When Facebook use becomes a problem, could social anxiety be to blame?

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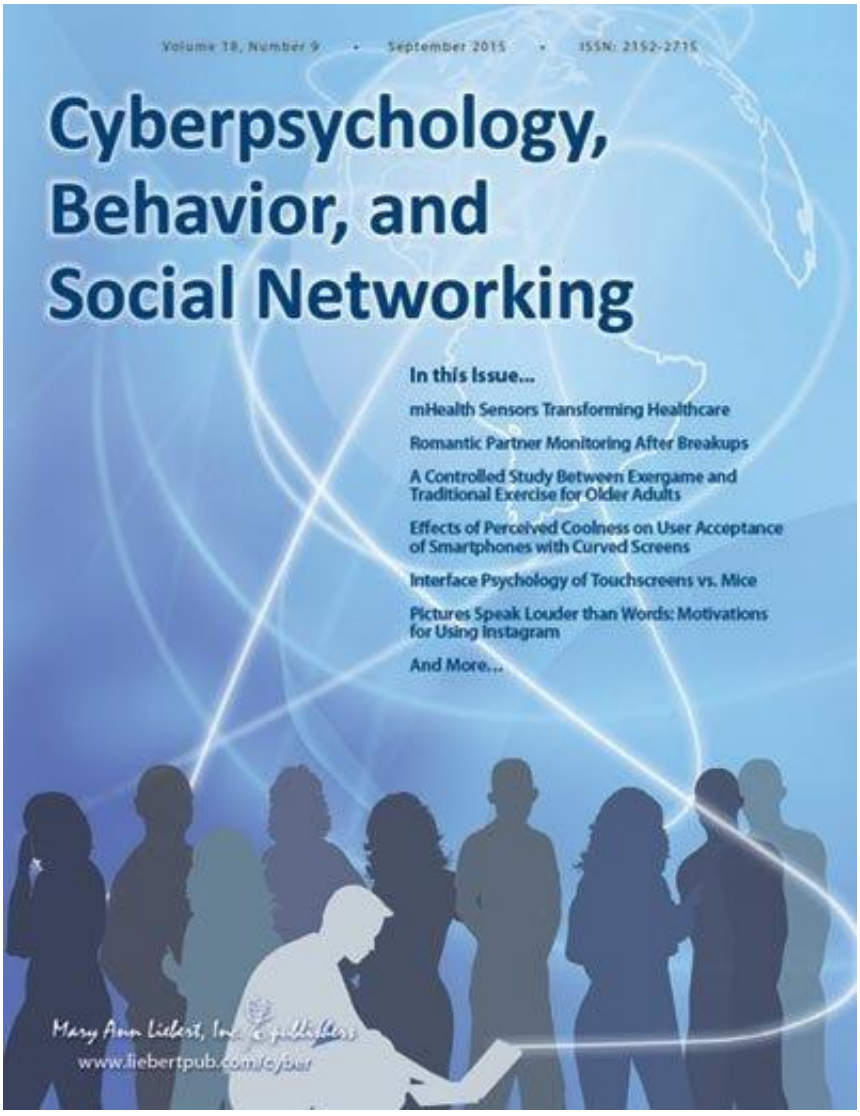

Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

A new study shows that the combination of social anxiety and the need for social assurance by feeling part of a group increases the risk for excessive and uncontrolled use of Facebook, which can negatively affect school performance, work, and one's health and well-being, as described in an article published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

In "Hooked on Facebook: The Role of Social Anxiety and Need for Social Assurance in Problematic Use of Facebook (http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/cyber.2015.0002)," authors Roselyn Lee-Won, PhD, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Leo Herzog, Hope College, Holland, MI, and Sung Gwan Park, PhD, Seoul National University, Korea, present the results of a study in U.S. college students. Both social anxiety and the need for social assurance were positive predictors of problematic Facebook use, but the link between social anxiety and excessive use of Facebook was only significant for users who had medium to high levels of need for social assurance, defined as a strong desire to seek companionship and interact with others. The authors note that the combined social connections capability and messaging features of Facebook may offer an appealing social media environment for users with social anxiety.

"Problematic Facebook use seems to result from multi-factorial causes and personality attributes," says Editor-in-Chief Brenda K. Wiederhold, PhD, MBA, BCB, BCN, Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, California and Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium. "More research into the synergistic nature of these factors and additional issues that should be included in a prediction model of this phenomenon may help aid in future assessment and prevention plans."

More information: The article is available free on the *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* (http://www.liebertpub.com/cyber) website until November 7, 2015.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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