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Writing for the Sciences

NYT Science Section Summary & Response

I read “Blurred Vision, Burning Eyes: This Is a Lasik Success?” by Roni Caryn Rabin. Rabin exposed the truth about Lasik. Lasik eye surgery has long been praised by physicians as the all-time vision fixer and alternative to eyeglasses and contacts. Rabin explains that this is possibly the case because they are the ones conducting the surgery and because the surgery is an elective procedure it is not covered by insurance. Therefore, ophthalmologists enjoy a large payday every angle time a patient undergoes Lasik eye surgery. Rabin provides patient testimonies that support her claim that Lasik surgery can be dangerous and may lead to harmful consequences. Some harmful side effects include severe discomfort, light sensitivity, double vision, and visual distortions that cause haloes to surround bright objects and turn headlights into blinding starbursts. These side effects sometimes led to job loss, disability, social alienation, depression, and even suicide. Rabin discussed how many of these testimonies are left unshared due to patient shame since it is an elective procedure, contributing to the misinformation surrounding Lasik.

I also read “Social Media Use Is Linked to Brain Changes in Teens, Research Finds” by Ellen Barry. Barry discovered the effects of social media on brain development in adolescents. Adolescents have increased sensitivity to social feedback. The article includes a study conducted by Dr. Maza that evaluates teenagers who utilize social media behavior and their responses to feedback. Barry also evaluates studies that show a linkage between social media and middle

schoolers, different races, and the LGBTQ community. Barry provides another perspective and adds more insight by investigating through multiple lenses from various articles and journals. Barry also makes sure to establish the limitations of the study and references outside views from experts. This study is the first to evaluate brain functions over time with social media usage. The question of whether social media is enhancing teens' reactivity based on outside opinions and criticism is discussed throughout the article with outside views aside from the study. Throughout three years Maza conducts full brain scans on the same middle schoolers, each time they play a PC game. This PC game either rewards or gives smiling or scowling peers as a form of punishment. From this game, the study shows the result of brain changes in three areas, and by this Barry conveys the idea of whether the effects are harmful or beneficial changes to the brain. Her purpose is to provide insight into how teenagers will behave in the world today based on their social media usage. The inclusion of various expert opinions is given, allowing readers to ensure that the article is credible. She correlates this study with other studies based on the sexuality and race of children and social media to take into account multiple scenarios for these teens' behaviors, giving readers more insight that the study lacked to mention. Barry goes into depth on the study and includes the exposition of the limitations and different views on whether or not the study is valid.