

# Social Connectedness and Health Issues

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## Abstract

The feeling of being a part of a family or community is social connectedness. Social connection is a crucial element of health and wellness, therefore it's all about the interactions that individuals have with one another. Social connectedness is one of the fundamental needs of individuals and is essential for a person's health and well-being. The goal of this narrative literature review is to examine numerous published works in order to determine the connection between social connectedness and health. The majority of the investigations in this case were conducted on adults (11–21 years old) and older adults (22–60 years old). Researchers studied several published research articles from 2007–2022 and discussed about their methodologies and findings. Most studies have revealed that socially connected people are generally have good physical and mental health. Lack of social connectedness causes negatively impact on young people's physical health by increasing their risk of inflammation, hypertension and obesity. Studies on mental health and social connectivity have shown that people who are socially connected have less stress, depression, suicidal thoughts, emotional discomfort, and anxiety than those who are not. After studying and critically analyzing various research articles the researchers found that social connection was linked to both physical and mental health. So all people need to be socially connected with others in order to maintain their health and quality of life.

**Index Terms :** Social connectedness, Health Issues, Review study

## I. INTRODUCTION:

Humans are social creatures, no individual can develop fully without society. Human personality develops fully by living in society. We are born into a family and from there our social consciousness begins and gradually it is prolonged. According to WHO [1] "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." In order to be healthy and happy, one needs to interact with others. A sense of social connectedness is a sense of community, family, or group membership. It concerns people's interactions with one another and their participation in the larger community. The concept of connectedness has been developed originally in a psychological context and refers to an individual's relationship to society [2]. For a person to be physically and psychologically healthy, they need to engage with others. A successful life is typically regarded as a predictor of social connectivity, which has been linked to numerous positive social and health outcomes. Social connectedness has been described as one of the key motivational reasons underpinning social behavior [3]. Relationships with family members, friends, classmates, acquaintances, communities and society, all contribute to one's social connectivity [4]. Social connectedness is defined as the quality of a person's ties with others and how those relationships affect, how they interact with other people [5]. In terms of general health and well-being, social connectivity is crucial. The context and complexity of an individual's identity include their physical, psychological, and social characteristics [6]. Every human need to balance their personal and social life, and for this reason, humans need to know about their social norms to survive. The importance of social relationships in the treatment of disease and the maintenance of health and well-being has drawn the attention of scientists and practitioners across a large number of behavioral science and medical disciplines [7]. In this regard health is a most important factor or resource for well-being as well as society. A lack of social connections can increase levels of stress by engaging in behaviors that increase health risk factors such as increasing tobacco and alcohol use or decreasing healthy behaviors such as exercising well and eating enough. Socially isolated individuals face elevated rates of illness and death [8]. The physical and mental health of a person as well as the health of a society is greatly influenced by social connectivity which is significant predictor of health outcomes [9].

**(1) Concept of social connectedness:**

The feeling of being a part of a community family or group is known as social connection. It focuses on how people interact with one another and how they engage with the community at large. An essential part of health and well-being is social connection. Everybody feels like they belong in a community that has strong social ties. It is a place where everyone has access to the resources they need to participate in interpersonal interactions, forge connections, and strengthen existing social networks. In society, people have a location to congregate with their friends and neighbors. It is an environment where social linkages are considered in all planning and strategic actions. Experience of belongingness and relatedness i.e., social connectedness between people is a pivotal idea for understanding the communication systems in that particular awareness systems [10]. Therefore, having a sense of community and connectivity is crucial.

**(2) Concept of Health:**

Modern definitions of health acknowledge that it implies a person's full potential for self-realization and self-fulfillment and goes beyond simply being free from disease [11]. Perry and Jessor mentioned health have four concepts, that is physical health, psychological health, social health and personal health, where physical health refers to processes of physical and physiological functioning and their adequacy and efficiency of this domain would be the proper operation of the main bodily systems with measurable signs like blood pressure, cholesterol levels, resting heart rate, carbon monoxide levels, etc. The term psychological health primarily refers to a subjective area or a person's sense of general well-being and self-appraisal. Person's psychological health also includes aspects like their sense of physical fitness and vitality, their sentiments of wellbeing, their perception of their own competence, and their sense of internal locus of control. The third area of social health, is concerned with how well someone interacts with others, how well they carry out their social roles and how well they develop the skills needed for adaptive functioning in social contexts and the fourth concept of personal health concern for one's own health suggests that there is untapped potential for fulfillment within a person, including aspects that are not always instrumental and that their stimulation and actualization would allow them to fully develop into who they can be. Personal health can be defined as an ongoing interest in pursuits that help a person transcend preoccupation with the responsibilities and tasks of daily living [12].

