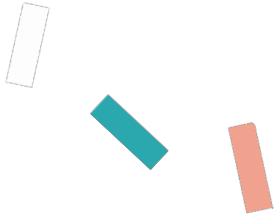
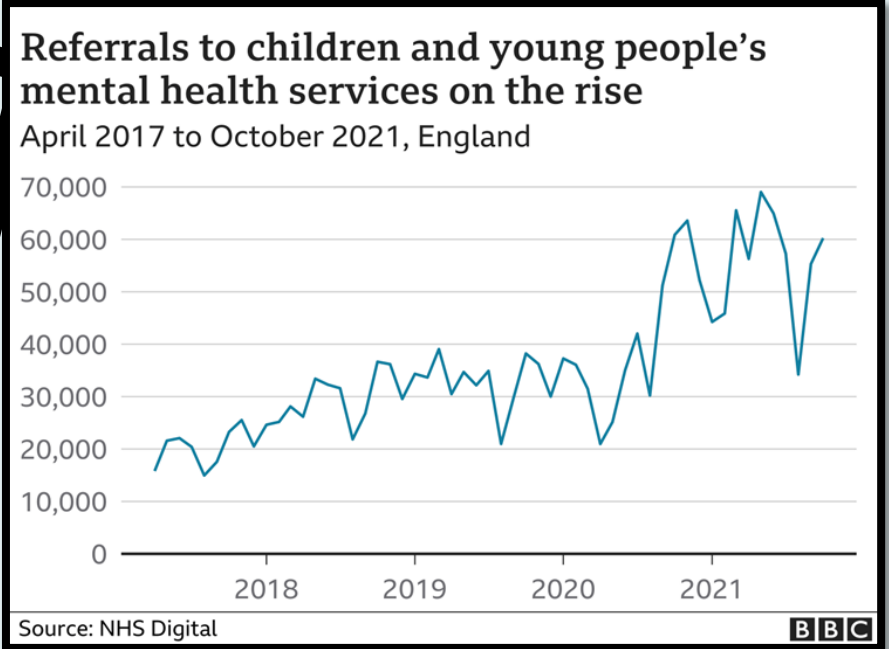

Exploring the longitudinal impact of social media on adolescent mental health: Findings from the UK Longitudinal Household Study



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Context



Background

- Social media use has been linked with depression, anxiety, psychological distress in young people in cross-sectional studies (Best et al., 2014)
- Limited longitudinal evidence to establish causal link (Keles et al., 2020; Marino et al., 2018)
- Concern about the role social media might play in making mental health problems worse
- Need to understand this relationship to inform interventions.

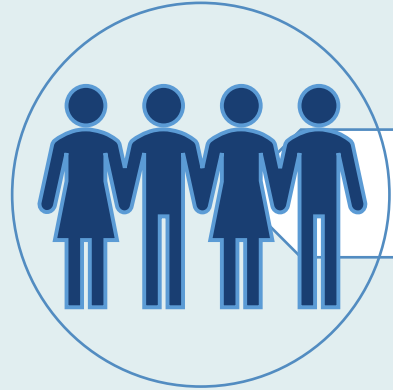


Aims

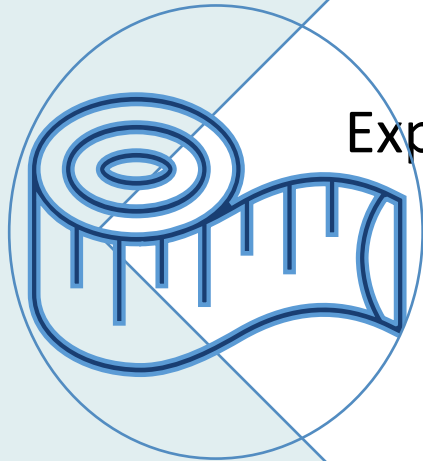


1. **Understand the longitudinal relationship between social media use and mental health**
 2. **The mediating role of important factors related to mental health**
 - **Self-esteem**
 - **Social connectedness**
-

Methods



3,228 10-15 year olds from Understanding Society 2009-2019.



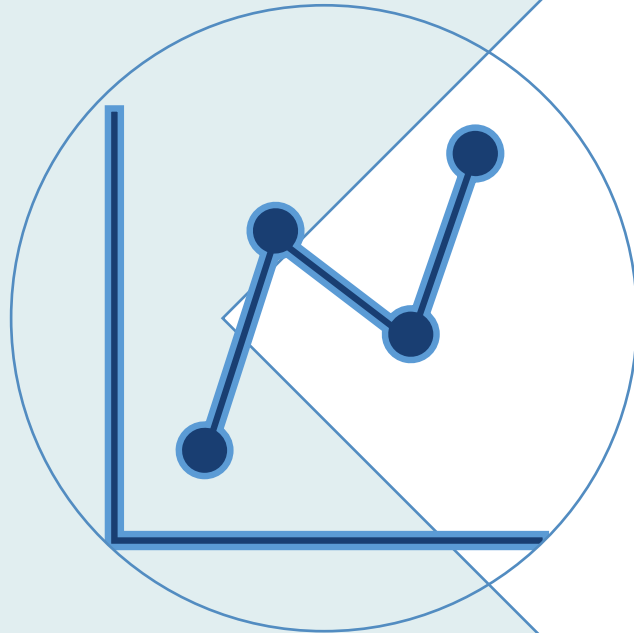
Outcome: Mental health 14-15 – SDQ Total Difficulties

