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A study on the prevalence of internet addiction in medical students

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Abstract

Introduction: Internet addiction is defined as "the inability to control the use of Internet that leads to feelings of pressure, anxiety and dysfunctional behaviours in everyday activities". The phenomenon of reckless use of the Internet by young people has taken enormous dimensions and has created problems for the mental and social functioning leading them to addiction.

Aim & Objectives: Study the prevalence of internet addiction in MBBS intern students in our college.

Methodology: This study is a cross-sectional study conducted at Index Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Indore for duration of 6 Months. Subjects were interns taken from MBBS batch 2017 fulfilling the inclusion criteria.

Result: In the present study, 102 (52%) were from male students and 98 (48%) from female students. The age group was 18-25 and they are intern students. It was observed that student go late for night sleep, they are deprived of good sleep duration as the college starts at 8 for about 93% of the students, and 68% of the students had social media and internet as a reason for sleeping late at night for academic or non-academic purpose.

In this study, 39% to 45% of the students slept for fewer hours than the recommended sleep duration because of late-night social media site use. 54% students answered that they don't believe their life would be boring without internet, while the 18% stated they cannot live without internet use, believing that their life would be vain. 10% students said they felt very annoyed while they were busy on Internet while the remaining 18% said they were not particularly bothered.

Conclusion: Internet offers incredible possibilities; it feeds us with information, news, entertainment, etc. It is a useful interactive tool, which facilitates our everyday life when used reasonably. Further our study reported that, excessive social media use decreases social face to face interaction. This has a negative impact on social well-being and can lead to depression, anxiety, and mood swings.

Keywords: Internet addiction, social media addiction, depression, anxiety

Introduction

One of the most modern forms of addiction that belongs to behavioural addictions is the internet addiction. Internet addiction is defined as "the inability to control the use of Internet that leads to feelings of pressure, anxiety and dysfunctional behaviours in everyday activities". The phenomenon of reckless use of the Internet by young people has taken enormous dimensions and has created problems for the mental and social functioning leading them to addiction. The worst impact of prolonged use of social networking sites and internet has been associated with physical, mental and long-term well-being. Social media has recently become part of people's daily activities. Many of them spend hours each day on Messenger, Instagram, Facebook, Internet Gaming and other popular platforms on Internet and social media. Internet addiction is a broad term and covers a wide range of behaviors and impulse control problems related to the use of Internet. The common element is that the individual disrupts their daily routine. This study was conducted to study the prevalence of internet addiction in MBBS intern students in our college.

International Law

This study was cross-sectional and conducted among 200 interns, who were students of Batch 2017 at Index Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre, Indore. A questionnaire using an Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Young is used to collect data across 6 months (i.e., June to November 2022).

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The participants provided consent before responding to the survey. This study was conducted among full time students who were willing to participate in the study and honestly answer all the questions. In the initial version of the questionnaire, the respondents is asked to answer the questions, sum up the outcome and extract the final result. The higher the degree, the higher the level of addiction and the greater the magnitude of problems arising from the use of Internet. SPSS v24 were used for data analysis, and Microsoft Word and Excel were used to generate graphs and tables.

Results

- The study was conducted using an Internet Addiction test developed by Young and in total, we received 200 answers of an analytical questionnaire, of which 102 (52%) were from male students and 98 (48%) from female students.
- The age group was 18-25 and they are intern students.
- The 49% of the respondents said they were very often or always connected to Internet, having a non-academic screen time of more than 8 hours while 31% of them said they were occasionally connected to Internet with a non-academic screen time of less than 1.5 hours.

- 62% of the respondents believe that their performance at work is not affected due to the use of Internet, while 33% said they are strongly influenced.
- In the present study 57% and 34% of the students spend more than three hours on social media during day and night respectively, thus majority of the students spent a total of six hours on social media every day. (Figure-1)
- In the present study it was observed that student go to late night sleep, they are deprived of good sleep duration as the college starts at 8 for about 93% of the students, and 68% of the students had social media and internet as a reason for sleeping late at night for academic or non-academic purpose. (Figure-2)
- In this study, 39% to 45% of the students slept for fewer hours than the recommended sleep duration because of late-night social media site use.
- The 54% of respondents answered that they don't believe their life would be boring without internet, while the 18% stated they cannot live without internet use, believing that their life would be vain. The 10% said they felt very annoyed while they were busy connected to Internet while the 18% said they were not particularly bothered. (Table-1)

