



# Social Media Use and Depression Among Undergraduate Students



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## Introduction

- Everyday individuals spend countless hours throughout the day on various Social networking platforms (i.e.: Facebook), microblogging apps (i.e.: Twitter) and content sharing apps (i.e.: Instagram, Snapchat) from the moment they wake up to the moment they fall asleep.
- The number of social media users worldwide in 2019 is around 3.484 billion which will continue to rise.<sup>1</sup> When it came to college students, more than 98% of students use social media with over 27% of them spending more than 6 hours on social media a week.<sup>2</sup>

## Objective

To determine if greater frequency in the screen time of social media usage is associated with an increase in depression among college students.

## Methods

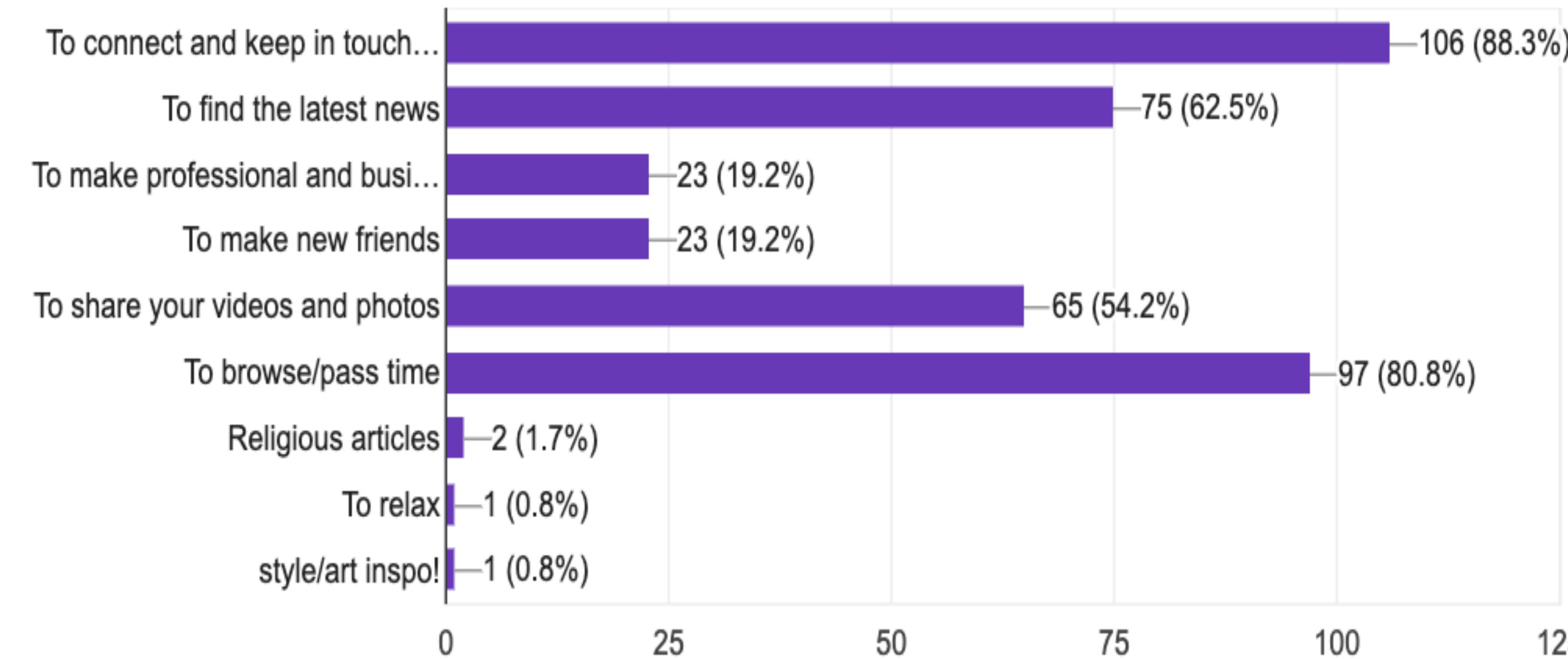
Developed a cross-sectional online survey asking about student's social media usage and how they feel after using it

