

Poverty linked to Facebook and Instagram addiction in teens

November 29 2022



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Adolescents from lower-income backgrounds are more likely to report addictive use of social media, according to an international team of researchers including Professor Frank Elgar from McGill University.

The findings show a link between [economic inequality](#) and problematic use of social network platforms and instant messaging applications. The researchers identified problematic social media use in teens who reported six or more addiction-like behaviors, such as feeling bad when not using social media, trying but failing to spend less time using it, and using social media to escape from [negative feelings](#).

The situation is worse in schools where differences in wealth between classmates are greater. The authors say the results—based on more than 179,000 schoolchildren in 40 countries—suggest that new strategies are needed on social media use that promote ways to disengage. Action by policymakers could help limit young people's harmful behavior, add the authors. These negative patterns include being unable to reduce screen time or lying to friends and family about social media use.

"Can an equal world reduce problematic [social media](#) use? Evidence from the Health Behavior in School-aged Children study in 43 countries," by Michela Lenzi, Frank Elgar et al., was published in *Information, Communication and Society*.

More information: Michela Lenzi et al, Can an equal world reduce problematic social media use? Evidence from the Health Behavior in School-aged Children study in 43 countries, *Information, Communication & Society* (2022). [DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2022.2109981](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2022.2109981)

Provided by McGill University

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