

## **USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS: MINI LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Francisca Maria Michelle Oliveira Lustosa <sup>1</sup>**

**Marcos Felipe da Silva Mello <sup>2</sup>**

**Viviane Soares<sup>3</sup>**

### **ABSTRACT**

Social media has become popular in recent decades as one of the main forms of communication, bringing people together through virtual environments where they share knowledge and experiences. However, their misuse, whether due to excessive exposure or frequenting hostile environments, can lead to symptoms involving anxiety and depression in children, adolescents, and young adults. The objective of this work was to analyze the influence of social media use by children, adolescents, and young adults in relation to anxiety and depression. The methodology used was a systematic literature review of studies. It was observed that social networks have an impact on a considerable portion of their users, who may exhibit symptoms of anxiety and depression; however, it is important that more studies are conducted to better understand this phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Anxiety; Depression; Social media.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The last decades of the 20th century, which culminated in the 21st century, brought with them technological innovations that were incorporated into the daily lives of the human population on a global scale, impacting professional life, leisure, and interpersonal relationships. Some technologies have favored social interaction in a digital way, meaning that people do not need to be physically present to have long hours of conversations and exchange experiences in general; these spaces have been named Social Networks (CORRÊA; GRIEP, 2022).

However, it is worth noting that excessive use or lack of filtering of the virtual environment you are engaging with can lead to harmful behaviors both psychologically and physically, generating signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression. Children, adolescents, and young adults are the most susceptible to this abusive use of social media, and the younger they are, the worse the impact, as their executive brain functions are not fully developed (SCHMITT, 2020).

---

<sup>1</sup> Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, UNINOVAFAPI, Email: fmmichelle.lustosa@hotmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Bachelor's Degree in Physiotherapy, Evangelical University of Goiás, Email: marcosfilipesm@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of the Graduate Program in Human Movement and Rehabilitation, Evangelical University of Goiás, Email: ftviviane@gmail.com

As it is an adaptation to the digital world, it is still unknown what short-term effects lead to increases in symptoms of depression and anxiety. However, in the medium and long term, the harms may be greater, but they have not yet been described in the literature. Thus, the objective of this study was to review the literature and identify the research that has studied the relationship between social media and symptoms of anxiety and depression.

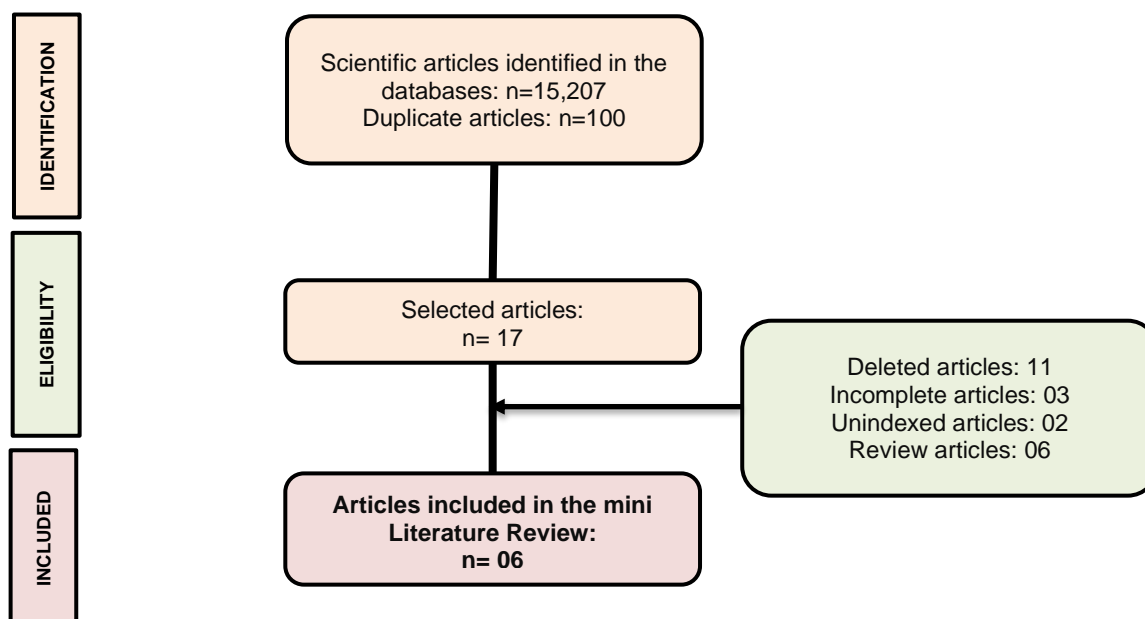
## **METHODOLOGY**

This is a mini literature review on the use of social media and its influence on anxiety and depression. The research was conducted in the databases Google Scholar, PubMed, Psycnet, and Web of Science from September 20 to 25, 2023. In the search, the descriptors "adolescent," "anxiety," "depression," "social networks," "social media" were used. Studies of any age group published in the last five years (2019 to 2023); full articles; indexed articles; articles published in Portuguese, English, or Spanish were included. From these, 17 articles were selected for full reading (Figure 1).

## **RESULTS**

Initially, 15,207 studies were identified by combining all the databases. 100 duplicate articles were excluded, leaving 15,107. Subsequently, 17 studies were selected for full reading, and six were included in the study. (Figure 1).

Figura 1. Flowchart of the study selection



Source: Authors (2023).

The articles were tabulated according to their publication characteristics: authors' names, year of publication, objective, social media used, assessment instruments, and conclusion (Table 1). The total number of participants in the studies was 1936, with an age range between 9 and 62 years.