Survey was distributed in Spring of 2021 using:

- UCSD student Facebook groups
- UCSD Public Health email announcements
- Total of a 120 responses

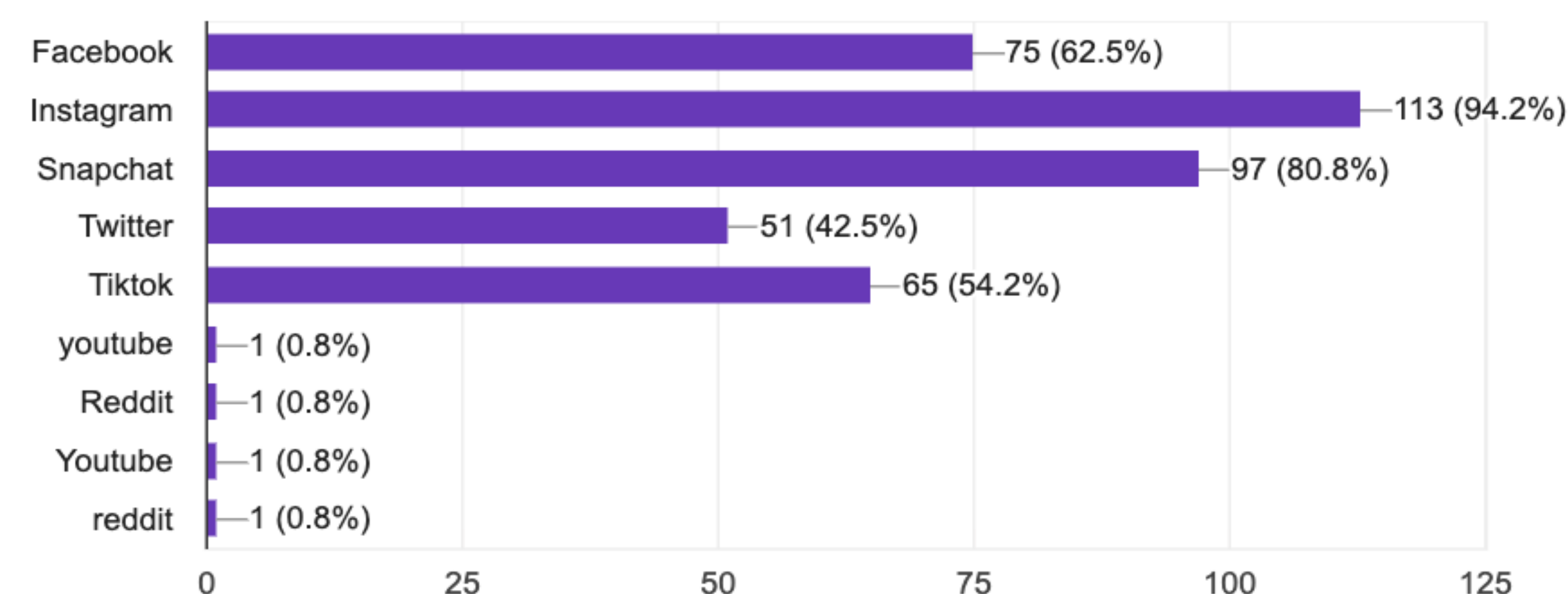
