



Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Health

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How this research started

- Patients in my clinic
 - MySpace as a main hobby
 - Facebook as a source of stress
 - MySpace as a major influence



Social networking web sites (SNSs)

- Popular among adolescents
 - >90% of teens have Internet access
 - Most report daily use
 - 95-97% of college students report ownership of a SNS profile
 - SNSs are replacing email



Social networking web sites (SNSs)

Components

- **Personal web profile**
 - Personal pictures
 - Journal entries and blogs
 - Favorites
 - Surveys
- **Communication**
 - Email
 - All email sent from profile to profile within website system
 - Instant Messaging
 - Publicly posted comments



**Networks
created via
Friending**

What we've learned so far

Display of health risk behaviors on SNS is common

- 500 randomly selected public MySpace profiles of 18-year-olds
 - Substance use 41%
 - Alcohol 37%
 - Tobacco 13%
 - Drugs 10%
 - Sex 24%
 - Violence 14%
 - **Any of these 54%**

Displays contain rich data

- Examples from teen profiles



Home Browse Search Invite Film Mail Blog Fa
Cl

Boi I'm Classy...Not Nasty

["If You Want My Number How To Respect A Women Cause Boi I'm Classy...Not Nasty"](#)

Female
19 years old
Southern Ave,
Washington DC

United States



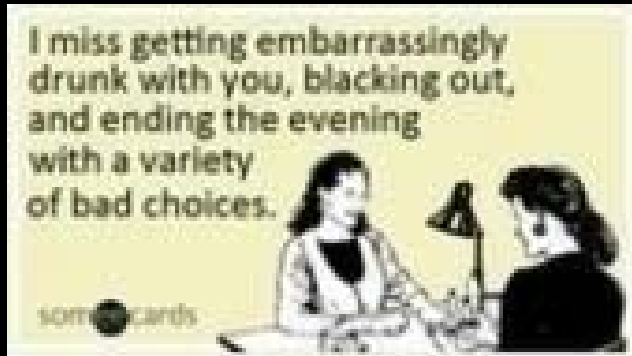
Last Login:
4/17/2007

[View My: Pics | Videos](#)

Category of reference	Example from Web profile
Sexual behavior	Listed “sex” as a hobby
Alcohol use	“Friday night I drank until I pissed 80 proof.”
Tobacco use	Answered survey question “how do you deal with stress?” with “Cigarettes, man”
Drug use	“My favorite Friday night date is Mary Jane.”
Violence	“And if you think you’re a playa I’ll kick your ass.”

Display of health risk behaviors on SNS is common

- 300 public Facebook profiles of 18-year-olds
- Substance use 76%
 - Alcohol 73%
 - Tobacco 9%
 - Drugs 18%
- Wanting to quit 0.6%
- Sex 24%



