

# 22nd

International Association  
for Adolescent Health  
(IAAH) European  
Regional Conference



**Joint Event:**

15th STATE OF THE  
ART Panhellenic  
Adolescent Health /  
Medicine Congress

*Youth Development Challenges in the post-COVID-19 era*

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## Youth Debate

### Is the Impact of Social Media on Teenagers Positive or Negative?

*Nefeli Papageorgiou – Karadima*

A couple of days ago I had planned to study 5 hours of history. I was writing a test the next day so I deemed it appropriate to do so. I always hear people saying it helps writing your schedule down so I took a burgundy pen, and wrote down the chapters I wanted to study. I switched my phone to airplane mode and started learning about the railway network of Greece. Yes you heard right. After I had memorized about 10 lines, I opened my phone again. As I reward, I thought. It was 6:30 when I started scrolling through all the different apps I had and by the time I was done, it was 8:00. I am pretty sure I am not the only one that has had this experience. Mobile phones have quickly become taken as much for granted as electricity or central heating. Their main purpose is to keep us connected regardless of the distance. It is the most important way of communicating with our family, friends, loved ones and society as well in a variety of different ways. Due to its constantly advancing technology, it is now essential to modern life and makes life without it seem tedious. But what if you find yourself becoming too connected to your phone? And more specifically social media apps? Is social media, after all, a blessing for teens, a curse for parents or perhaps a bit of both?

Teens are enveloped by the online world of this social network. The truth is that social media can be beneficial for society. It can encourage people

and grow while also assisting them in connecting and deepening their bonds. Regular social media use is connected with social wellbeing, self-rated health, and mental health, according to a Harvard study. For instance, social media can foster peer motivation, encouraging young people to form healthy habits, try new things, pursue their aspirations, and speak up about issues that are important to them. Teenagers and young adults frequently feel the urge to fit in and to believe that their way of thinking is not grotesque-abnormal. When they finally achieve to do so, they feel less lonely, like they are a part of a broader community. In addition to that, as it is well known, at that age identity formation is an obstacle often met. A positive teen self-identity is vital because it shapes a teen's perception of belonging not just for their teen years but for most of their adult life. In fact Erik Erikson, a well-known psychologist, believes identity development is a key process for teens and that a failure to establish identity leads to role confusion and a weak sense of self. Through social media teens have the ability to find positive role models who have qualities or are successful in areas they deem important. This is beneficial to the maturation process and contributes to a strong sense of self. Social media has also seen a great deal of usage by those seeking information.

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Young adults shift away from traditional media sources for their news and are moving more towards social media and messaging services to find the news. Due to obligations to our families and other activities, our time is becoming increasingly more limited. However, social networking sites give people a chance to interact quickly and effectively. It is easier, it is faster. The modernized, new way of life requires a person to be informed about all kinds of news, and social media is the haste way to do so. Writing a Tweet takes all of 20 seconds, and with cross-posting to other social networks switched on, that update can be reached by everyone you want it to in an instant. The power of social media is the ability to connect and share information with anyone on Earth or with many people simultaneously. A Pew Research Centre study found a link between using social media and having more friends and a more varied personal network. Friendships among many teenagers can begin virtually, with 57% of teenagers making a friend online. I am aware of your thoughts at this point. Is a friendship formed online actually a friendship? You might be surprised to learn that 33% of teenagers say that communicating with friends online is `` simpler than trying to do it physically. Additionally, I believe we can all agree that when COVID-19 began, things for online communication drastically changed. There was a significant increase in the average time users spent on social media. More specifically 70 minutes daily, compared to 54 minutes and 56 minutes the years before.

Empathy, the ability to understand the emotions of others and share in them (the affective compo-

nent of empathic concern), is believed to underlie the human capacity to bond with offspring in parent-child attachment and cooperate with group members in ways that progress societies . Young adults who spend more time on social network sites have more empathy for their peers, meaning that they are better able to understand and share their friends' feelings. Social media has made forming connections with people across the world easier and more doable than ever before. Therefore these new connections allow for an overall better understanding of one another.

But it is widely known we are all fallen victims to the strong power of social networking sites as dramatic as it may sound. The human species is a sociable creature. To prosper in life, we require the company of others, and the quality of our relationships has a significant bearing on both our mental health and enjoyment. Social interaction with others has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, improve self-esteem, bring comfort and joy, prevent loneliness, and even lengthen life. On the other hand, a lack of solid social ties can seriously jeopardize your mental and emotional wellbeing. Nonverbal cues are equally as crucial in face-to-face communication as the words we use. Non-verbal cues are lost when utilizing social media and complicating communication and leads to miscommunication. Preteens and teens transition through adolescence and start to become more independent as they take the time to establish a sense of self. While feeling envious or putting yourself first is common, it can turn dangerous under certain circumstances. When an adolescent

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is entirely self-absorbed and utterly incapable of displaying interest in or compassion for others, narcissism becomes a hazardous feature. Unfortunately, social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok have taken this demand for attention to an extreme by enabling us to post updates and photographs at any time to attract attention. On social media, we draw attention by presenting a fabricated version of ourselves rather than our true selves. We end up getting a lot of attention but also feeling more alone and isolated than before as a consequence. Also, because it's so simple to become absorbed in social media activity, people frequently forget about their actual goals. Individuals regularly aspire for internet popularity rather than setting their sights on the dream career by developing practical talents. Setting and achieving objectives requires a lot of effort and drive. We can wind up going down a path where we just don't get things done because it's too easy to find a diversion thanks to social media, which gives us an easy outlet to divert our attention when we don't feel like putting in the hard effort. On the internet, people speak in ways they wouldn't ordinarily in real life because they feel free to do so. One of the many unfavourable effects of social media is that even if you're not the one saying awful things, you'll inevitably be exposed to them.

Whether or not it is intended at you, cyberbullying will make you think more negatively and probably make you view people more negatively overall. The best remedy in this situation is to get out into the world and see the random acts of compassion that individuals perform on a daily basis.

In addition, it's very clear that privacy and the internet don't mix well. Employers are using social media more and more to check out the profiles of possible workers. Posting every opinion could cause people to perceive you negatively, which could, to put it mildly, cost you opportunities. You are all probably aware of the complete invasion of another person's privacy when personal information and photos are leaked. Social networking is the simplest method to stifle or even end the creative process, in my personal experience. Similar to aimlessly watching television, browsing social media sites has a numbing effect on the mind.

Creativity frequently calls for strong concentration or a relatively calm, relaxed mind. Social media obstructs both of these. Lastly, it's easy to present a certain persona on social media. Social media presents a distorted view of reality, which can be harmful to one's self-esteem. According to one study, participants who used Facebook the most frequently had lower trait self-esteem, and this was mediated by more exposure to positive social comparisons on social media. This suggests that our self-esteem decreases when we observe the lives of others that we judge to be better than our own. Whether on purpose or not, all of us have a natural desire to evaluate ourselves against others. Social media allows us to contrast our circumstances with those of others since it helps us feel better. However, when we contrast ourselves with those who are performing better than we are, we feel inadequate or inferior. The social media platform we choose also affects our morale, as do crisis situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Many experts have speculated that the rise of social media, which enables us to share information where we always appear in our best light, may have amplified inaccurate comparisons. According to research, people socially compare themselves more when they spend more time on Instagram. Among other things, this social comparison is associated with higher levels of social anxiety and worse levels of self-esteem.

Anyone can form their own opinion on this unsettled debate, but in mine the usage of social media poses too many hazards. I think there should be a balance on how and when we use it, as there should with almost anything in this life.

Thank you for your attention