

Social media use contributing to poor mental health in Indonesia, research finds

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Social media use contributing to poor mental health in Indonesia, research has found.

The research presented in a paper by Sujarwoto Sujarwoto, Gindo Tampubolon and Adi Cilik Pierewan examines the specific effect of [social media](#) on mental health in the [developing country](#).

It found that social media had a detrimental effect on mental health—as has been documented globally. But the authors noted specifics to developing countries such as Indonesia.

Researchers said that the country's high levels of inequality are highlighted on social media leading to envy and resentment at seeing happy, positive social media images of how others live.

Inequality in Indonesia has been rising fast since 2000 and the country has the third-fastest-growing economy among the G20 economies.

It has a rising consumer class which contrasts starkly against those with less education or unable to get employment.

Indonesia's transition to democracy has also played out on social media with negative results.

A cacophony of news about government failures, corruption, crime, conflicts and poverty is amplified on social media on a daily basis—providing little escape for the country's citizens.

The study looked specifically at Facebook, Twitter and chat, and analyzed 22,423 individuals across nearly 300 districts of the country.

Social media is incredibly popular in Indonesia; Facebook reported a total of 54 million individual users in Indonesia, making it the fourth largest Facebook-using country in the world, while Twitter reported 22 million Indonesian users, putting the country in fifth place worldwide.

Twitter also reported that Indonesian users publish a total of 385 tweets per second on average.

Meanwhile, mental disorders are becoming a major burden in the country.

Based on the latest Indonesia Basic Health Research survey 2018, the prevalence of individuals with [mental disorders](#) in the country is an estimated 11.8 million people.

Global Development Institute researcher Gindo Tampubolon said: "It's a strong reminder that these technologies can have a downside.

"We would like to see public health officials think creatively about how we can encourage citizens to take a break from social media or be aware of the negative consequences it can have on [mental health](#)."

The authors call for public health interventions and policies advocating wise use of online social media to prevent increased [mental illness](#) driven by excessive [social media use](#) in Indonesia.

More information: Sujarwoto Sujarwoto et al. A Tool to Help or Harm? Online Social Media Use and Adult Mental Health in Indonesia, *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s11469-019-00069-2](#)

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