Adolescents and Social Media Safety: A Guide for Nurse Practitioners

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Introduction: Going online has become a common occurrence for many adolescents. A Pew Research Center (2015) survey of youth between the ages of 13 and 17 years found that 92% of teens reported going online daily, and 71% reported using more than one social networking site during their time online (Lenhart, 2015). Social media and networking online has become a familiar environment for the youth of today. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that practitioners caring for adolescents assess for depression, bullying and risky behaviors during visits. The AAP also recommends addressing social media use, risks, and strategies to mitigate these risks with parents of adolescents at every well child visit (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013). These recommendations cover a number of content areas to address during an office visit, and the practitioner may improve efficiency by using evidence-based information to guide gathering a history and appropriate education provision.

Purpose: The purpose of this review is to examine existing evidence on social media safety, risks, predictors of online victimization and strategies for mitigating these risks for adolescents.

Method: This literature review comprised disciplines including nursing, psychology, criminology, education, business and technology to fully explore available evidence. The search was performed using Google Scholar and EBSCO Academic Search Complete in August 2018. EBSCO Academic Search Complete includes PsycINFO, CINAHL Complete, ERIC, and SocINDEX collections. Information gathering was guided by the PRISMA flowchart for tracking source documents. The search was limited to relevant, peer reviewed research in English, and no older than five years unless considered seminal work. Keywords and phrases included: Social media, social networking sites, cyber, online, safety, victimization, crime, education, teaching, prevention, intervention, adolescent, teen, teenager, youth, parent, adult, mediation, and prediction. Retained articles had to include information to answer the following questions. What are the risks adolescents face while using social media? How many adolescents are affected by online victimization? What are the predictors of being victimized while using social media? What mitigation strategies have been effective in reducing these risks? Are parental mitigation strategies effective?

Results: The initial search returned 2921 items, and of these, 81 abstracts were reviewed based on title and summary provided by the search engine. After excluding items that failed to include information to answer the questions for inclusion, 45 items remained. There is an abundance of empirical data available on the harms and benefits of social media use in adolescents, however, less evidence-based information exists on how to reduce these risks or change risk taking behavior. Among the risks faced by adolescents using social media, cyberbullying has dominated the discussion. In addition to cyberbullying, adolescents may also face legal consequences related to sharing inappropriate information about themselves and others, violation of copyright laws, and sharing evidence of criminal activity (Kim, Oglesby-Neal, & Mohr, 2017). Further risks include engaging in online risk-taking behaviors that increase target suitability for online predators. Future educational and employment opportunities of adolescents may be positively or negatively impacted by information available through social media searches (Nauen, 2017; Schaffer, 2018) The results of school-based education programs for social media safety have shown promising results in raising adolescent knowledge levels and intent to change online behavior. The literature review found little evidence that these adolescents made lasting changes in their online behavior based on these programs (Schaffer, 2018), or experienced a protective effect from cybervictimization (Álvarez-García, Pérez, González, & Pérez, 2015). There was strong evidence that parental mediation led to a change in adolescent online risk-taking behavior through co-viewing, discussion of content viewed, and joint decision making regarding online activities (Wang & Xing, 2018). Parents who had lower levels of perceived knowledge regarding social media safety reported less involvement in parental mitigation

strategies (Chang et al., 2016). The Routine Activities Theory was found to be an accurate predictor of online victimization (Näsi, Räsänen, Kaakinen, Keipi, & Oksanen, 2017). Online victimization could be predicted by examining three key areas: suitability of victim, exposure to a motivated offender, and lack of capable guardianship (Kalia & Aleem, 2017).

Conclusions: Practitioners should concentrate on the three main predictors of online victimization when assessing and educating adolescents and parents regarding social media safety. Parents should be encouraged to participate in co-viewing of their adolescent's online content on a regular basis. A dialogue should exist between the parent and adolescent regarding risk mitigation strategies. Educating the parent to provide information can increase participation in the process as self- efficacy increases. Increasing parental involvement in the education and monitoring of adolescent social media activities may lead to a reduction in adolescent risk- taking behaviors online.

Title:

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Abstract Summary:

This literature review examines evidence on online social media and networking safety among adolescents. Recommendations for how Nurse Practitioners can meet AAP recommendations for addressing these risks with parent education are provided.

Content Outline:

1. Introduction
   1. AAP recommendations
      1. Teach parents about social media safety.
      2. Should be part of the assessment for all adolescents.
      3. Create outreach programs in the community to deliver this information.
   2. Barriers facing practitioners.
      1. Broad subject matter.
      2. Time constraints in practice.
      3. Lack of knowledge on the subject.
      4. The subject is primarily studied by other disciplines (psychology, education, criminology and technology).
   3. Questions explored in the review.
      1. How extensive is social media use in the adolescent population?
      2. What are the risks faced by adolescents using social media?
      3. What are the predictors of online victimization?
      4. Effective risk mitigation strategies.
2. What are the risks faced by adolescents using social media?
   1. Legal risks.
   2. Cyberbullying.
   3. Online predators.
   4. Loss of future educational and employment opportunities.
3. What are the predictors of online victimization based on the Routine Activities Theory?
   1. Proximity to an offender.
   2. Being a suitable target.
   3. Lack of protection or guardianship.
4. Risk mitigation strategies.
   1. What did not work.
   2. What did work.
5. Conclusion
   1. Education should be targeted at parents.
   2. Practitioners need a comprehensive, simplified, and evidence-based set of recommendations to share with parents.
   3. The subject matter is too broad to be taught exclusively by practitioners.

4. The office setting should be a place to reinforce this information.
5. There is a need for more studies on the most effective method to deliver this information.

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Author Summary: Lee Yarber has spent the last two years working towards the completion of her Adult and Gerontological Primary Care Nurse Practitioner education. As part of her Doctoral project, she identified a need for an evidence based educational tool for practitioners to use when addressing social media safety with parents of adolescents. A literature review was performed to accurately identify the risks adolescents face online and strategies parents can use to lessen these risks.