## Results

Main reason for using social media



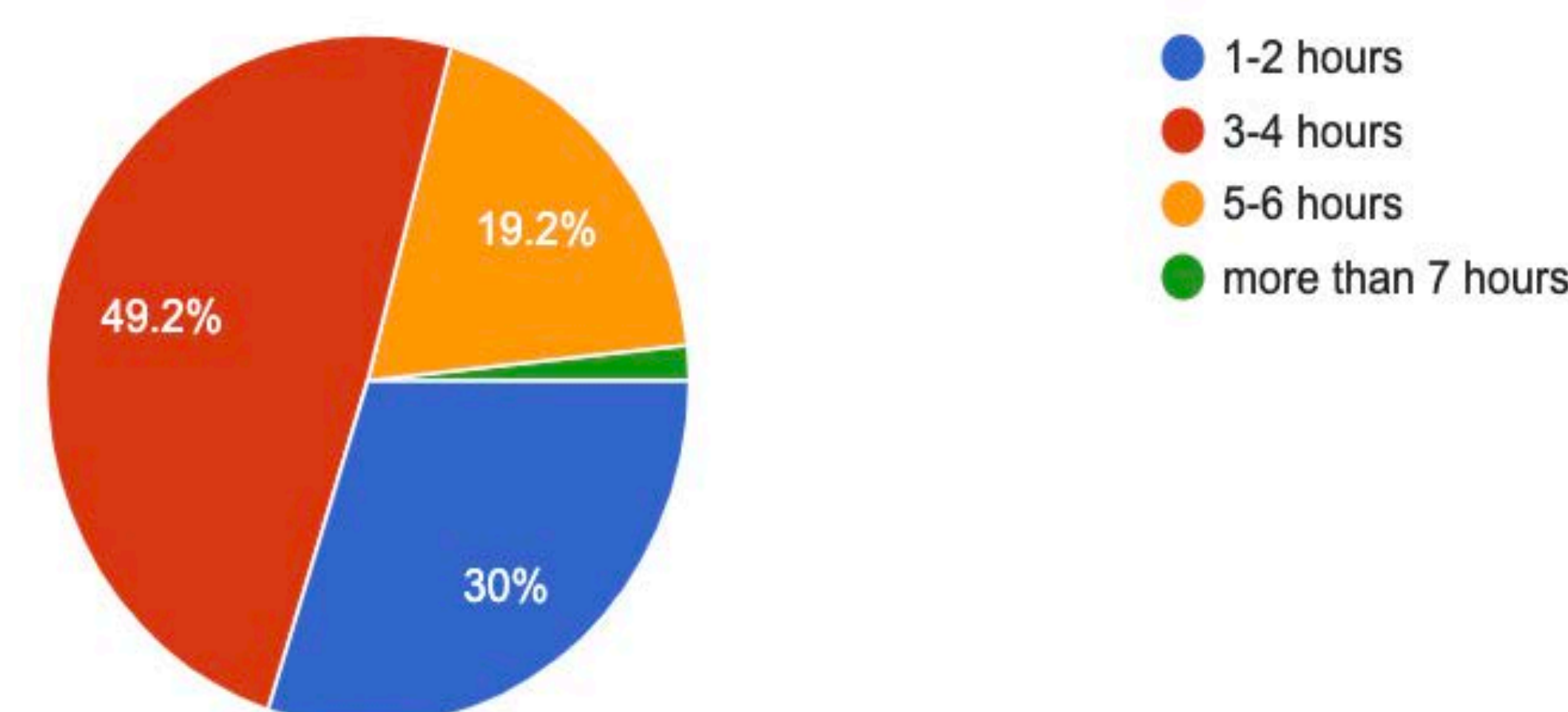
The two main reasons for using social media is to stay connected with friends and family as well as passing time