Several studies have shown that there is a connection of social connectedness and health. This study consists of two parts viz., social connectedness and health. The social connectedness part consisting of various part like family connectedness, community connectedness, peer connectedness, online connectedness etc. and health also consists two parts viz., mental health and physical health. In this regard, this study will review various related articles regarding social connectedness and health to explore the relation.

**II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- i) To understand the relationship of social connectedness with health issues.
- ii) To understand how social connectedness promote better health.
- iii) To find out the contribution of social connectedness and different health issues on quality of life.

**III. METHOD OF THE STUDY:**

This study is basically a narrative literature review. A narrative review is an identification of a few studies that describe a problem of interest it has no predetermined research question or specified search strategy, they are not systematic, and follow no specified protocol [13]. The phrases "health" and "social connectivity" were used in searches on Research Gate and Google Scholar to find references for this review. For the review, only records written in English were taken into consideration.

**IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

| Sl. No. | References                         | Study Design  | Age Group                       | Findings  |
|---------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1.      | Brooks, <i>et. al.</i> , 2022 [14] | The 1072 women who completed all questions thoroughly were the focus of the study. Data were acquired through a cross-sectional study that was undertaken by a significant institution in the north-eastern United States. The Global Physical Activity Questionnaire was used to assess physical activity, the Centre for Epidemiology Studies-Depression Scale 7 was used to assess depression, and the Perceived Stress Scale 4 was used to assess stress. To describe the sample, descriptive statistics were calculated. The variations in physical activity, subjective stress, and depressive symptoms based on sexual orientation | 19 years to 25 years aged women | For heterosexual and non-heterosexual women there were substantial differences in perceived stress and depressive symptoms but not in physical activity. When controlling for sexual orientation, higher levels of strength training and strenuous exercise were associated with decreased depressive symptoms and lower perceived stress. Depressive symptoms revealed a positive connection with perceived stress and a negative link with strength training for both heterosexual and non-heterosexual sexual women. In heterosexual women, depressive symptoms also |

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|    |                                     | were investigated using independent samples t-tests. The association between perceived stress, depressive symptoms, moderate physical activity, strong physical activity, and strength training, segregated by sexual orientation, was investigated using Pearson's correlations. While controlling for sexual orientation, multiple regression models were utilized to investigate the relationships between various forms of physical activity and reported stress and depressive symptoms [14].  |  | demonstrated a negative relationship with vigorous exercise. Results show that non-heterosexual women perceive stress and depression symptoms more intensely and that these mental health problems can affect people on many different levels. Regardless of sexual orientation, more intense physical exercise and strength training were linked to reduced perceived stress and despair levels [14].  |
| 2. | Sun, <i>et. al.</i> , 2021 [15]     | The study followed 210 Chinese international students studying in the United States throughout time to examine how racial and linguistic discrimination affected their levels of anxiety and depression. Participants were assessed twice - once during their first academic term and once more three months later during their second term at a U.S institution. Five scales were used in this study : i) the Beck Anxiety Inventory, ii) the Beck Depression Inventory-II, iii) Brief Perceived Discrimination Scale iv) the Perceived Language Discrimination Scale and v) the Social Connectedness Scale[15]. | 17 years to 29 years aged university students              | The study sought to examine the simultaneous and long-term impacts of perceived racial and linguistic discrimination on Chinese international students' mental health as well as the potential moderating effects of social connectedness to the host and ethnic communities. They also looked at how social connectivity affected the relationship between mental health and perceived discrimination. Overall, social connectedness and mental health are significantly correlated with Chinese International students who reported higher degrees of social connectedness with either Chinese or American students [15].   |
| 3. | Paiva, <i>et. al.</i> , 2021 [16]   | The Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), a multidisciplinary and transnational biennial panel survey that collects information on health, socioeconomic status, and social and family networks across 27 European nations as well as Israel, is the source of the data used in the current study. Multilevel linear regression analyses were performed to analyse the data [16].   | 50+ aged people  | This study focuses on connection and social engagement as two psychosocial components of social life in order to evaluate both their individual contributions to the understanding of cognition as well as the effects of their interactions on cognition. The findings demonstrated a correlation between enhanced cognition and higher levels of social engagement and social connectivity. According to the analysis, people with high degrees of social engagement and social connectedness also had better cognitive scores. Moreover, when one of these components is absent, the other contributes to cognition protection. This study highlights the value of social engagement and social connectivity for maintaining and improving cognition, which significantly improves the quality of life for middle-aged and older persons [16]. |
| 4. | Steiner, <i>et. al.</i> , 2019 [17] | The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health's Waves I and IV, which included weighted data (n = 14 800), were used. The relationships between family and school connectedness in adolescence and self-reported health risk  | Adolescent students (7-12 -years) and adults (24-32 years) | Adolescent school connectivity may have long-lasting protective impacts on a variety of adult health outcomes relating to mental health, violence, sexual behaviour, and drug use. Adolescent school connectivity was independently associated with   |

