

Project title: Social media use of LGBT young adults: more risks or more benefits?

Project leader: Dr. Kai J. Jonas (h-index 18)

Function: Associate Professor Work & Social Psychology

Collaborators: Dr. Sarah Stutterheim (h-index 14), Dr. Philippe Verduyn (h-index 15)

Proposal (250 words):

Introduction: For many young same-sex attracted individuals/young LGBT, social media use is a prominent form of self-expression, and means to acquiring community norms, finding support, avoiding discrimination and coping with rejection. At the same time, it is a gateway for exposure and access to and risk contexts, such as substance use and sexual risk-taking. Quite likely, social media use is a main determinant of young LGBT's psycho-social well-being and is related to their physical health. In contrast to research on heterosexual youth, there is considerably less research on these mechanisms in LGBT youth.

Objectives: In this project, the main aim is to understand how social media use influences, positively or negatively, psycho-social well-being, substance use, and sexual risk taking in young LGBT. Sub goals are:

1. Testing the buffer vs. risk hypothesis of social media use, i.e., finding support vs. exposure to risks.
2. Understanding how norms about sexual risk and substance use are communicated in social media, and how they influence individual behavior.
3. Understanding well-being of young LGBT using social media in relation to their coming out status and face-keeping.
4. Assessing social media use as a determinant for depression, loneliness, and suicidal ideation.

Setting and Methods: Cross-cultural, qualitative, quantitative (experimental and survey) research.

Impact: At the end of this project, we will have a better understanding of the determinants of psycho-social well-being, substance use, and sexual risk taking in young LGBT that use social media. Based on our findings, tailored interventions can be devised.

Requirements candidate: Highly motivated student with excellent English communication skills and proactive and resolute attitude.

Keywords:

Top 5 selected publications:

1. Weiss, K., **Jonas, K. J.**, & Guadamuz, T.E. (2017). Playing and never testing: HIV and STI testing among app-using MSM in Southeast Asia. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 44, 406-411.
2. Baams, L., Bos, H., & **Jonas, K. J.** (2014). How a romantic relationship can protect same-sex attracted youth from the impact of expected rejection. *Journal of Adolescence*, 37, 1293-1302. (cited 8 times)
3. Baams, L. **Jonas, K. J.**, Utz, S., Bos, H.M.W., & van der Vuurst, L. (2011). Internet use and online social support among same sex attracted individuals of different ages. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27, 1820-1827. (cited 46 times)
4. **Stutterheim, S. E.**, Pryor, J. B., Bos, A. E., Hoogendijk, R., Muris, P., & Schaalma, H. P. (2009). HIV-related stigma and psychological distress: the harmful effects of specific stigma manifestations in various social settings. *Aids*, 23(17), 2353-2357. (cited 128 times)
5. Kross, E., **Verduyn, P.**, Demiralp, E., Park, J., Lee, D. S., Lin, N., ... & Ybarra, O. (2013). Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being in young adults. *PLoS one*, 8(8), e69841. (cited 505 times)