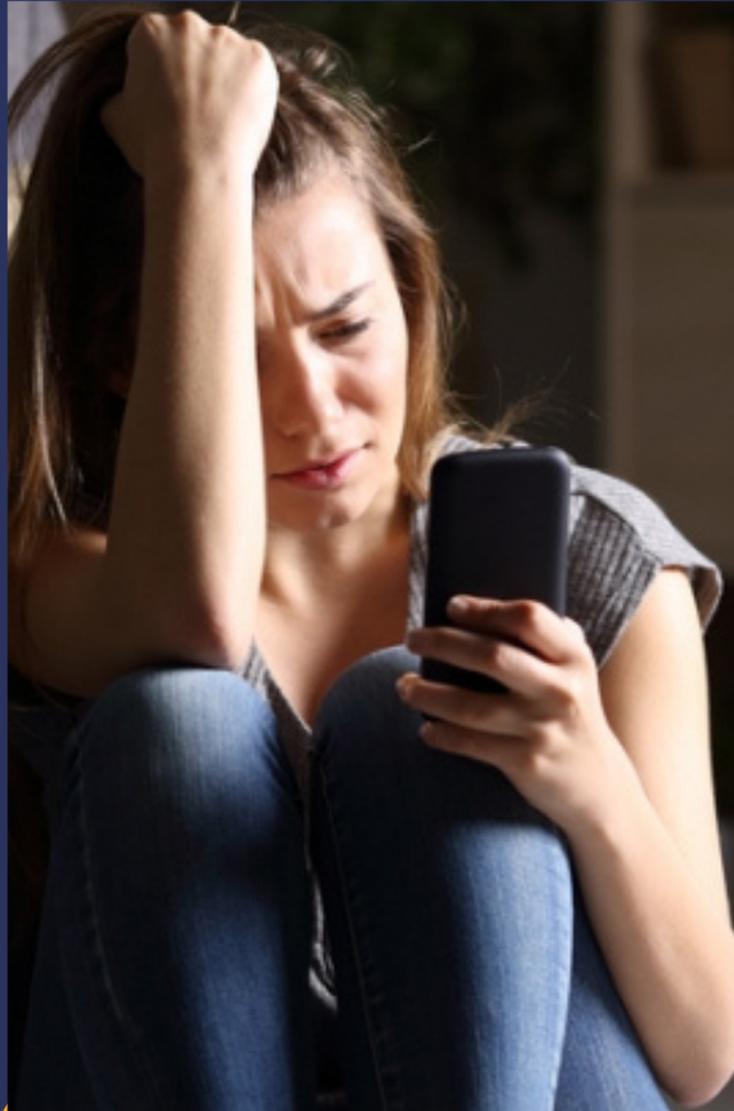


**VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL MODEL
UNITED NATIONS
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**THE EFFECTS OF RAPID
TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT
ON TEENAGE MENTAL HEALTH**

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Letter from the chairs (Alen Milakovic and Hannah Baskin)

Letter from the chair:

Hi everyone!

My name is Alen Milakovic, and I am a 17-year-old IB program attendee from Bosnia and Herzegovina! MUNs have become an integral part of everyday activity for me, as they have given me the ability to better understand political currents globally, and meet amazing people from all over the world. I consider myself to be a person of many interests, ranging from literature and philosophy, to linguistics, all the way to fashion and chemistry. That being said, it is an immense honor to be acting as the WHO Chair!

Regards,

Alen Milakovic

Chair | World Health Organization

Letter from the Co-chair:

Hi Delegates!

My name is Hannah Baskin and I am so excited to be the Co-Chair of the WHO for VIMUN 8! I am a sophomore who lives in New Jersey and I have been a member of the Model UN clubs in my school for three years. While I have participated in conferences as a delegate, this is my first time serving as a chair. I am so grateful to have this opportunity and can already tell it is going to be an amazing experience. I think that Model UN is such a great activity for all students to participate in, as it helps them to gain knowledge and perspective about real-world issues. Additionally, it values skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, and public speaking, which are all applicable outside of the conference as well. As this is an international conference, you will also have the opportunity to speak with students from all over the world and hopefully make some new MUN friends!