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|    |  | behaviours and experiences of adulthood such as emotional distress, suicidal thoughts and attempts, physical violence victimisation and perpetration, intimate partner physical and sexual violence victimisation, multiple sex partners, condom use, sexually transmitted infection diagnosis, prescription drug misuse, and other risk behaviours, were examined using linear and logistic models [17]. |                                   | protective effects against emotional distress, suicidal ideation, physical violence victimization and perpetration, numerous sex partners, prescription drug abuse, and other illegal drug usages. The same was true for familial closeness, which showed independent protective links for emotional distress [17].  |
| 5. | Gunn, <i>et. al.</i> , 2018 [18]       | This study makes use of The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health dataset. This study was investigate three domains of social connection: i) parental connection, ii) school connection and iii) social integration. The connectivity changes and suicidal thoughts and ideas was tested by Logistic Regression Test [18].  | 12-21 years adolescents' students | The purpose of this study was to investigate the long-term relationships between changes in social connection and suicidal behaviour of adolescence. The result showed that social integration and changes in parental connectivity were both discovered to be protective variables against the reporting of suicidal ideation. Adolescents who reported higher degrees of parental attachment reported fewer suicidal thoughts, while those who indicated higher levels of social integration were less likely to express suicidal ideation [18]. |
| 6. | Saeri, <i>et. al.</i> , 2018 [19]      | In order to evaluate the bidirectional longitudinal association between social connectedness and mental health a cross-lagged panel analysis of a large longitudinal national probability sample was used by investigators about Attitudes and Values Survey using data from four successive waves of the New Zealand [19].   | New Zealand's adult residents     | According to the New Zealand Attitude and Value Survey, social connectivity and mental health have a positive and reciprocal relationship throughout time, with social connectedness having a stronger predictive power than mental health in terms of future social connectedness [19].   |
| 7. | McLoughlin, <i>et. al.</i> , 2018 [20] | The current study used a two-stage sequential process to look at the connections between cyberbullying, help-seeking intentions, and coping mechanisms among South Australian high school students. Only the quantitative findings will be covered in this study [20].  | 12-17 years students              | The significance of social connectedness and how technology can help young people foster it are both covered in this study. The study's main finding was that young people who were more socially connected were more likely to respond to frequent cyber victimisation by taking proactive measures to cope. They had a higher propensity to seek assistance and experience better mental health as a result [20].  |
| 8. | Wu <i>et. al.</i> , 2016 [21]          | A Systematic Literature Review [21].  | -                                 | This paper presents the results of a systematic evaluation of recent studies that examined the relationships between adolescents' usage of Internet technology and their sense of social connectedness. Teenagers are growing acclimated to technology and sticking around the virtual playground in part because it helps them strengthen their social bonds. This study demonstrates that real-life social skills are prerequisite   |

