

Social Research Call

Title:

Growing Up Kind: Neural Markers Of Prosocial Development And The Effects Of Social Media



Acronym: KiNDMe

Project leader: Inês Mares

Host organisation: William James Center for Research (WJCR), ISPA, Lisboa, Portugal

Main purpose of the project: We will characterise the development of prosocial behaviour during adolescence and early adulthood and identify the positive or negative role/s that social media has in shaping prosocial behaviour. We will further test a novel theoretical mechanism in which social reward sensitivity might underpin an association between social media usage and prosocial behaviour.

Design/methodology/approach: The project comprises two experimental Work Packages that make use of well-established behavioural and neural experimental paradigms, as well as a comprehensive set of questionnaires. Used paradigms will obtain multiple measures of prosocial behaviour and associate them with social media usage allowing us to fully characterize developmental trajectories between 13 and 25 years of age.

Potential results: Our novel findings will help to identify critical periods of prosocial development to target with educational and parental intervention. We will clarify the contribution of social media consumption on prosocial behavior, through reliable and implicit neural markers, providing the foundation for evidence-based guidelines for parents, educators, and policy makers.

Social relevance of the research: Insights into the development of prosocial behavior can provide an evidence base for those seeking to promote emotional well-being, better academic achievement, and increased civic contribution in adolescence. Researching the impact of social media on prosocial behaviour is increasingly relevant due to the prevalence of social media use in late childhood and early adolescence.

Originality/value of the project: We will use state-of-the-art neuroscience methods and analysis to reveal the underpinnings of prosocial behaviour, reward sensitivity, and their association with each other and social media consumption. This would be the first use of such neural measures to tackle this complex set of inter-related processes.