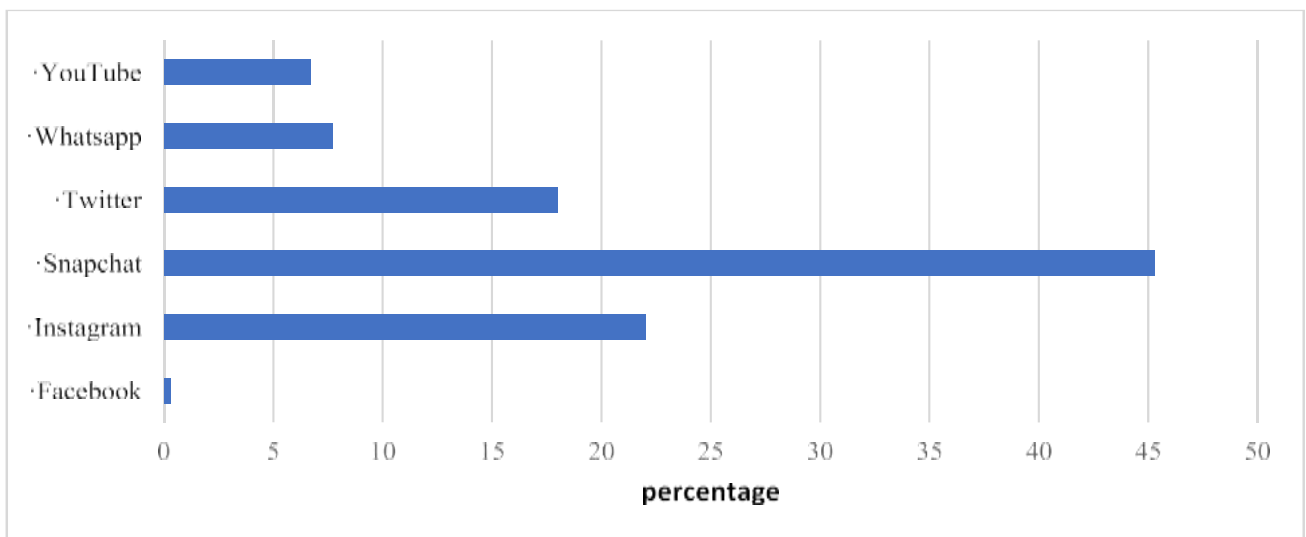


Fig 1: Most popular social media platforms among the students.

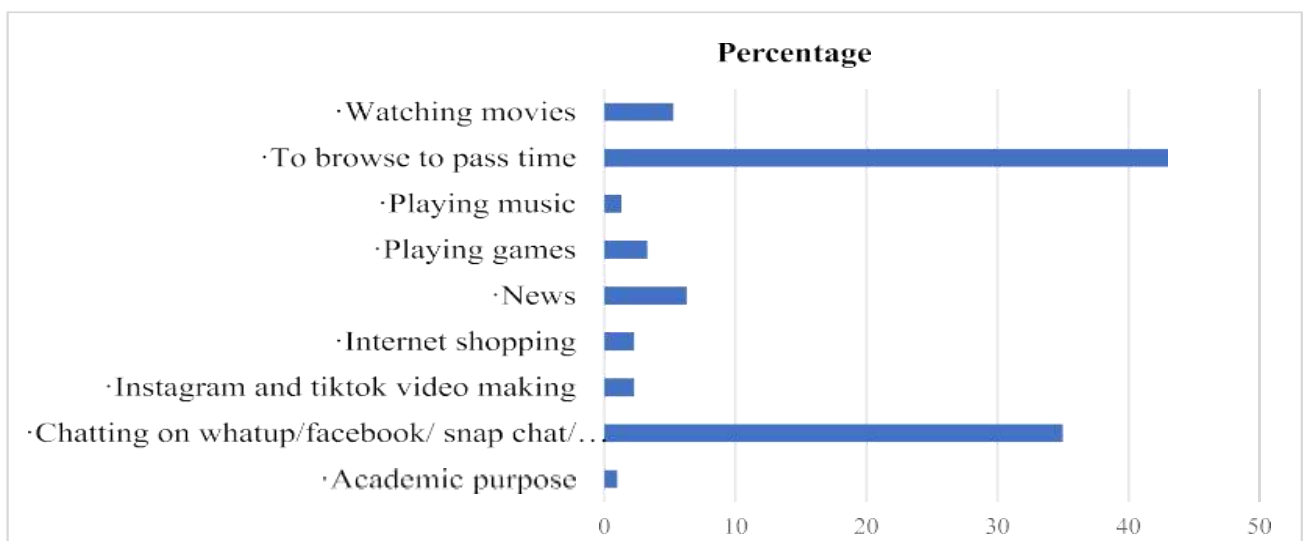


Fig 2: Purposes for which Internet platforms were used by the students.

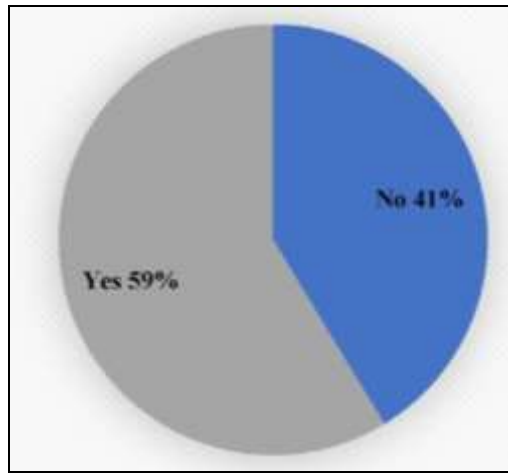


Fig 3: Percentage of students who reported that social media use had affected their relationships with their family members and friends.

Table 1: Prevalence of internet addiction in interns

Internet Addiction Dependence	IAT Score	Students n=200
Normal usage	0-39	108
Mild Level	31-49	36
Moderate level	50-79	20
Severe level	80-100	36

Conclusion

Internet offers incredible possibilities; it feeds us with information, news, entertainment, etc. It is a useful interactive tool, which facilitates our everyday life when used reasonably. The use of social networking sites, especially by the young people, should be done sparingly so as not to provoke extreme behaviours. A majority of the students used social networking sites.

Excessive social media use for non-academic purpose distracted them from their learning and academic activities and delayed their bed time, which in turn reduced their sleep duration.

Further our study reported that, excessive social media use decreases social face to face interaction. This has a negative impact on social well-being and can lead to depression, anxiety, and mood swings.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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