Social media, help-seeking and support in student mental health

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Bristol Medical School and the Alan Turing Institute
• Engage participants and cohort leaders to assess acceptable approaches
• Develop easy-to-use open-source software for securely linking Twitter data
• Proof-of-principle linking of Twitter data in the ALSPAC cohort
• Dissemination of the software and findings across CLOSER cohorts, funders, participants and policy makers

• Roll out the software to other cohorts
• Develop software to link other social media platforms

The Alan Turing Institute
• Build the framework for algorithm developers to validate their approaches against “ground truth” in cohorts
Positive emotion

Negative emotion

Terrorist attack in SE London

New Year’s Day

Valentine’s Day

A-level results day

Christmas Day
Positive emotion

A-level results day

July

August

September
Anxiety

Positive emotion

A-level results day

The day before A-level results
Aims

1. To use social media analysis and ecological momentary assessment in consenting student participants to identify fluctuations in mental health related to the academic year
2. To use qualitative text analysis of social media data to identify themes related to mental health in a student population, including help seeking and peer support
3. To identify social media behaviours causally related to changes in mental health
4. To develop a tool for the University to monitor the pulse of student mental health at a population level in real time
Student Focus Groups for co-creation of EMA framework and research

Research Software Engineer for development of EMA framework and web interface

Objective 1: development of EMA framework
- Programming and testing iterations

Objective 2: EMA data collection and social media linkage
- Consent campaign
- Data collection

Objective 3: Analysis of EMA and social media measures with academic calendar

Objective 4: Qualitative analysis of social media data

Objective 5: Development of web interface to monitor mental health
“We’re always sharing our data with loads of people all the time who are using our data for advertising and selling it on. At least with this we would have given our consent and knew it was for a good cause.”
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