The presence of a reduction in empathy, self-control, assertiveness, and affective approach by the participants was identified in high school students (ANDRETTA et al., 2021). All the studies showed the harmful effects of social media use and that they are directly related to the intensity of use (FARIA et al., 2021; MONTEIRO; SOUSA; CORREIRA, 2022) and also the relationship with anxiety and depression (MEIRELES; COUTO, BAPTISTA, 2022; RODRIGUES et al., 2023).

A study demonstrated that moderate use of social media has become relevant for stimulating weekly social interaction in groups, without identifying a correlation between excessive use of this technology and psychiatric disorders in patients of CAPS-I in Cascavel (CORRÊA; GRIEP. 2022).

**Table 1.** Characterization of the articles selected for analysis (n=6).

Author/Year	Objective	Social Network	Instrument	Conclusion
ANDRETTA <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Characterize the use of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) by high school students from private schools	Does not specify n=456 students From a private school in the south of the country	IHSA-Del-Prette QUTIC	Clinical studies are suggested to develop a greater repertoire of social skills in this population for the purpose of preventing problematic behaviors related to low levels of social skills and high media use.
FARIA <i>et al.</i> (2021)	gather information on the use of social media among students at the ESUDA Faculty of Human Sciences and the reported impacts on health and emotional well-being	<i>Whatsapp; Instagram; Facebook; Twitter; Tik Tok; Tinder and similar</i> n=101	Virtual questionnaire on the Google Forms platform, of the self-report type	The use of social networks was found to be correlated, depending on the intensity of use, with positive and negative effects on respondents' perceptions of their health and certain emotions.
CORRÊA; GRIEP (2022)	Understanding the prevalence of excessive use of entertainment technologies in the daily lives of children and adolescents with psychiatric vulnerabilities, so that we can better address these innovations within the healthcare field.	<i>Instagram; Youtube; Tik Tok; Twitter; Whatsapp; Facebook</i> n=20 adolescents aged 9 to 18	Standardized CAPS-I Questionnaire.	The use of technologies has proven to be a favorable factor for face-to-face social interactions; however, no relationship with the other factors studied was demonstrated.
MEIRELES; COUTO; BAPTISTA (2022)	Analyze the association between addictive social media use, depressive symptoms, and social anxiety.	Does not specify n=161	EBADEP-The brief version); CARS; CASE	A path analysis indicated that addictive social media use is predictive of depressive and social anxiety symptoms.
MONTEIRO; SOUSA; CORREIA (2022)	Analyze the relationship between internet addiction, anxiety, depression, stress, and the recreational time dedicated to the internet per day.	Does not specify n=20	IAT.	This study has implications for the approach to university health services, particularly in terms of prevention and intervention in this issue, as well as highlighting the importance of proper emotion management as a preventive factor.
RODRIGUES <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Analyze the relationship between social media use and anxiety symptoms in university students	Does not specify n=148	TPB Scale for IAG Behavior	It is concluded that the use of social media can bring various psychological and social impacts on the quality of life of young adult university students.

IHSA-Del-Prette: Inventory of Social Skills for Adolescents; QUTIC: Questionnaire on the Use of Information and Communication Technologies. EBADEP-A brief version: Baptist Depression Scale – Brief Adult Version; CARS: Social Media Addiction Questionnaire; CASO: Social Anxiety Questionnaire for Adults. IAT: Internet Addiction Test; TPB: Multidimensional Scale based on the Theory of Planned Behavior; IAG: Greenberger Anxiety Inventory. Source: Authors (2023).

## CONCLUSION

In fact, there is a relationship between anxiety and depression and the excessive use of social media, as some digital environments can be harmful due to their hostility. New studies need to be conducted to establish how social media influences mental health and, consequently, the quality of life of its users, as well as to determine what duration of exposure can be harmful, thus stimulating the emergence of psychosocial disorders.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

ANDRETTA, I. *et al.* Habilidades sociais e uso de mídias sociais por adolescentes no ensino médio. **Aletheia**, Canoas, v. 54, n. 2, p. 44-54, dez. 2021.

CORRÊA, A. C. C; GRIEP, R. The relationship between psychiatric disorders and the excessive use of technologies among children and adolescents at CAPS-I in Cascavel. **Research, Society and Development**, [S. l.], v. 11, n. 16, p. e353111638220, 2022.

FARIA, M. X. V. *et al.* O dilema das redes sociais: uso por estudantes universitários e impactos sobre afetos e a percepção de saúde. **HumanÆ**. v. 15, n. 2, 2021. ISSN: 1517-7602.

MEIRELES, J. R.; FERREIRA COUTO, L. M.; BAPTISTA, M. N. Adicção em redes sociais, sintomatologia depressiva e de ansiedade social na pandemia de COVID-19. **Psicologia Argumento**, [S. l.], v. 40, n. 110, 2022.

MONTEIRO, A. P.; SOUSA, M.; CORREIA, E. Adicción a Internet: relación con la ansiedad, la depresión, el estrés y el tiempo en línea. **CES Psicología**, [S. l.], v. 16, n. 1, p. 45–61, 2023.

RODRIGUES, J. *et al.* A relação entre o uso de mídias sociais e os sintomas da ansiedade: percepção dos estudantes universitários. **Psicologia e Saúde em debate**, [S. l.], v. 9, n. 1, p. 207–221, 2023.

SCHMITT, M. **O que leva a se viciar na internet? Relações entre solidão, depressão, ansiedade, estresse, adição à internet e uso de mídias sociais online.** Dissertação de Mestrado, UNISINOS. 2020.