

SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS AMONG TEENS AT HIGH RISK FOR SUICIDE

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Full Research Article

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OUR GOAL

To explore the **prospective relationship between social media use and suicidal thoughts and behaviors** in the first 30 days of an intensive outpatient program (IOP) for depression and suicidality.

We also compared the relationship between suicidality and social media use to other forms of media.



WHO WE STUDIED AND WHAT THEY DID

100 adolescents (13-18 years old) who were enrolled and participated in IOP for depression and suicidality.

At intake, they completed a baseline measure of their media usage and then filled out weekly measures of depression and suicidal thoughts and behaviors at clinical visits over the next month.

WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social Media is unique in its **frequency, immediacy, and quality of social experiences**, along with the opportunity for **immediate social feedback**.

- Cross-sectional studies have shown that heavier social media or internet use is associated with **increased likelihood of suicidal behavior** among adolescents.

This is the first study to predict the future occurrence of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

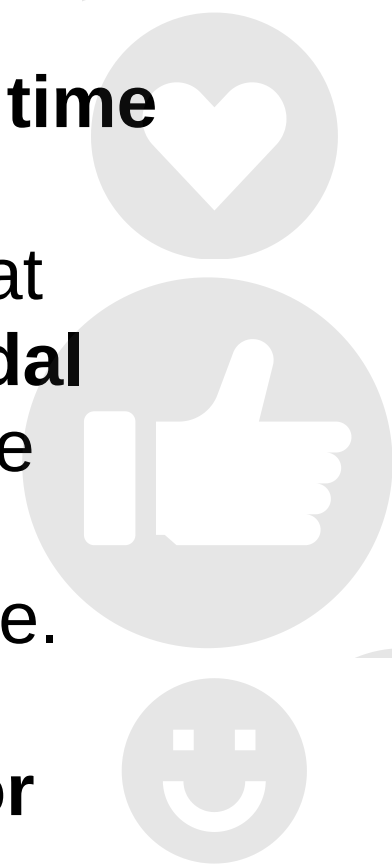


RESULTS

SOCIAL MEDIA USE & SUICIDALITY

Adolescents who spent **less time on social media**, including active SM (messaging), are at **higher risk of having suicidal ideation with a plan** over the next month than those with greater daily social media use.

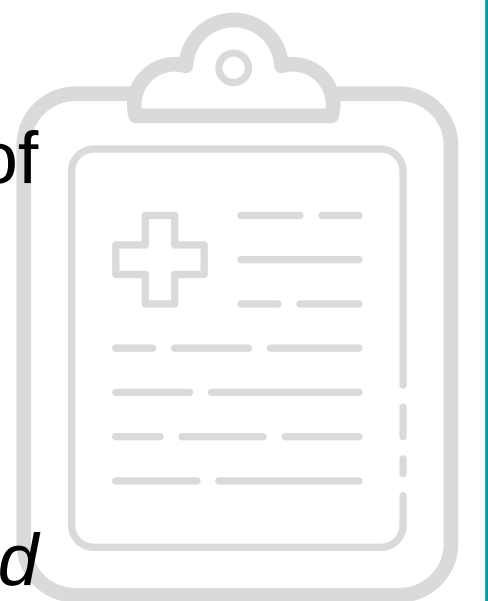
There was **no effect of TV or gaming** on suicidality.



SOCIAL MEDIA USE & TREATMENT OUTCOMES

Social media use was found to **moderate** (impact the strength of) **the effect of treatment** on average days of passive suicidal thoughts and depression symptoms.

Adolescents with **more social media use** reported *less passive thoughts and depression over treatment* than those with less social media usage.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Among adolescents at high risk for suicide, **less engagement in social media** may reflect lack of pleasure in social situations or withdrawal, which **may heighten risk** for more severe suicidal ideation or impede initial treatment.
- Social media is complex and it is important to consider, especially how it relates to social dysfunction, in treatment for depression and suicidality among adolescents.