I am your co-chair and I will be helping to run this committee. I hope that you all have an enjoyable experience preparing for and participating in this conference. I look forward to meeting everyone and hearing all that you bring to the debates and discussions we will have about this topic, which is a really fascinating one. This committee is going to be such a fun and memorable one and I cannot wait for the conference.

Good luck!

Hannah Baskin.

Co-Chair | World Health Organization

FORUM: World Health Organization

ISSUE: The Effects of Rapid Technology Development on Teenage Mental Health

Definition of Key Terms

Social media

Social media can be defined as interactive technologies including websites and applications which will allow the users to create, share or exchange information, contents and ideas and to participate in social networking.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying, also known as cyber harassment, is a form of bullying practiced by electronic means and is mostly done by sending threatening messages to the victim. Nowadays, cyber-bullying has gotten very common among teenagers as a result of technology development. Cyber-bullying can result in many dangerous mental illnesses and the committee should also address ways in order to mitigate the effects of cyberbullying.

OCED

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development was founded in 1961 and currently has 37 member countries. The intergovernmental organization aims to stimulate economic progress and world trade within its member countries.

Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills can be defined as someone's ability to interact and communicate with others. Some of the most important skills include but are not limited to verbal and non-verbal communications, listening skills, negotiation, problem solving and decision making. Additionally, the process of learning and developing these skills is called socialization which is an important part of children and teenagers lives. The increasing use of technology has widely affected children's ability to learn these skills. More information can be found on the background guide.

Introduction to the topic

Advantages of technology development

The use of technology is rapidly expanding in the twenty-first century and it has started to influence every aspect of our lives. Technology development has had many positive impacts on our everyday lives. As an example we are now able to easily communicate with every and to access necessary information, support and help at our fingertips. Moreover, we are now able to do certain tasks at a very higher speed and right now, technology has increased the productivity of all the industries.

The current situation and the negative effect of technology on teenagers

For children living in the twenty-first century, social media and technology have become an important part of their lives. Reports have shown that in the year 2015, a typical 15 year old teenager, living in a country that is a member of OCED, has been able to use social media since age ten and has spent hours on it. It is also important to note that these statistics have grown since 2015. Additionally, right now, these cellphones are not borrowed from a family member and are owned by the children themselves and the cell phone ownership among 13-17 year old teengares has drastically increased over the past few years. As a result, parents are having a harder time monitoring the children's activities since more than 45 percent are constantly online and 97 percent of them have an active social media account.

Although rapid technology development has improved many qualities of our lives, it has certain disadvantages, most of them being highly destructive for kids and teenagers. Research reports have shown that higher levels of screen time and social media usage have a direct impact of teengates mental and physical health and are associated with increased risk of mental illnesses

such as depression and anxiety, as well as reduced physical activity. These effects can have a negative impact on their development and social skills. Regrettably recent research has shown that internet addiction among teengares is extending at a notable speed. Internet addiction is strongly linked to some important concerns such as depression, anxiety, low



self-esteem and loneliness. Other research has shown that it can eventually lead to isolation. 2017 reports have shown that children and teenagers having a higher screen time are three times more likely to feel isolated than those who have a lower screen-time. The increasing use of social media has also disturbed sleep patterns and it has even led to activities such as cyber bullying. Some of the most famous social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok and Facebook are now a risk factor for increased levels of depression.

As stated before, attention difficulties are one of the most important consequences of the increasing technology use among teenagers. Teenagers' brains are still developing and due to the use of internet, there is a high chance for their brains to adopt an internet approach to thinking, which means that their brains will quickly scan and process information from different sources. On the contrary, other generations had the chance to spend a great amount of time reading or participating in different activities which require them to greatly focus. Right now, teenagers' brains are getting trained to rapidly change and very little need for imagination. Increased aggression is another concern which is heavily related to the use of social media. This aggression is caused by the violence found in different video games and right now, teenagers are more likely to get into arguments with their parents, teachers and friends and are highly impacted by violence.

