

SOCIALIZAPP: A DIGITAL TOOL TO DETECT HOW SOCIAL MEDIA USE MAY INFLUENCE MOMENTARY RISK IN YOUNG WOMEN WITH NON-SUICIDAL SELF-INJURY

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1. Introduction

Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is a public health concern among young people, with important clinical implications and a robust association with suicide risk. Explanatory models highlight emotion regulation difficulties and interpersonal sensitivity as core mechanisms in NSSI (1,2).

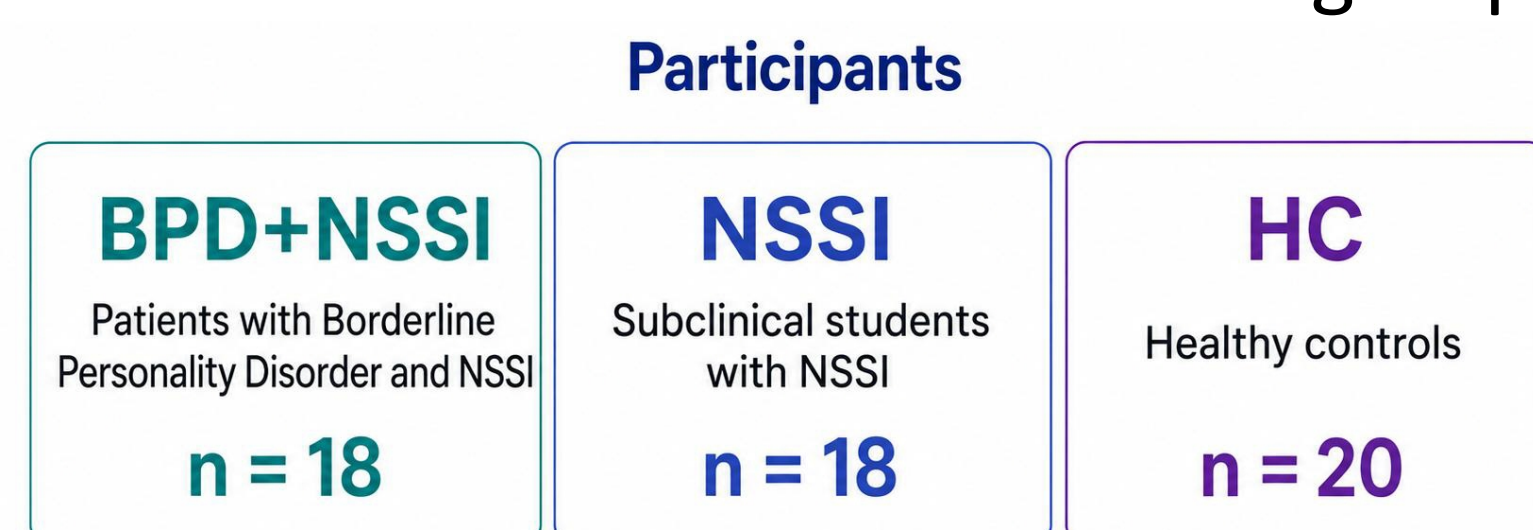
Social media represents a particularly relevant context for studying these processes, as digital social approval, exclusion, and feedback may shape young people's emotional and behavioral responses. However, few ecologically valid studies have examined how digital social exclusion impacts clinically relevant variables associated with NSSI.

The **aim of this study** was to examine how digital social inclusion and exclusion influence perceived rejection, emotional distress, and behavioral responses in young women with NSSI.

2. Method

Sample

A total of **56 young adult women** ($M_{age} = 23.68 \pm 2.54$) were recruited and divided into three groups:

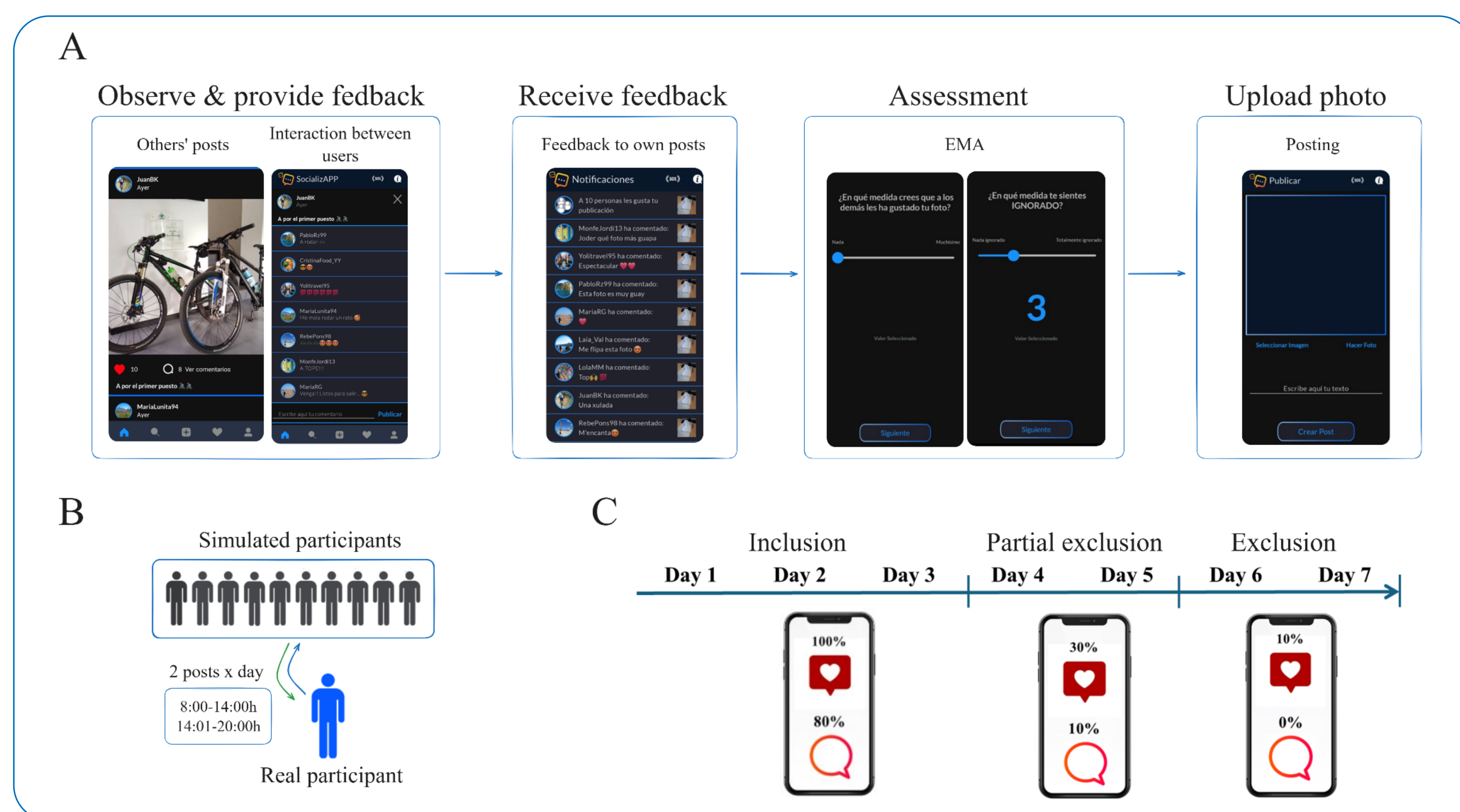


Procedure

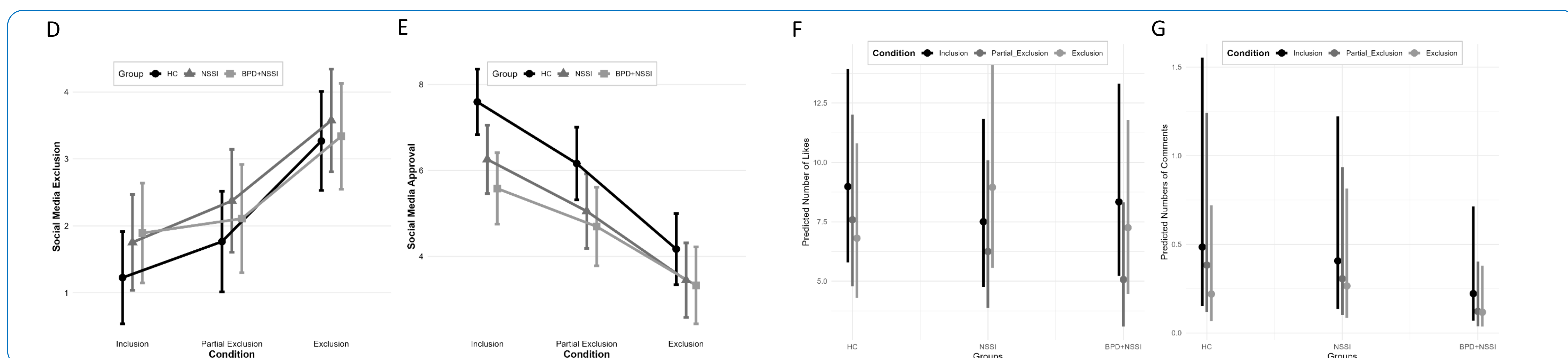
All participants completed Socializapp, an app that simulates the functioning of Instagram, where they interacted with 10 other fictional participants (**Fig. B**).

Participants uploaded photos twice a day and interacted with other users through "likes" and comments. At the end of each interaction, they completed an Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA), reporting their emotional state, feelings of exclusion, and urges to engage in NSSI (**Fig. A**).

Participants used the app for 7 days, with the experimental condition gradually shifting from Inclusion to Exclusion across the study period (**Fig. C**).



3. Results



All participants were sensitive to the experimental condition, reporting higher perceived exclusion during exclusion phases (Fig. D) and adjusting their behaviour across each phase (Figs. F-G). Patients in the BPD+NSSI group showed a reduced response to social inclusion (Fig. E).

Digital social exclusion was associated with increased NSSI urges (OR = 5.27).

4. Conclusions

Socializapp is a useful and innovative tool for studying digital social exclusion with high ecological validity. Preliminary findings suggest that young people with NSSI show greater vulnerability to negative social media feedback, displaying a distinct pattern compared with healthy controls in perceived exclusion, social approval, and momentary emotional distress.

5. References

- Vega et al. (2017) Actas Esp Psiquiatr, 46:146-155.
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- Hartgerlinket al (2015). Plos One, e0127002.

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