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Social Media's Impact on Mental Health in Children & Adolescents

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Social Media's Impact on Mental Health in Children & Adolescents

Georges Tahhan

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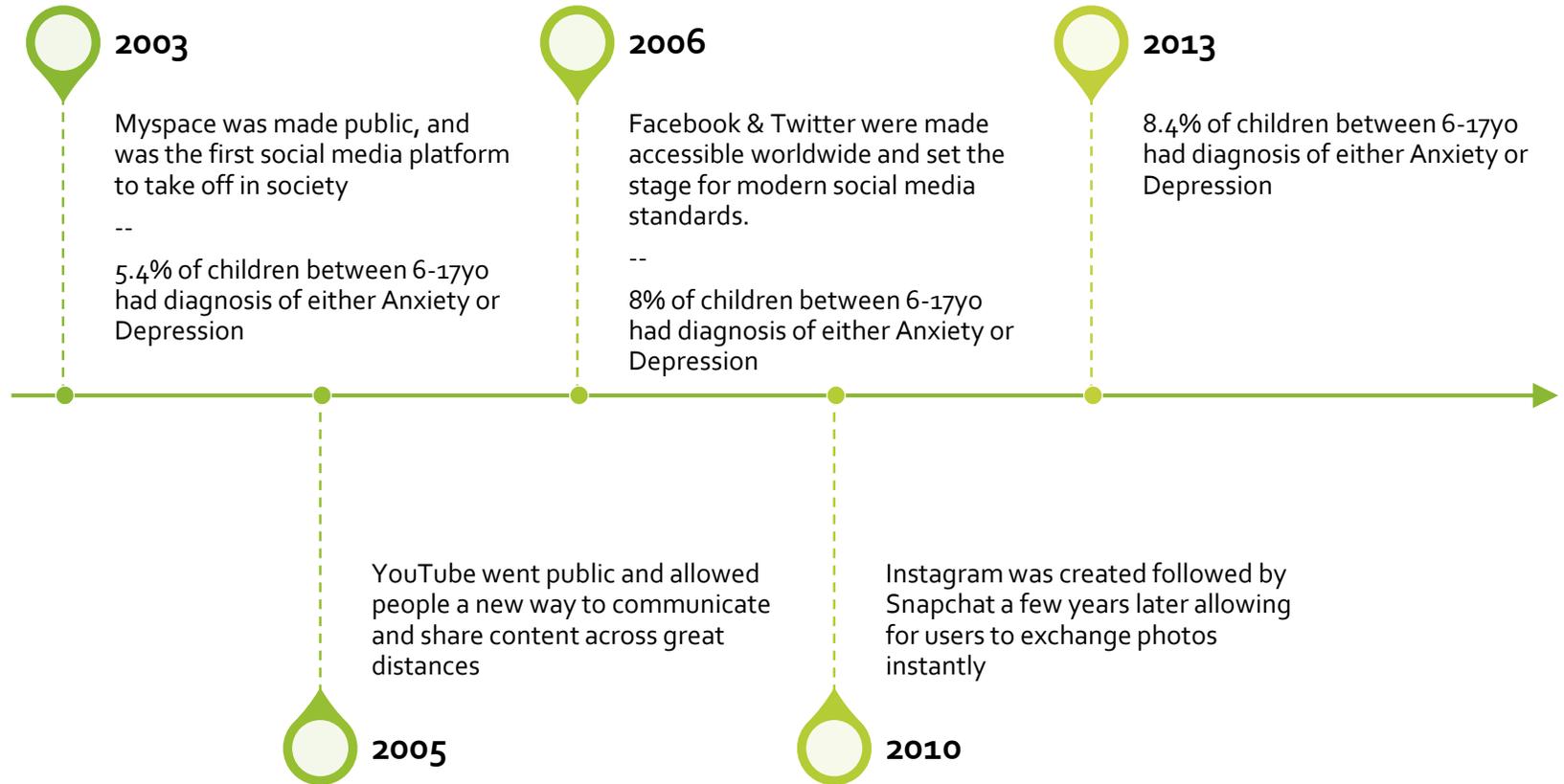
Plattsburgh, NY

