

Evaluating the Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Multi-Generational Medical Professionals: Basis for a Mental Health Awareness and Support Program Development

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the relationship between social media use and mental health among multigenerational medical professionals to inform the development of a Mental Health Awareness and Support Program. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used among 150 medical professionals, including nurses, physicians, medical technologists, pharmacists, therapists, midwives, and other healthcare workers. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire assessing demographic characteristics, social media usage, and mental health indicators, including stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and sleep disturbance. Descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, independent-samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance were used to analyze the data. Results showed that respondents commonly used social media for communication, professional collaboration, access to medical information, education, relaxation, and motivational content. Stress was the most evident mental health concern, while anxiety, depression, burnout, and sleep disturbance were generally reported at low levels. A significant positive relationship was found between social media use and mental health status ($r = .493$, $p < .001$). Social media usage differed significantly by age, generation, profession, frequency of use, and daily duration of use. Mental health status differed significantly by years of professional experience, frequency of social media use, and average daily use duration. The findings support the development of a generation-sensitive mental health awareness and support program emphasizing digital wellness, responsible social media use, stress management, emotional resilience, peer support, and referral mechanisms.

Keywords: *Social media use; mental health; medical professionals; generational differences; digital wellness; stress management*

INTRODUCTION

Social media plays an important role in the personal and professional lives of medical professionals by supporting communication, collaboration, continuing education, and access to health information. However, excessive or inappropriate use may contribute to stress, sleep disturbance, emotional fatigue, and reduced well-being through compulsive use, social comparison, negative content, and nighttime engagement. These effects may differ among Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z due to variations in digital habits and coping strategies. Thus, this study examined the relationship between social media use and mental health among multi-generational medical professionals to inform a proposed Mental Health Awareness and Support Program.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of social media on the mental health of multi-generational medical professionals to inform the development of a Mental Health Awareness and Support Program.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: What is the profile of the respondents in terms of: 1.1. age; 1.2. generation category; 1.3. sex; 1.4. profession; 1.5. years of experience; 1.6. frequency of social media use; 1.7. average duration of social media use per day?

Research Question 2: What is the level of social media usage among multi-generational medical professionals in terms of: 2.1. duration of use; 2.2. purpose of use; 2.3. content exposure; 2.4. type of platform used?

Research Question 3: What is the level of mental health status of the respondents in terms of: 3.1. stress; 3.2. anxiety; 3.3. depression; 3.4. burnout; 3.5. sleep disturbance?

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between social media use and mental health outcomes among multi-generational medical professionals?

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the mental health status of respondents when grouped according to generation?

Research Question 6: Is there a significant difference in social media usage among respondents when grouped according to generation?

Research Question 7: Based on the findings of the study, what Mental Health Awareness and Support Program may be developed?

Scope and Delimitations

This study examined the relationship between social media use and mental health among multi-generational medical professionals in selected healthcare settings. Participants included licensed and non-licensed healthcare workers from Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional design, data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and tests of difference. The findings served as the basis for a proposed Mental Health Awareness and Support Program. The study was limited by self-reported data and its cross-sectional design.

Review of Related Literature

Social media provides medical professionals with opportunities for communication, education, collaboration, and emotional support. However, excessive or problematic use has been associated with stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and sleep disturbance. Factors such as compulsive use, nighttime browsing, negative content exposure, and social comparison may increase psychological distress. Generational differences also affect patterns of social media use and coping strategies, emphasizing the need for generation-sensitive mental health interventions. Overall, the literature supports further investigation into the relationship between social media use and mental health to inform the development of targeted Mental Health Awareness and Support Programs.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Rozzano Locsin's Technological Competency as Caring in Nursing Theory, Nola Pender's Health Promotion Model, and Sister Callista Roy's Adaptation Model. These theories explain that responsible social media use can support professional growth, promote healthy behaviors, and encourage effective coping with digital-related stress. Together, they provide the foundation for understanding the relationship between social media use and mental health and for developing a generation-sensitive Mental Health Awareness and Support Program.

Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by the Social Comparison Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Stress and Coping Theory, Job Demands–Resources Model, and Neuman Systems Model. The independent variable was social media use, while the dependent variable was mental health status. Generational cohort served as the moderating variable. Based on the findings, the study proposed a Mental Health Awareness and Support Program to promote digital wellness, responsible social media use, and psychological well-being among medical professionals.

INPUT

Social Media Use:	Dependent Variable:
• Frequency of Use	Mental Health Outcomes
• Purpose of Use	• Stress
• Content Exposure	• Anxiety
• Sleep-Related Use	• Burnout
	• Depression
Moderating Variables	• Sleep Disturbance
• Baby Boomers	
• Generation X	
• Millennials	
• Generation Z	

PROCESS

Assessment and Analysis

- Data Gathering
- Evaluation of Social Media Use and Mental Health
- Generational Comparison
- Coping Strategies
- Peer Support Program

OUTPUT

Mental Health Awareness and Support Program

- Support Program
- Mental Health Education
- Digital Well-being
- Stress Management

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationship between social media use and mental health among multi-generational medical professionals. It describes the research design, participants, sampling procedure, data collection process, research instrument, ethical considerations, and statistical analyses used to develop a proposed Mental Health Awareness and Support Program.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional design to examine the relationship between social media use and mental health among multi-generational medical professionals. It described respondents' characteristics, social media use, and mental

health status, determined their relationship, and compared findings across Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. The results served as the basis for a proposed Mental Health Awareness and Support Program.

Research Steps

The study was conducted in sequential phases, beginning with securing ethical and institutional approvals. Eligible participants provided informed consent before completing a structured questionnaire on demographic profile, social media use, and mental health status. Collected data were coded, analyzed using appropriate statistical tests, and interpreted to develop the proposed Mental Health Awareness and Support Program.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling from selected healthcare settings. A total of 150 licensed and non-licensed medical professionals from Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers participated. Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire after obtaining informed consent. All responses were treated confidentially and used solely for research purposes.

Data Analysis Methods

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe respondents' characteristics, social media use, and mental health status. Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between variables, while the independent-samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to identify differences among groups. All analyses used a 0.05 level of significance.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The study tested whether significant relationships and differences existed between social media use and mental health across generational groups. The questionnaire underwent expert content validation and pilot testing. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a value of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study relied on self-reported, cross-sectional data and therefore could not establish causality. Findings may not be generalizable because respondents came from selected healthcare settings, and workplace and personal factors were not fully controlled. Ethical approval, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and participants' right to withdraw were ensured throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the 150 respondents, most were Millennials and nurses with over ten years of work experience. Social media was mainly used for communication and professional learning. Stress was the most common mental health concern. A significant positive relationship was found between social media use and mental health ($r = 0.493$, $p < .001$), with younger

professionals reporting higher social media use. These findings support the development of a generation-sensitive Mental Health Awareness and Support Program.

SUMMARY

The study examined the relationship between social media use and mental health among multi-generational medical professionals. Respondents generally used social media for both professional and personal purposes, with stress identified as the primary mental health concern. A significant positive relationship was found, supporting the development of a Mental Health Awareness and Support Program.

CONCLUSIONS

Social media plays an important role in communication, learning, and professional collaboration among medical professionals. However, frequent or prolonged use was associated with changes in stress and well-being. The findings emphasize the need for a generation-sensitive Mental Health Awareness and Support Program that promotes digital wellness, stress management, emotional resilience, and responsible social.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthcare institutions should implement generation-sensitive mental health programs that promote digital wellness, stress management, and emotional resilience. Medical professionals are encouraged to practice responsible social media use and self-care. Future studies should include larger samples, diverse healthcare settings, and examine additional workplace and long-term mental health factors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Healthcare institutions should implement generation-sensitive mental health programs that promote digital wellness, stress management, and emotional resilience. Medical professionals should practice responsible social media use and self-care. Future studies should include larger samples, more diverse healthcare settings, and examine additional factors affecting mental health.

AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

The authors used artificial intelligence solely for language editing, grammar checking, organization, and manuscript improvement. All research design, data analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and the final manuscript remained the sole responsibility of the authors in accordance with academic integrity and ethical research standards.

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