

Peer Review

Review of: "AI and Mental Health – A Policy Perspective"

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Comments to the author(s) on the paper “AI and Mental Health – A Policy perspective”

The manuscript is clear and useful in documenting direct harms from algorithms and in arguing for a national policy response (and I support this). The facts highlighted from the existing literature are generally convincing. I feel the article could have unveiled the “knock-on effects” related literature slightly better than it has done currently. A major part of the article talks about the adverse effect of AI on mental health that could stem from employment loss due to AI taking jobs. However, the literature or facts highlighted in the article do not show much evidence that AI has or is going to take jobs. The articles (e.g., Andreeva et al. 2017) cited in the Knock-on effect sub-section are mostly talking about the negative effects on mental health due to downsizing (but not due to AI). There is very little evidence to convincingly believe that all these job losses or fear of job insecurity are due to AI. I would suggest using more evidence on the adverse effect of AI on the labour market and then linking it to the potential harm to mental health. Much of the academic and policy literature (e.g., Nobel Laureate Daron Acemoglu’s work, David Autor’s work) distinguishes task-level change (AI automates tasks) from job-level displacement (whole jobs disappearing). The paper should reflect that nuance and use that framework to link to likely mental health effects or tone down the causal link of AI-driven mass job loss in the absence of such evidence.

Minor point:

While I have enjoyed reading the article and appreciate its lucid writing, I feel the beginning of the article could be better written. For example, the sentence below can be made more precise. Currently, it is unclear whether it is talking about a recent government policy regarding AI adoption, a policy deficit, or about the unintended consequence of AI adoption.

“There’s currently a policy deficit in this area in the UK, only partially addressed by the Online Safety Act, and with recent government policy decisions affecting employers potentially having the unintended consequence of incentivizing some to use AI to replace staff, with knock-on mental health implications.”

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.