

Social media use and physical health

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Social media use was correlated with worse physical health indicators among college students, according to a new study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

David Lee, Ph.D., from the University at Buffalo, the State University of

New York, and coauthors demonstrated that social media use was associated with higher levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a biological marker of chronic inflammation in the blood that is associated with chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular diseases and cancers. Social media use was also related to experiencing more frequent somatic symptoms. It also positively correlated with more visits to the doctor or [health centers](#) for an illness.

High levels of social media use or screen time may negatively affect physical health in multiple ways. For example, it may reduce users' amount and quality of sleep. Hyperconnectivity may also increase stress or displace health-promoting activities such as exercise.

"Given the prevalence of social media in daily lives and the importance of social relationships to physical health, we call for additional research to examine the relationship between [social media use](#) and physical health by utilizing diverse methodologies," state the investigators.

"This NIH-supported research, using an objective biomarker, further advances our understanding of the negative impact social media may have on one's health. It will be important in future studies to explore which types of media use may be most detrimental, as well as how factors such as self-esteem, may moderate the link between social media and [physical health](#)," says Editor-in-Chief Brenda K. Wiederhold, Ph.D., MBA, BCB, BCN, Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, California and Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium.

More information: David S. Lee et al, Social Media Use and Its Link to Physical Health Indicators, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* (2022). [DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2021.0188](https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2021.0188)

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