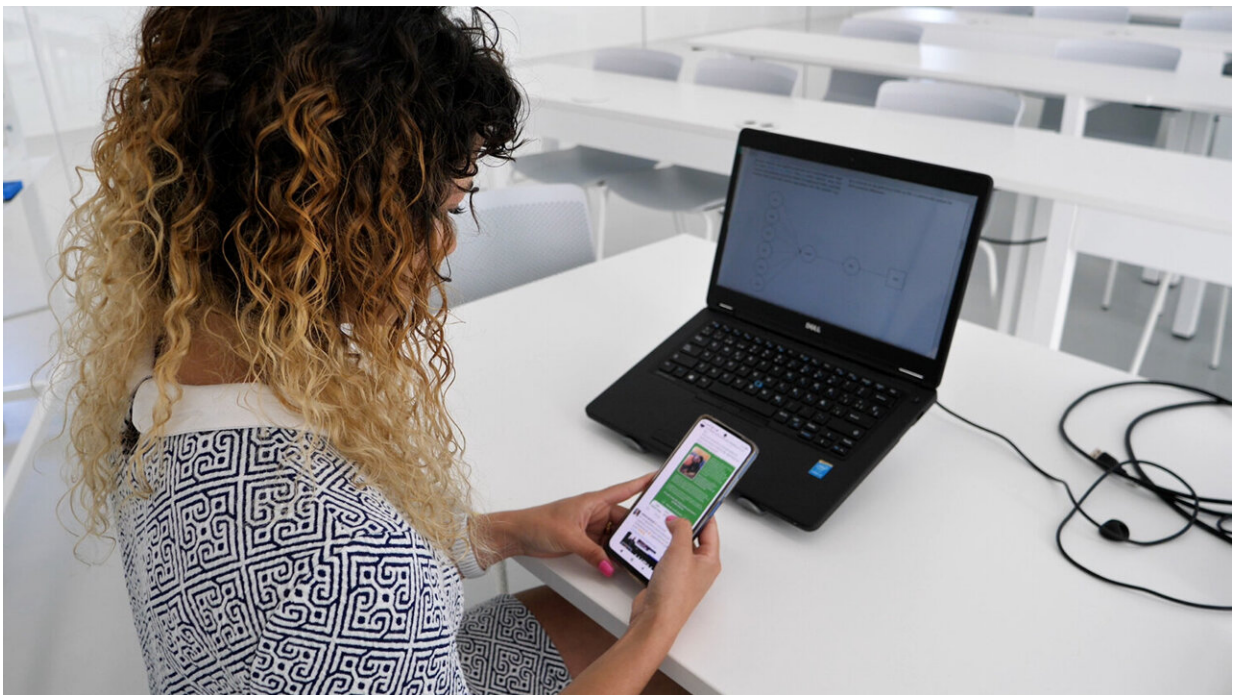


# Scientists study the mediating role of 'FoMO' given the trend towards 'problematic smartphone use' among adolescents

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The researcher at the Department of Social Psychology of the University of Malaga Christiane Arrivillaga has participated in an international study conducted at the University of Toledo (Ohio, USA) that aims to analyze how emotion dysregulation and FoMO, that is, the fear of missing out, together with a need to stay online to know what other people are doing, serve as factors to predict the possible problematic smartphone use among young people. Credit: University of Malaga

Researcher at the Department of Social Psychology of the University of Malaga Christiane Arrivillaga has participated in an international study conducted at the University of Toledo that aims to analyze how emotion dysregulation and FoMO—that is, the fear of missing out—together with a need to stay online to know what other people are doing, serve as factors to predict the possible problematic smartphone use among young people.

According to this paper, with results published in *Addictive Behaviors*, having difficulty in [emotion regulation](#), such as lack of emotional clarity and awareness, emotion denial, etc., increases the probability of feeling FoMO, which may increase the risk of an excessive and problematic use of mobile devices.

Research was conducted with nearly 350 undergraduate students from the midwestern United States. It evidences that difficulty in controlling impulses when feeling [negative emotions](#) is the most relevant factor of emotion regulation among [young people](#) that explains higher levels of FoMO.

"Social media show on screen near real-time experiences that the device user is not part of, making them feel uncomfortable and uneasy about not being there in that moment," says Arrivillaga.

This study demonstrates, therefore, that excessive smartphone use may be based on an unsatisfied psychological need that is related to a deep fear of social rejection.

The expert assures that the best way to "cushion" these effects is by "training" the [emotional intelligence](#) through strategies that improve emotional attention based on the identification of physical alteration indicators, together with regulation strategies, such as breathing, to avoid impulsive reactions.

In this respect, the researcher adds that having difficulty in controlling impulses is not strictly the same as being impulsive, which is a [personality trait](#), "so efforts should be focused on providing people with tools to help them manage the most negative moods, which in turn may help reduce the FoMO and, thus, the problematic smartphone use and its associated consequences."

**More information:** Christiane Arrivillaga et al, Emotion dysregulation factors associated with problematic smartphone use severity: The mediating role of fear of missing out, *Addictive Behaviors* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2023.107708](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2023.107708)

Provided by University of Malaga

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