

# College student 'Fear of missing out' (FoMO) associated with illicit behavior

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The fear of missing out (FoMO) on rewarding and fun experiences is something that most people feel at some point in life. Among college students, the degree to which someone experiences FoMO is associated

with their risk of participating in maladaptive behaviors including academic misconduct, drug and alcohol use, and breaking the law, according to a new study published this week in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Paul McKee of Southern Connecticut State University, U.S., and colleagues.

For many students, college is a major transition that can facilitate either psychological growth or maladaptive behaviors and [psychological problems](#). Previous studies have found an association between FoMO and disruptive/harmful social media use. A greater understanding of how FoMO influences individual behavior is important to reducing FoMO's [negative influence](#).

For the new study, 472 college students completed a hard copy questionnaire packet assessing FoMO levels, unethical and illegal behavior while in college, and demographic variables. The researchers analyzed this data both by using standard statistical approaches and by applying a supervised machine learning approach.

With the first analysis approach, the team discovered associations between FoMO and nearly all the behaviors they examined. Higher levels of FoMO were found to be correlated with higher rates of classroom incivility (p

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