Social media apps used



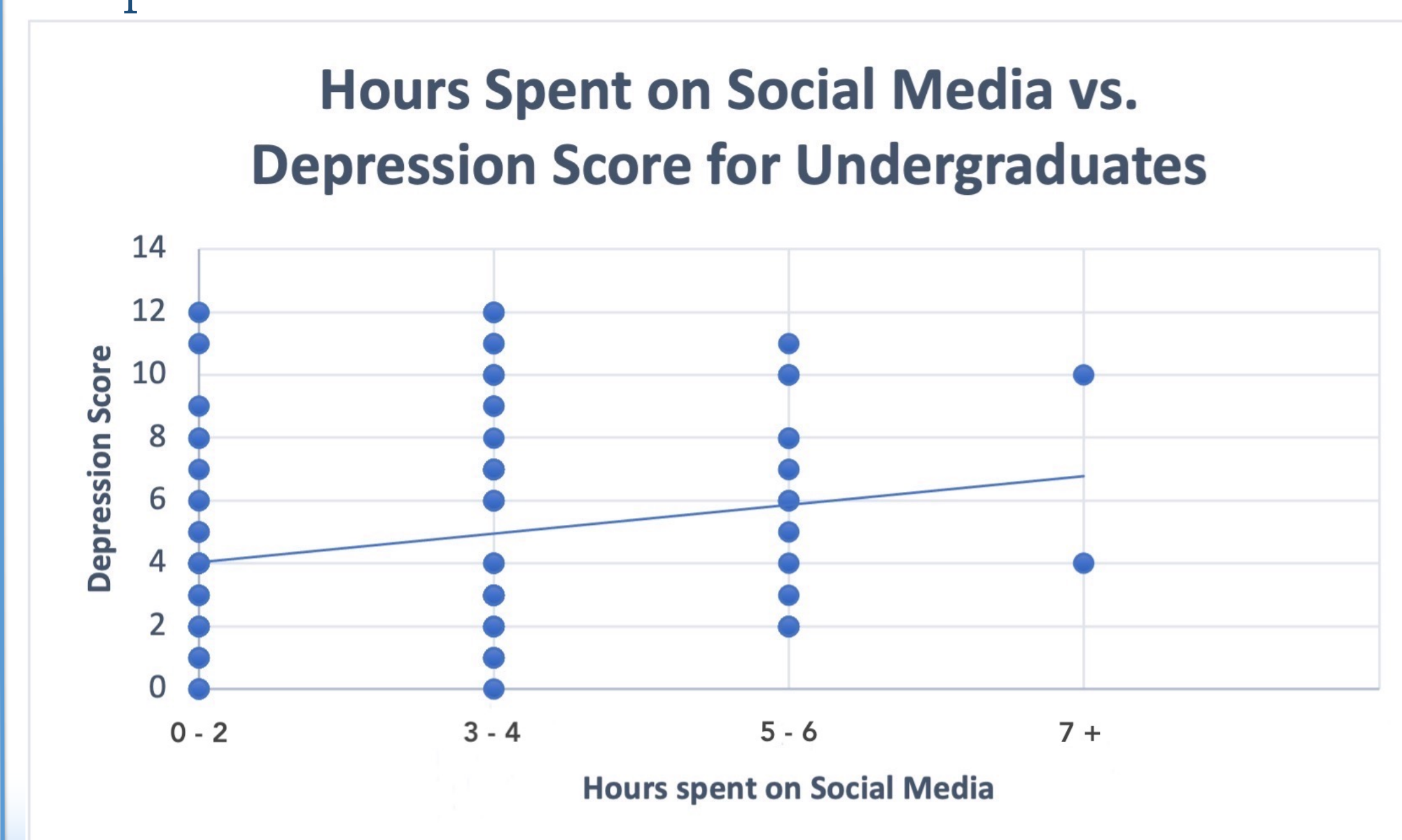
Instagram was the number one most used social media app

Hours spent on social media



Most users spend 3 to 4 hours on social media a day

Correlation Between Hours spent on Social Media and Depression Score.



Coefficient R	0.2117773196
N	118
T stat	2.333848004
DF	116
p value	0.02132508185

An R value of 0.2 indicates a slight positive correlation between higher social media use and depression among undergraduate students. The P-value of 0.02 is statistically significant and not due to chance.

## Conclusion

- Higher social media use is associated with increased depression among college students, proving the hypothesis to be true.
- The knowledge gained from this study can be used to design better interventions in combating depression and other mental health issues among college aged students and the younger population and to . There needs to be further research on healthy ways to manage and incorporate social media in daily life without facing these bad mental health effects.

## Policy Implications

- Develop and implement social media education into school curriculums to teach kids from young age about the harms of high social media use
- Work with phone companies to set screen time and health reminders
- Develop technology to allow parents to monitor and lock screen time for kids remotely.

## References

1. Karim F, Oyewande AA, Abdalla LF, Chaudhry Ehsanullah R, Khan S. Social Media Use and Its Connection to Mental Health: A Systematic Review. *Cureus*. 2020;12(6):e8627. Published 2020 Jun 15. doi:10.7759/cureus.8627

2. Dossett Jason. Is Social Media Damaging or Helping College Students? Greenville University Papyrus. <https://papyrus.greenville.edu/2020/10/is-social-media-damaging-or-helping-college-students/>.