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**Project Title**

The impact of online social networking on mental and social health during the COVID-19 pandemic: A large study of middle-aged and older adults in Canada

**Project Summary**

Due to physical, social, and economic limitations in older age, mental illness is widespread among older Canadians - yet often overlooked. Online social networking facilitates social participation among older Canadians, especially during the pandemic; however, its effectiveness in improving mental and social health is unclear. Using data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study of Aging, we seek to examine the trends, uses, and barriers of online social networking; the characteristics of users; and its impact on mental and social health among middle-aged and older Canadians, with special emphasis on its role during the pandemic. This research will help assess whether online social networking may be an effective intervention against mental illness among older adults and identify subgroups who may benefit most from this new social outlet.

**Keywords**

Social Networking; Mental Health; COVID-19, Social Determinants of Health; Older Adults