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LIFESTYLE

Social clutter

Hate-filled content bad for brain, finds study

ARE YOU EXPOSED to reading racist, misogynistic or other hateful content on Facebook? It may have a harmful effect on your brain in the long run. According to a recent Italian study, the use of online networks may threaten subjective well-being in several ways.

Social networks increase the risk of being exposed to offensive behaviour and hate speeches that could have a harmful effect on people's mental well-being, it added.

To reach this conclusion, authors Fabio Sabatini and Francesco Sarracino from the Sapienza University of Rome and the Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg explored survey data from 50,000 people in 24,000 Italian households using social networking sites.

According to researchers, many opinions found online can expose people to ideas



that challenge their world view, make them feel less exceptional and, when opinions include hateful content, offend them.

Online networking exposes individuals to the risk of worsening people's trust in others

and therefore hampering relationships.

"This finding suggests the need to update social networking sites' policies against hate speech and aggressive behaviours, as already requested by a growing number

of advocacy groups, particularly focusing on gender and race-based hate," the authors concluded.

Previous research has also found that social networking sites can impact people's happiness. *IANS*

Sleep tight

Eat your way to eight hours of good shut-eye



TRY INCLUDING RICE, cheese and potato in your diet to help you get a good night's sleep.

There are a few food items which can improve your sleeping pattern, reports femalefirst.co.uk:

- **A glass of warm milk:** The old wives' tale about a glass of warm milk can actually work wonders. This is because dairy is a source of tryptophan, an amino acid which your body converts to melatonin and serotonin which acts as a natural sedative. Warming up milk increases the comfort factor and if you are hungry, try adding a few oats as the carbohydrates make it easier for the tryptophan to get to your brain.

- **Cheese:** Contrary to popular belief, cheese can actually contribute to a good night's sleep. Cheese has calcium, which is also known to release serotonin. The key is not to overdo it and give yourself at

least two hours before going to bed so as to avoid indigestion.

- **Potatoes:** Carbs act as a natural sleep aid by stimulating the pancreas to secrete insulin. When this happens, some amino acids that interact with tryptophan leave the bloodstream and enter muscle cells, which causes an increase in the tryptophan levels in the bloodstream and results in an increase in the serotonin levels. High carb foods include potatoes, pasta and bread.

- **Valerian root:** Valerian root is a herb that is believed to have a calming, relaxing effect on the body. It has been used for centuries to treat insomnia, mild anxiety and restlessness. The exact mechanism of action is unknown. However, it may act as a depressant to the central nervous system to produce a mild tranquilizing effect. *IANS*

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

The Story Of Red

The colour red has been very auspicious in the Chinese culture for thousands of years. It is the colour for happiness, prosperity, togetherness and good luck. This is the reason why many businesses in China have red lanterns or red patterns all over the homes or at the entrance. It is the main colour used during festivals and weddings. During the Chinese New Year red envelopes with money are distributed to children to bring them good luck. But did you ever think about where this belief stemmed from?

According to some ancient tales, there was a mythical beast by the name of Nien who terrorised people during the Chinese New Year. People in many villages placed bowls of food outside their main door so that Nien could eat and go away. However one Chinese New Year Nien got scared looking at a child wearing a red dress and so from that day on he never returned to the village. As a result people started displaying red lanterns outside their homes to protect themselves. And this is how the colour red came to be associated with happiness and prosperity. However this is an old tale that has no proof. However Chinese people continue to believe in the benefits of using red in everyday life and for special occasions.

Red is also an integral part of Feng Shui. Red represents the Fire element, which is the driving force for career, fame, ambition and good luck. Fire colours are used in Feng Shui to enhance this element. This could be one of the reasons why everything from Chinese flags to wedding gowns are red.

So does this mean red can be used in all aspects of everyday life? To answer this we need to delve into a bit of psychology. For a Chinese, red colour is auspicious due to its cultural significance. However this is not the same for all nationalities. In South Africa red is used for mourning and in Japan it is associated with anger and discontent. The Australian Aboriginals link red with mother earth while in Thailand it is the colour to be used on Sunday. On the other hand within the holistic community, red is associated with drive and energy and is linked with the first chakra.

Implementing Feng Shui cures from a textbook is easy. However to understand the cultural significance and then suggest an appropriate colour scheme for a property is the sign of a good Feng Shui consultant.

So next time you want to use the colour red at home, first ask yourself - what does this colour mean to me? The impact of using this colour will be felt based on your belief about the colour.

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