

Cyberbullying linked with depression, emotional abuse

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Cyberbullying may exacerbate mental health conditions among adolescents, particularly teens who have experienced previous emotional abuse, according to new research presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in San Diego.

Cyberbullying is a common experience among adolescents and has received wide media attention. It has been linked to [mental health](#) consequences and suicide.

Researchers led by Samantha B. Saltz, M.D., Child and Adolescent Chief Resident, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, examined [cyberbullying](#) victimization among adolescent psychiatric inpatients and related it to [social media](#) use and histories of adverse early life experience. They collected data on social media use and cyberbullying among 50 psychiatric inpatients between the ages of 13 and 16.

Most participants engaged one or more times a day on at least one type of social media (Facebook 54 percent, Instagram 53 percent, chat rooms 33

percent, Twitter 30 percent). Ten participants (20 percent) had been victims of cyberbullying, while only three (6 percent) admitted to partaking in cyberbullying. Cyberbullying victims reported that several media outlets were used (Facebook 6/10, Instagram 6/10, Twitter 4/10, chat rooms 3/10). None of the victims reported bullying via email.

Cyberbullying was associated with symptoms of depression and dissociation, and with anger. Previous experience of emotional abuse was significantly correlated with cyberbullying. Other types of early life trauma, including physical and sexual abuse and physical and emotional neglect, were not associated with cyberbullying. Saltz and colleagues suggest educating adolescents about healthy use of technology may be helpful.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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