Background Three billion people, around 40% of the world's population, use online social media.(defendernetwork.com, n.d.) Two studies involving more than 700 students found that depressive symptoms, such as low mood and feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness, were linked to the quality of online interactions.Loneliness A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine last year surveyed 7,000 19- to 32-year-olds and found that those who spend the most time on social media were twice as likely to report experiencing social isolation, which can include a lack of a sense of social belonging, engagement with others, and fulfilling relationships.A number of studies have been done on the effects of social media; these can give us an idea of how these platforms could be affecting us. Stress People use social media to discuss everything from customer service to politics, but the downside to this is that our feeds often resemble an endless stream of stress.Mood In 2014, researchers in Austria found that participants reported lower moods after using Facebook for 20 minutes compared to those who just browsed the internet.These researchers assessed the emotional content of over a billion status updates from more than 100 million Facebook users between 2009 and 2012.Twitter was found to be a significant contributor to this stress because it increases awareness of other people's stress.Overall, the researchers concluded that social media use was linked to lower levels of stress.Researchers found higher levels of depressive symptoms among those who reported having more negative interactions.A similar study conducted in 2016 involving 1,700 people found a much higher risk of depression and anxiety among people who used social media platforms the most.In 2015, researchers at the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C. aimed to find out if social media causes more stress than it relieves.Research has found that this can inhibit the body's production of the hormone melatonin, which facilitates sleep.Last year, researchers from the University of Pittsburgh asked 1,700 18-to 30-year-olds about their social media and sleeping habits.Spending more time on social media, the researchers said, could displace face-to-face interaction and make people feel excluded.In the survey of 1,800 people, women reported being more stressed than men.However, Twitter also acted as a way to cope with stress; the more women used it, the less stressed they were.Sleep Humans used to spend their evenings in darkness, but now we are surrounded by artificial lighting all day and night.They found a link with sleep problems, and they concluded that blue light from electronic devices was part of the cause.However, the evidence does suggest that social media affects people differently, depending on many factors.The same effect was not found for men who, according to the researchers, had a more distant relationship with social media.Reasons for this include cyberbullying, having a distorted view of other people's lives, and feeling like time spent on social media is a waste.In other words, if you lie in bed at night checking Facebook and Twitter, you may have trouble sleeping.As with many other modern-day temptations, excessive use for some people may produce negative effects.On the other hand, it would be wrong to say that social media is a universally bad thing because it does bring a number of benefits to our livesPeople spend an average of two hours every day on social media platforms, according to some reports.That breaks down to around half a million posts and photos shared every minute.A good or bad mood may also spread between people on social media, according to researchers from the University of California.Conclusions It is clear that in many areas of social media research, not enough is known to draw many strong conclusions.With social media playing such a big

part in our lives, it is important to consider how it can affect our mental health and well–being.The study suggested that people felt that way because they saw it as a waste of time.