Status update: *“Jim has been drunk for 48 hours straight”*

Friend’s reply: *“Way to go jim!”*

Data we collect has similarities with other self-report studies

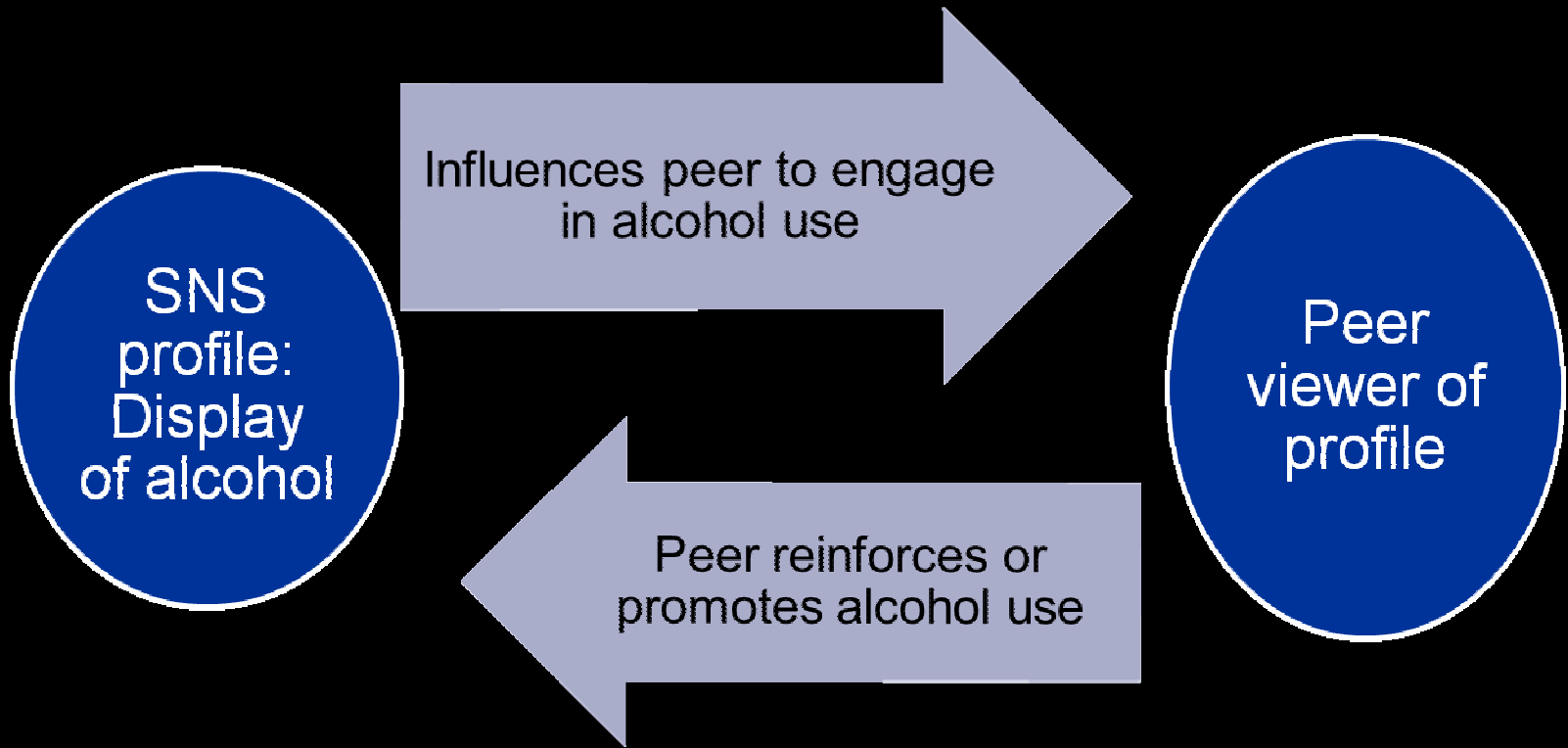
- Risk/protective
 - Adolescents who display religion are less likely to display sex
 - Adolescents who display sports involvement are less likely to display drugs
- Prevalence of alcohol displays among students varies by university and friends
 - Reflection of the culture, environment, friendship network

What data can you obtain?

- Who
- What
 - Feelings about what
 - How what may have occurred
- When
 - And for how long
- With whom
- Reactions from others

What does a display mean?

- Engagement in a behavior
- Consideration of engagement in a behavior
- Bragging/boasting



Display has impact

- Influencing other teens
 - *“I don’t think it matters whether a kid has drunk or not, if he talks about it on MySpace it could get other kids to drink”*
- Influencing friendship decisions
 - *“So I met this kid in class and then looked him up on Facebook, saw a bunch of pot leaves on his page, didn’t know he was into that, so next class I sat someplace else, I’m not into that shit.”*

Display has impact

- Influencing dating partners
 - *“If I look up a girl on Facebook that I am going out with, and I see sexual references, to me that means sexual activity is around the corner”*

What we are working on

- What is the validity of the displayed information?
 - Associations between display of alcohol and self-reported alcohol use
 - Associations between display of depressive symptoms and score on depression scale

What we are working on

- How can we use all the tools these sites can offer?
 - Depression symptoms: 26%
 - Depression symptoms displayed in a manner consistent with DSMIV criteria for MDE: 3%

What we hope to learn next

- How can we use this information?
 - Identify adolescents at risk
 - Use as bridge to obtaining further evaluation and treatment
 - Who could identify?
 - The 3 P's as possibilities
 - » Professionals
 - » Parents
 - » Peers

What we hope to learn next

- How can we use this information?
 - Ongoing monitoring/communication with specific patient populations
 - Recovering substance users
 - Mental health
 - Chronic illness

What we hope to learn next

- How can we use this information?
 - Tailored messaging
 - Based on content on a profile
 - Spread via a network

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www.pediatrics.wisc.edu/research/moreno



Questions?

OMG!