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|     |  |   |   | for adolescents to use technology in a constructive way, even though Internet technology may give them more options to seek emotional connection with peers and school [21].  |
| 9.  | Grieve, <i>et. al.</i> , 2013 [22]     | In this study the cross-sectional design included subjective well-being, anxiety, depression, and social connectivity on face book. This study initially looked into the distinction between face book and offline social connectivity as separate variables. Face book users participants were answered questions on their online and offline social connections. Face book connectivity was found through factor analysis [22]. | 1-st group mean age was 28.12 years and SD=10.99 and 2-nd group mean age 25.87 years SD=9.90. | According to the findings, face book use may present a chance to establish and sustain social connections in an online setting, and face book connections are linked to less cases of depression and anxiety as well as higher levels of happiness. Facebook may function as a distinct social medium where relationships can be formed and maintained which offering a different social outlet that linked to variety of psychological benefits [22].                              |
| 10. | Dinnie, <i>et. al.</i> , 2013 [23]     | Finlathen and Baxter Park are the subjects of the case study on Dundee, United Kingdom. Ten individuals participated in four-part in-depth ethnographies that included semi-structured face-to-face interviews, walking interviews in parks and other green spaces, video recordings of the green space by participants and researchers, and video reviews with participants [23].  | 19 to 65 years aged people  | This article examines how common interactions with urban green space are mediated by social and institutional practices and how such practices are related to emotions and well-being. The study discovered that people's interactions with green spaces and thus any health advantages brought about by engagement are inextricably social in nature and are controlled by their social group memberships. Furthermore, there are multiple social contexts and social orders [23]. |
| 11. | Yang, <i>et. al.</i> , 2013 [24]       | Latent growth curve models and longitudinal data from 4,323 persons in the Health and Retirement Study were used to assess the trajectories of social integration over five waves, 1998-2006, in relation to energy metabolism biomarkers in 2006. Using a summary measure of the quantity of social links across five areas, they evaluated social integration [24].   | 50+ years older adults  | High social integration was associated with significantly decreased chances of metabolic dysregulation on an individual and a systemic level. High levels of social integration had longer-lasting effects on metabolism than variations in those levels. These effects were widespread among subpopulations and more pronounced in younger old males, white people, and low-income individuals [24].   |
| 12. | Kaczynski and Glover 2012 [25]         | Adults in Canada's Waterloo, Ontario are the source of the data collection. A survey method was used to examine people's perceptions of the walk ability and social connectedness of their neighborhood. A thorough 7-day logbook was used to record each minute of neighborhood physical activity for transit and entertainment [25].  | Adult people  | In this study participants reported feeling both socially connected and having a high perception of walk ability engaged in the most physical activity for both leisure and transportation. While the high social connectivity or low walk ability group engaged in more recreational physical activity than the low walk ability groups, the high walk ability or low social connectedness group engaged in more transport-related physical activity [25].                         |
| 13. | Mitchinson, <i>et. al.</i> , 2008 [26] | The participants in this study were 655 patients from two Veterans Affairs medical centers who took part in a randomized controlled trial of massage  | The mean age was 63.8 years   | This study shows how the presence or absence of social contacts can significantly affect and how patients feel during their postoperative   |

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|     |  | <p>as an adjunct therapy for postoperative pain. Participants' social networks were measured by the numbers of friends or relatives that individual had and how frequently contact was done among members of their social network. Five postoperative days were used to score subjective results using visual analogue scales. There were also records on surgical complications, length of stay, and daily opiate use [26].</p>  |  | <p>recovery following major operations. In this study, patients with more extensive social networks fared better than those with more limited or non-existent networks. Once pre-operative pain and anxiety levels were taken into account, the impact of social network size on post-operative levels of anxiety, despair, inner peace, relaxation, and pain was not noticeable. This shows that preoperative anxiety and pain levels are strongly correlated with the size of social networks [26].</p>   |
| 14. | Kumi-Kyereme, <i>et. al.</i> 2007 [27] | <p>Focus groups, in-depth interviews and a nationally representative survey were the three sources of data used in this study. 16 focus groups with in-school and out-of-school participants were held as part of this study. Each focus group discussion featured between 8 and 12 members, and discussions with homogeneous groups of adolescents who lived in either urban or rural areas were done. The meetings were recorded on tape also 102 in-depth interviews with both males and females between the ages of 12 and 19 were done. To investigate the reasons why some young people may be at risk for HIV and unintended pregnancy, an in-depth interview style was adopted. The Third source of data was household survey. Measures of adolescent's connectivity include living with parents or other parental figures the number of close friends, school attendance, frequency of religious attendance and involvement in any clubs or social groups. Adolescent's communication were measures through open ended questionnaire [27].</p> | 12 to 19 years aged male and female adolescents' group | <p>This study explores the relationships, interactions and supervision of unmarried teenagers in Ghana by their parents, other adults, friends and significant social institutions. The result shows adolescents have strong attachments to their families, adults, friends, school, and religious groups. Adult monitoring is also high but family contact about sex related matters is less frequent than non-family members. Negative link between parental supervision and sexual behaviour in both males and females was established by multivariate study of survey [27].</p>   |
| 15. | Yugo and Davidson 2007 [28]            | <p>Using cross-sectional weights from NLSCY Cycle 4, all analyses were carried out through the Statistics Canada Remote Data Access programme. Parental nurturing, parental monitoring, school involvement, peer connectivity, and community engagement were the five assets represented by the NLSCY variables that were originally dichotomized into high and medium to low levels. The SAS Bootvar 3.0 programme, logistic regression models, and the bootstrap method for variance estimation were used to calculate five self-reported health outcomes and behaviours, including excellent or very good health, high self-worth, alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana usage [28].</p>   | 12-15 years aged groups                                | <p>A number of self-reported favourable health outcomes and behaviours, such as excellent or very good health, high self-worth, and decreased alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana usage were linked to connectedness within social contexts, particularly to family and school. Peer connection was linked to increased alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana usage as well as higher self-worth and improved self-assessed health. The transition of Canadian adolescents into healthy adulthood could be facilitated by a comprehensive strategy for healthy youth development that highlights and boosts strong interactions in these situations [28].</p> |
| 16. | Carter, <i>et. al.</i> , 2007 [29]     | <p>A web-based survey was created and given to 652 students chosen randomly</p>   | 11 years to 16 years                                   | <p>This study highlights the value of families and schools as young</p>   |