Exposure: Number of hours on social media 12-13

Mediators: Self-esteem 13-14,
Social connectedness 13-14

Covariates: Sex, ethnicity, year participated,
mental health and household data 12-13

Methods – analysis

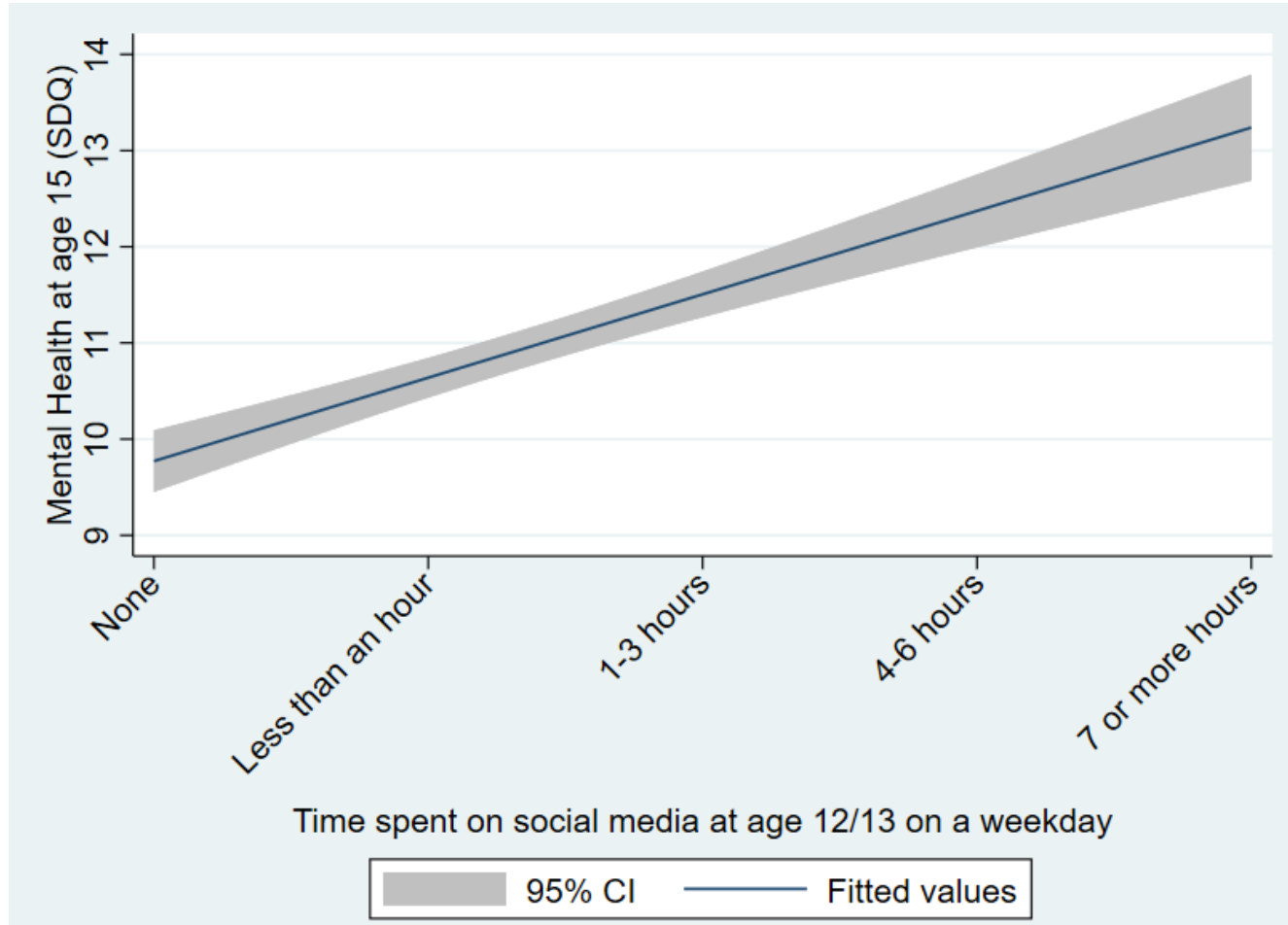


Linear regression – does social media use at age 12-13 predict mental health at age 14-15

Path analysis - structural equation modelling investigated the mediation pathways

