

Peer Review File

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Reviewer A

Comments:

Your letter is overwrought and displays a lack of scientific neutrality. Haidt's claims have been disputed as noted in a recent editorial in Science magazine. Candace Odgers has also summarized the literature on this issue in Nature magazine. We are clearly in a moral panic over the effects of social media, and a more dispassionate approach will serve us better. I would recommend Megan Moreno's recent statement in The Conversation as a good place to start in thinking about what should and can be done to control social media platforms' most egregious practices (see <https://theconversation.com/online-child-safety-laws-could-help-or-hurt-2-pediatricians-explain-whats-likely-to-work-and-what-isnt-226436>).

One should also recognize that the most sensitive indicator of mental health problems in youth, the suicide rate, has not gone up in all countries. There are many countries in which it has stayed steady or gone down despite the rise of social media and internet use.

Reply:

Thank you for your wise comments.

The recent statement by Megan Moreno's in The Conversation has been introduced in the list of sources “in the USA”, as well as Reference n.12, after Reference n.11 by the “Surgeon general”, as quoted in her statement. A lot of points made by Megan Moreno’s have been used in the Discussion of the revised version, always quoting her, exactly as you suggested.

Your comment that the most sensitive indicator of mental health problems in youth, the suicide rate, has not gone up in all countries, and there are many countries in which it has stayed steady or gone down despite the rise of social media and internet use, has been entered in our initial part of the text (lines 37-40).

Reviewer B

Comments:

I have reviewed the manuscript and find the text to be well-written and relevant, though it would benefit from a few modifications. The paper effectively highlights the damaging effects of social media on the mental health of children and teenagers, referencing numerous recent studies. These minor adjustments will help in making the manuscript more impactful and informative for the readers.

ABSTRACT

The statement about "alarming messages" is vague and would benefit from specifying what these messages are and how they were documented. The section listing various sources could be made more fluid and cohesive by summarizing the diversity of the sources in a single sentence. Lastly, the final part explaining the purpose of collecting significant positions should be clearer, detailing how these positions were gathered and analyzed.

TEXT

Lines 46-66: The section discussing Jonathan Haidt's work is very interesting, but it might benefit from the inclusion of some references from the literature to support his theory.

Line 71, please insert reference/s.

Line 75, please insert reference/s.

Lines 82-83: How was this information collected? Please explain the research method.

Lines 85-106 and lines 116-154: The list itself is useful, but it might be better presented as a table if the journal allows it. Additionally, adding some discussion to the text would enhance its value, as the list currently takes up space that could be used for more in-depth analysis.

Lines 112-114: same here

Lines 115-166: The conclusion highlights the mounting scientific evidence and public declarations linking excessive social media use to mental health challenges in children and teenagers. However, it could benefit from clearer phrasing. The sentence "It is not acceptable to ignore these facts anymore" is impactful but might be more effective if rephrased to stress the urgency of the issue. The phrase "ignorance becomes responsibility" could be expanded to explain the consequences of inaction. The recommendation for creating mechanisms to share new evidence with educators and parents is crucial, and this point could be emphasized further to underline the importance of collaborative efforts among all stakeholders, including the medical community, educators, parents, and society at large.

Reply:

Thank you for your detailed revision of our manuscript. Your suggestions have been followed by introducing in the revised version several modifications.

In the Introduction, our statement about "alarming messages" has been expanded and clarified. The same has been done for the section listing various sources, and the final part explaining the purpose of collecting significant positions.

TEXT

The suggested references have been added to the revised version, as you requested.

Lines 82-83: How was this information collected? The research methods have been specified.

Lines 85-106 and lines 116-154. The Editorial Office of the TP journal didn't request to transform the text in a table, and, considering all the different types of sources, probably would be better and easier for the readers to find a list as it is in the current format.

Lines 115-166: The conclusion highlights the mounting scientific evidence and public declarations linking excessive social media use to mental health challenges in children and teenagers. However, it could benefit from clearer phrasing.

The sentence "It is not acceptable to ignore these facts anymore" has been rephrased and expanded, as requested.

The phrase "ignorance becomes responsibility" has been expanded by explaining the consequences of inaction.

The importance of collaborative efforts among all stakeholders, including the medical community, educators, parents, and society at large, has been introduced in the text of the revised version, as you suggested.