

Social Media Effects on Mental Health and Body Image of Pregnant and Postpartum Women

#007

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Objectives:

With the advent of social media, individuals now more than ever are on social media. There have been studies that show an association between social media use and decreased well-being and increased distress among young adults (Huang, 2020; Ivie et al., 2020). However, there has also been significant heterogeneity within this body of literature (Ivie et al., 2020) with some studies suggesting no correlation between social media use and mental health symptoms (Berryman and Ferguson, 2018). In terms of social media impact on body image and disordered eating, studies have shown a correlation between increased social media use and worse body image as well as disordered eating (Holland and Tiggemann, 2016; Hicks and Brown, 2016). Therefore, we will attempt to further elucidate any correlation between social media use and depression/anxiety symptoms as well as body image among pregnant and postpartum women. Specifically, we have three separate aims with this study:

Specific Aim 1: To evaluate the relationship between social media use and depression and anxiety symptoms among pregnant and postpartum women through evaluating degree of social media use and screening for pregnant and postpartum depression and anxiety symptoms.

Specific Aim 2: To determine if social media use impacts body image and disordered eating behavior among pregnant and postpartum women through screening for negative body image and disordered eating behavior.

Specific Aim 3: To evaluate social media impact on pregnancy expectations and perceived impact of social media on body image and symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Our null hypothesis is that social media has no impact on depression and anxiety symptoms nor on body image in pregnant and postpartum women.

Methods:

This pilot study will be a cross-sectional survey of 30 pregnant or postpartum women who are able to consent for the study, and they will be recruited from an OB clinic in Cincinnati, OH. From a demographic standpoint, we anticipate women aged 18-35 and will attempt to recruit a racially and age-diverse sample. This approach will primarily be diagnostic, looking at social media use as an independent variable and depression and anxiety as well as body image as dependent variables in pregnant and postpartum women to determine if there are any correlations between these variables. Study subjects will be given surveys on demographics, pregnancy data, social media use, and body image. Depression and anxiety symptoms will be assessed by the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale and GAD-7. To our knowledge, there are no body image scales in pregnancy or validated social media use scales.

Therefore, we designed two different scales for this study: one measuring social media use and the other body image in pregnancy based on another body image scale written by McDermott et al, 2014.

Results:

In order to control for potential confounding variables, we plan to perform a simple linear regression using the demographic, pregnancy, and past psychiatric data to determine if there are any statistically significant variables related to depression/anxiety symptoms and body image. We then plan to divide the degree of social media use into quartiles based on social media use scale score with the highest quartile using social media the most. Using multiple linear regression, we will determine if there is a statistical difference between each quartile of social media use in terms of depression symptoms using any statistically significant variables related to depression symptoms as covariants. We will then perform the same analysis using GAD-7 scores and body image scale scores as dependent variables. If there are a significant amount of women in our data set who do not use social media, we will use these as controls. However, given that most people are on social media, we do not anticipate having a control group and instead, we will primarily determine if there is a dose-dependent relationship between social media use and depression, anxiety, and/or body image. We will then determine the percentage of women who believe social media has impacted their expectation of pregnancy, depression and/or anxiety symptoms, and body image.

Conclusions:

Conclusions will be drawn based on results and above analysis. Potential limitations of this study include limited population size (n = 30) and possible limited generalized applicability given the sample will only be taken from women in Cincinnati. However, given the advent of social media and several studies showing potential impact on depression and anxiety (Huang, 2020; Ivie et al., 2020) as well as body image in women (Holland and Tiggemann, 2016; Hicks and Brown, 2016), we anticipate this will offer significant contribution to the existing literature of women's mental health.

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Disclosures:

None.

Appendix 1: Demographics survey

Age: ____

Are you currently married, single, or in a relationship? _____

What is your level of education?

- Some high school or less High school diploma or GED Some college
 Associate's Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctorate

Employment status: employed unemployed

Approximately, what is your yearly income?

- <\$20,000 \$20,000-\$34,999 \$35,000-\$49,999 \$50,000-\$74,999
 \$75,000-\$99,999 \$100,000-\$149,999 \$150,000-\$199,999 \$200,000 or >

What would you consider your race?:

- White Black or African American Native American/Alaska Native Asian
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Two or more races Other: _____

Are you of Hispanic Origin?: Yes No

Appendix 2: Pregnancy/Postpartum Status

Are you currently pregnant? Yes No

If yes, how far along are you? _____

Did you recently give birth within the last year? Yes No

If yes, how many months has it been since your delivery? _____

Are you currently or do you plan to breastfeed? Yes No

How many pregnancies have you had? _____

How many live children do you have? _____

Appendix 3: Mental Health History

Have you ever been diagnosed with depression?

Yes No

If so, is this current? Yes No

If not current, how long ago were you diagnosed? _____

Did your episode of depression occur during or after your pregnancies? Yes No

Have you ever been diagnosed with anxiety?

Yes No

If so, is this current? Yes No

If not current, how long ago were you diagnosed? _____

Have you ever been diagnosed with bipolar disorder?

Yes No

Have you ever been diagnosed with PTSD?

Yes No

Have you ever experienced physical or sexual abuse?

Yes No

If so, is this current? Yes No

Have you ever had an issue with excessive alcohol use? (e.g. drinking daily or binge drinking)

Yes No

If so, is this current? Yes No

Have you ever had an issue with illicit drug use? (e.g. using daily or having difficulty with functioning)

Yes No

If so, is this current? Yes No

Have you ever been diagnosed with an eating disorder (e.g. anorexia, bulimia, binge-eating disorder)?

Yes No

If so, is this current? Yes No

If not current, how long ago were you diagnosed? _____

Do you feel you have adequate social support at home?

Yes No

Social Media Scale Use Scale

Are you currently using social media?

- Yes No

How many social media accounts do you have?

- One Two Three Four or more

Which platform(s) of social media do you use? Check all that apply.

- Facebook Twitter Instagram Snapchat TikTok Other: _____

How often do you check social media?

- Once a month or less Weekly to a few times per week Daily Several times per day

How often do you interact on social media (e.g. liking, messaging, etc)?

- Once a month or less Weekly to a few times per week Daily Several times per day

How often do you post on social media?

- Once a month or less Weekly to a few times per week Daily Several times per day

How many hours per day on average do you spend on social media?

- <30 min 1-2 hours 3-4 hours 4+ hours

Do you start your day by looking at social media?

- Yes No

Are you annoyed when people comment about your level of social media?

- Yes No

Do you feel guilty about how much you are using social media?

- Yes No

Do you feel the need to cut back on your social media use?

- Yes No

Body Image Scale in Pregnancy

Have you been feeling self-conscious about your appearance?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Have you felt less physically attractive as a result of being pregnant?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Have you been dissatisfied with your appearance when dressed?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Have you been feeling less feminine as a result of being pregnant?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Do you find it difficult to look at yourself naked?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Have you been feeling less sexually attractive as a result of being pregnant?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Do you avoid people because of the way you feel about your appearance?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Do you feel that pregnancy has left your body less whole?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Have you felt dissatisfied with your body?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Has social media had an impact on your expectations of pregnancy?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much

Was your pregnancy or has it been consistent with your expectations based on social media?

Not at all A little Quite a bit Very much