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|  |  | among the secondary schools in Dunedin, New Zealand. The relationship between family, friends, and school characteristics and health-promoting and health-compromising behaviours was discovered using logistic regression [29]. | adolescents student | people's support systems. High levels of health-promoting behaviours and low levels of health-compromising behaviours were both significantly correlated with school involvement. Connectedness to family was mainly linked to a decrease in suicidal ideation reports and an increase in physical activity reports. Connectivity to friends was mostly linked to a rise in reports of behaviours that compromise one's health [29]. |
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**V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:**

From various research journal it was evident that most of the study about social connectedness and health issues was done on adult student (11-21-years) and older adult people (22-60+ -years). From this study researchers opined that most of the study designs are mainly cross-sectional and longitudinal. Focus group discussion and in-depth interviews was also done. From the various study, it was established that social connectivity was associated with mental and physical wellbeing. It is evident from the different studies on mental health and social connectedness that those who are socially linked have less stress, sadness, suicidal thoughts, emotional pain, and anxiety than those who are not.

**VI. DISCUSSION:**

Human are social being, human-to-human relationships are essential for the society or vital for the development of an individual's life. Without society the individual can never sustain himself. Only with the support of the society individual can be able to show his performance or innovativeness. The main focus of these study is to examine the relationship between social connectedness and health issues by reviewing various published articles. Strong social connectedness has a positive impact on physical and mental health. It has been demonstrated in numerous studies that having better social connections improves one's health and well-being and which is beneficial for one's daily life. Hence social connectedness and mental health are significantly correlated [15]. Adolescents who are connected or associated with their schools have lower psychological distress, suicidal ideation, physical violence victimization, sex partners, prescription medication dependency and illegal drug use [17]. Social interaction and connectedness helps among middle-aged and older people in retention and increasing their cognitive function which greatly improves their quality of life [16]. The reporting of suicidal ideation was found to be protected by both changes in parental closeness and social integration [18]. According to Mitchinson, *et. al.*, (2008) social connectivity is significantly co related for patient's recovery, preoperative anxiety and pain levels are strongly correlated with the size of social networks. Patients with larger social networks showed better than those with smaller or non-existent networks [26]. Being socially connected was prospectively linked to lower chances of anxiety and depression with a clinical diagnosis [30]. Use of technology in a constructive way, adolescents can be able to seek emotional connection with peers and school [21]. Social connectedness also impacts on people's metabolic system. Yang, *et. al.*, 2013 proves that high degrees of social integration exhibited long-lasting impacts on metabolism than changes in those levels and they were linked with noticeably lower odds of metabolic dysregulation both on an individual and a systemic basis [24]. Numerous studies have shown that a young person's physical and mental health both can suffer from lack of social contacts. Having friends and other social contacts is good for our health and happiness. People's quality of life may be improved by solid relationships and ongoing social contact. At the core of all of our desires is the yearning to be accepted and to feel like we belong. A sense of social connection is one of our most fundamental human needs and it has an impact on our longevity, mental health, and physical health.

**VII. CONCLUSION:**

After studying the various journals, articles researchers has been found out that people with less social connection faces various physical and mental health issues like loneliness, depression, anxiety, metabolic dysregulation, obesity, sleep disturbance etc. whereas people attached with society exhibited lower psychological distress, higher self-esteem, cooperation, empathic towards others and more trustworthiness. Social connectivity fosters a beneficial relationship between social, emotional and physical wellbeing. At last researchers concluded that a lack of social connections has been linked to deteriorating physical and mental health as well as a higher predisposition for antisocial behaviour. In order to improve health and maintain a high standard of living, all humans must maintain social connections with other peoples.

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