Project Mentor: Maegan Cabrera, MD

Problem Identification

- 7.1% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 4.4 million) have diagnosed **anxiety**.
- 3.2% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 1.9 million) have diagnosed **depression**.
- Having another disorder is most common in children with depression: about 3 in 4 children aged 3-17 years with depression also have anxiety (73.8%) and almost 1 in 2 have behavior problems (47.2%).
- For children aged 3-17 years with anxiety, more than 1 in 3 also have behavior problems (37.9%) and about 1 in 3 also have depression (32.3%).
- For children aged 3-17 years with behavior problems, more than 1 in 3 also have anxiety (36.6%) and about 1 in 5 also have depression (20.3%).
- Diagnosis of depression and anxiety in children have increased steadily since 2003

Public Health Impact



Community Perspective

Allyson Oshiro, MD – Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Fellow

- A significant amount of inpatient admissions are based on issues stemming from smart phone use including:
 - Anxiety/Depression
 - Cyber-bullying
 - Sub-par sleep habits
 - Altercations w/ authority figures (parents, teachers, etc.)
- Smart phones/social media are relatively new technologies and need to be further evaluated to understand its effects on the mental health of children and adolescents

Peggy Bolster, RN – Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Director

- Children are having access to unlimited content without guidance or tools necessary to process novel information. This seems to derail important social development – such as simple social skills, healthy attachments and healthy self-image.
- Currently, there is a no electronics policy on the unit. The patients generally do fairly well without social media for several days – “perhaps it’s a welcome break that they would not/could not otherwise admit.
- “We are seeing more and more children on our unit who are simply depressed, overwhelmed and hopeless because of the world they inhabit – the world of social media. They cannot escape, don’t want to and crave it yet they struggle to understand it, process it and compartmentalize it. It’s very difficult for them to have any perspective on it because it is all they know.”

Intervention

- Designed a handout for the general public to information, resources, and general tips regarding social media usage and its mental health implications.
- Objectives of handout:
 - Explain how social media effects on the mental health of developing children and adolescents
 - Provide guidelines for parents to help manage their children's smartphone/social media usage
 - Provide healthy alternative activities to perform with their children
 - Provide resources for improving mental health care
 - Visually summarize key points

Response

- The presentation to the staff at CVPH Family Medicine Clinic was an efficient and effective means to raise awareness to a very common and growing concern in our community.
- The handout was a great tool for health care providers to use in future patient encounters to provide succinct information regarding their children's mental health care.

Effectiveness & Limitations

Effectiveness:

- How to measure the effectiveness of this handout
 - Create a short questionnaire that patients fill out before and after reading the handout
 - Questions should incorporate objectives of the handout (on slide 5) to determine if the objectives were met

Limitations:

- Patients who can't read or don't read English would not be able to access this resource
- Information only reaches those who are handed the handout which means only a small subset of patients are benefiting from the information

Future Interventions & Projects

1. Keep raising awareness of mental health by providing continuing education to health care staff
2. Have a set of questions regarding mental health to ask patients during their well check visits
3. Incorporate the patient handout into the EMR so that physicians can select it to be printed and given to the patient with their visit summary
4. Creating and teaching a class to elementary school children about the importance of proper phone and social media usage
5. Providing general support to mothers and fathers on how to navigate the modern

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Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This project is a requirement for the Family Medicine clerkship. It will be stored on the Dana Library ScholarWorks website. Your name will be attached to your interview and you may be cited directly or indirectly in subsequent unpublished or published work. The interviewer affirms that he/she has explained the nature and purpose of this project. The interviewee affirms that he/she has consented to this interview.

Consented: Yes

Name: Allyson Oshiro, MD

Name: Peggy Bolster, RN