Sensitive analysis with imputed data

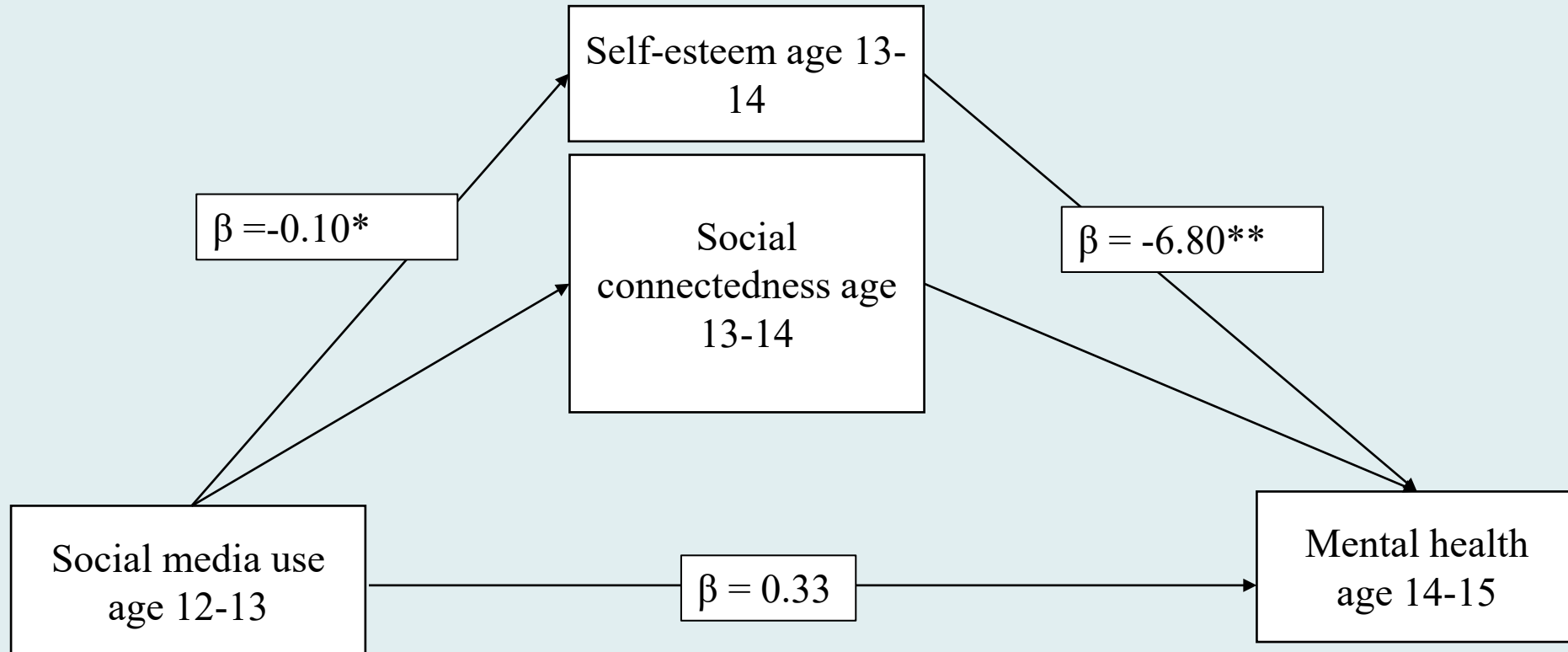
Results - regression



Non-significant linear trend showing more time spent on social media was related to poorer mental health ($n=2,603$, $b=0.21$, $p=0.52$) after controlling for covariates.

Poorer mental health at 12-13 and taking part in the survey later accounted for relationship

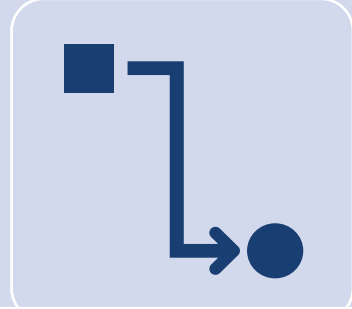
Results – mediation (unadjusted data)



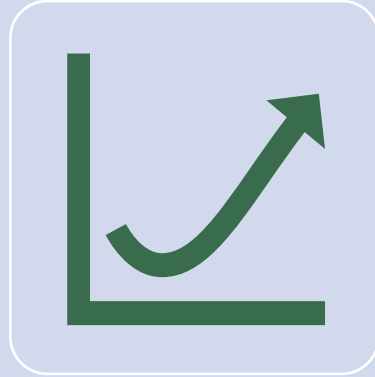
Limitations

Measures

Conclusions



Little evidence to suggest a longitudinal relationship between social media use and mental health



Reducing time spent on social media alone may not improve mental health



Consider the role of self-esteem & how we use social media



Thank you for listening
Please contact me here



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