

# University researchers find WhatsApp can be good for our health

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Academics at Edge Hill University have found that spending time on social media, specifically WhatsApp, is good for our wellbeing.

Dr. Linda Kaye, a senior lecturer in Psychology found that the text-based messaging app, which offers users group chat functions, has a [positive impact](#) on psychological wellbeing.

The research found that the more time people spent on WhatsApp per day, the less lonely they were and the higher their self-esteem as a result of feeling closer to friends and family.

Dr. Kaye said: "There's lots of debate about whether spending time on [social media](#) is bad for our well-being but we've found it might not be as bad as we think.

"The more time people spent on WhatsApp, the more this related to them feeling close to their friends and family and they perceived these relationships to be good quality.

"As well as this, the more closely bonded these friendships were and the more people felt affiliated with their WhatsApp groups, the more this was related positively to their [self-esteem](#) and social competence.

"Group affiliation also meant that WhatsApp users were less lonely. It seems that using WhatsApp to connect with our [close friends](#) is favourable for aspects of our well-being."

The research of 200 users, 158 women and 41 men with an average age of 24, found that the average reported daily use of WhatsApp was around 55 minutes, with people using it because of its popularity and group chat function.

Dr. Kaye added: "This research contributes to the ongoing debates in this area and provides specific evidence of the role of social factors, along with social support motivations for using [communication technology](#).

"Specifically, the findings show how including factors relating to social bonding capital is highly pertinent within this field as a way of understanding how technology usage relates to psychosocial well-being.

"It gives rise to the notion that social technology such as WhatsApp may stimulate existing relationships and opportunities for communication, thereby enhancing aspects of the users' positive well-being."

**More information:** Linda K. Kaye et al, Psychosocial Outcomes Associated with Engagement with Online Chat Systems, *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction* (2019). [DOI: 10.1080/10447318.2019.1620524](https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2019.1620524)

Provided by Edge Hill University

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