

Live streaming platform 'Twitch' poses risks for minors who may be manipulated, preyed upon, says new research

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A popular live streaming platform, Twitch, poses risks to minors who can interact with adult strangers and donate money to streamers without the supervision of a parent or guardian, according to research presented during the [2023 AAP National Conference & Exhibition](#) at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

The abstract, "Predator Paradise: Analyzing the Ease of Accessibility to Minors on Twitch," found that young users feel a false sense of safety on the [platform](#), as a significant proportion were willing to reveal [personal information](#) despite having no knowledge of who might be listening. The nature of the live streaming platform makes it particularly risky, as there is no way to take back information that minor streamers reveal while on Twitch.

"Twitch is an exciting platform; however, it may present hidden dangers for minor users," said Ruth Milanaik, MD, FAAP, principal investigator of the study. "Parents need to supervise all interactions on this platform to best protect their child."

To conduct the research, trained coders entered Twitch.tv, searched popular video games and scrolled to view current live streams that appeared to be conducted by [minors](#) and who had their cameras on and showed their faces. No accounts were created for this study.

The participants analyzed data collected on 100 minor Twitch streamers with 1,755,452 followers. Youth streamers provided their names (47%) and stated their location 50% of the time. About 38% provided detailed schedules of when they would be live, and 64% linked and encouraged viewers to follow their other public social media. Viewers were able to donate money to 37% of streamers.

"The donation system is quite scary to me," said Fiona Dubrosa, visiting scholar at Cohen's Children Medical Center, Northwell Health in Rego

Park, N.Y. "The idea that anyone can donate money to streamers of any age seems very manipulative, and I do not think that it is widely known of the disturbing ways this could be utilized. Twitch must create a safer platform."

The researchers conclude that popular websites like Twitch can serve as a [breeding ground](#) for voyeuristic consumption of underage streamers, and encourage pediatricians and caregivers to be aware of the potential dangers to children.

This research was conducted by the Teen Trends Consortium at Cohen's Children Medical Center, Northwell Health. Teen Trends Consortium is a group of researchers aged 18–24 that focuses solely on the most salient issues facing pediatric populations, including substance use and technology.

More information: Abstract Title: Predator Paradise: Analyzing the Ease of Accessibility to Minors on Twitch

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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