Interpersonal interactions and emotional development

Interpersonal interactions are another important issue and are highly limited due to technology development. Right now, children are continuously armed with technology and as a result, they are unable to navigate an interaction with a friend or family member. Navigating social situations is a critical skill which can be very useful in solving long-term problems. Technology and social media can also act as a short-term shelter for children who are dealing with problems such as family arguments or not fitting in at school, but it is important to note that they will need navigating skills for long-term problems in adulthood.



Emotional development is an important stage of children and teenagers lives. Peer interactions and explorations and different types of plays have an important on teaching children skills such as empathy, sympathy, problem solving skills, critical thinking and curiosity and in general what is called “people's skills” are developed at this time. Regrettably, screen time is now replacing all these interactions and as a result teenagers nowadays have developed a sense of detachment from others’ feelings and emotions.

The impact of social media on school and academics

Marcia Blondel, an english teacher has stated that *“lack the attention span to read assignments on their own, due to cell phones and social media. You can’t become a good writer by watching YouTube, texting and emailing a bunch of abbreviations”* Nowadays, teenagers' brains are trained to constantly switch between tasks and are not able to focus on a single important task. With the lack of attention and other mental and physical damages caused by this issue, the increasing use of technology has a notable negative impact on teenagers academics. Additionally, Michael Rich who is the executive director of the Center of Media and Child Health in Boston has described the current situation as *“a generation of kids in front of screens whose brains are going to be wired differently”*

Physical effects of social media development on teenagers

It is also important to note that technology development will also have a long-lasting impact on teenagers' physical health and physical and mental health, two concepts which are heavily related to each other. Tools such as computers and smartphones can hold a person's attention for a long period of time resulting in eye strain including blurred vision and dry eyes. Poor posture is another physical health concern which can even lead to musculoskeletal issues. Sleep problems are another issue and the blue light emitted by technological devices will have a damaging effect on teenagers brain.

Conclusion

It is important to note that most of these effects are long-lasting. Research has shown that one out of five children between the age of 13-18 will suffer from a serious mental illness, of which 11 percent are mood disorders, 10 percent are behavior disorders and 8 percent anxiety are disorders. Although not all these issues are not technology related, technology and the increasing use of social media does have devastating effects on these statistics. That is why The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that

children and adolescents should have approximately two hours of screen time. Additionally, it discourages any screen time by children who are under two years old.

Past International Actions

There had not been many international actions taken regarding the damaging effects of technology on teenage mental health and in general regarding the increasing use of social media however it is important to note that different countries have implemented different guidelines regarding this issue but there has not been an international legislation and guidelines about it. This shows the urgency of this matter.

World Mental Health Day

The world mental health day is an international day with the purpose of mental health awareness and education. It also aims to break the stigma regarding this issue. The day was first celebrated in 1992 after the creation of the World Federation for Mental Health. The following organization is an international mental health organization with members from 150 members around the world.

QARMAS(Questions a Resolution Must Answer)

1. Is there a need for an international agreement to be created regarding this issue? What is the role of the United Nations and the governments?
2. How can the international community raise global awareness regarding the devastating effects of social media on teenage mental health?
3. What are the actions that need to be taken individually, nationally and internationally?
4. Can the international community totally tackle this issue? If not how can the international community mitigate the effects of technology development on teenage mental health?
5. What are the roles of families and schools regarding this issue?
6. Is there a way to properly monitor social media use of teenagers with respecting their privacy?

Possible solutions

As stated before, most of the devastating effects of technology development on teenage mental health are long-lasting. This shows the urgency of finding cautionary

solutions in order to mitigate these effects. Some of the possible solutions regarding the issue are as follow:

- Raising general awareness about the effect of technology and social media on teenage mental health and ways to mitigate it
- Different discussion with children and teenagers regarding safe and healthy media use
- Limiting the amount of screen time for children by adding parental controls since it is impossible and not realistic to avoid technology at all forms
- Finding alternatives to social media such as different extracurriculars or parent-child bonding activities
- Making the child less dependent on technology and to prioritize other activities
- Creation of international agreements regarding this issue that are followed by the countries
- More national and international events regarding this issue with the focus of raising awareness among families and teenagers
- Specific guidelines for schools regarding technology usage

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