



## A SURVEY ON THE ATTITUDES OF MEDICAL STUDENTS TOWARDS THE USE OF TINDER

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**ABSTRACT** **Background:** There have been a variety of dating apps on various online platforms which are being used by young adults in the quest to form relationships ranging from casual friendships to short term affairs and even the development of long-term relationships. One such app that has been used by many young adults has been Tinder. The current survey aimed to assess the attitudes of undergraduate and post graduate medical students towards the use of Tinder.

**Methodology:** 118 under-graduate and 117 post graduate students were interviewed using a semi structured questionnaire designed to assess attitudes towards Tinder. The questionnaire was specifically designed for this study and validated by three experts. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequency and percentage were used in the assessment.

**Results:** Out of the total sample 215 (91%) used Tinder on their personal devices. Amongst the participants, 211 (90%) were aware of Tinder as a platform for dating and relationships. 103(44%) believed Tinder was used for casual dates and not for long term relationships. 71% of students had gone out on a date using tinder and many believed that tinder was cause of infidelity. Many students reported going out on a date using tinder while being in a serious relationship with someone else.

**Conclusion:** Tinder is a dating app that is used by a majority of young adults and medical students. Further research with larger surveys shall help us know more about the intricacies and usage patterns of the same in student populations.

**KEYWORDS :** medical students, Tinder, dating apps, post graduate, under graduate, relationships.

### INTRODUCTION

There is a change in the relationship scenario in India with many young adults flocking to online dating apps in order to foster new relationships. These apps are aimed at casual, short term and long-term relationships.<sup>[1]</sup> A dating app allows users to create a descriptive profile with what one expects from a relationship and they can access the already existing database on the site and see other users who they may contact if their interest is aroused.<sup>[2]</sup> Tinder is an online dating and relationship site that has been around since the last 5 years and is a hybrid dating app as users give suggestions using algorithms, and tone may also browse on their own.<sup>[3]</sup> 1 in 9 young adults between the age of 25-34 years use dating app and Tinder is the most popular amongst all the apps being used.<sup>[4]</sup>

Online dating apps eliminate some of the challenges of traditional dating practices.<sup>[5]</sup> Conventional notions of a romantic relationship initiation are hinged upon an individual's chance encounters with other single adults within his/her geographic proximity (e.g., meeting someone at work, social engagement, or grocery store), or an introduction made by members of his/her social network (e.g., being set up by a friend or family member). The pool of available partners would then be inevitably limited for a vast majority of individuals.<sup>[6]</sup> The online dating app connects you to thousands of people from the comfort of your home and increases an individual's options exponentially while also increasing the chances that he/she shall find a date.<sup>[7]</sup> Online dating boosts a person's odds in three distinct ways viz. access, communication and matching. An access to a large pool of daters (millions) is available instead of a local social network. It also allows one to communicate with each other through use of text, voice, image, and videos irrespective of geographical boundaries. One can also have the option of evaluating potential mates anonymously (people can look at other profiles while they are offline) instead of having to meet someone face to face or giving them a call. Many sites and apps also promote dates by determining who would be the best match instead of leaving this decision to the user.<sup>[8]</sup>

Tinder is a location-based social search mobile app that allows users to like (swipe right) or dislike (swipe left) other users and allows users to chat if both parties swiped to the right (a match). Using one's Facebook

account, Tinder is able to build a user profile with photos that have already been uploaded. Daters who are most likely to be compatible based on geographical location, number of mutual friends, and common interests are then streamed into a list of matches. The app allows the user to anonymously like another user by swiping right or pass by swiping left on them.<sup>[9]</sup> The app is used in over 196 countries and is available in over 40 languages. Estimates reveal that 50 million people use Tinder monthly and 12 million matches happen per day. Around 1 billion swipes are needed to get to those 12 million matches that happen and daters log into the app approximately 11 times a day.<sup>[10]</sup>

Research is scarce on these apps and how young adults perceive and use these sites. There is no research on the experience of online daters subject to the irresistible allure of an endless stream of potential mates in the Indian scenario. Research on medical students and their use of Tinder is not available. The purpose of this survey was to understand the attitudes and experience of undergraduate and post graduate medical students who frequently use Tinder.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out at a tertiary hospital in a metro city where undergraduate and post graduate students were the participants of our survey. We included only those students that were using Tinder on a regular basis and excluded those that were not using the app. Students undergoing current psychiatric treatment were also excluded from the study. A total of 118 undergraduate and 117 post graduate students consented for the survey and were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire designed to assess attitudes towards Tinder and experiences while using the app. The questionnaire was in English and was specifically designed for this study. It was validated by five senior medical teachers of the same institution. There was no questionnaire available on Tinder and hence we had to make our own for the survey. Both electronic forms and manual forms were used in the data collection process which lasted for a month. Written informed valid consent was taken manually or electronically from every participant. The survey was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee. All the data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency and percentage where appropriate.

## RESULTS

Out of the total sample 215 (91%) used Tinder on their personal devices. Amongst the participants, 211 (90%) were aware of Tinder as a platform for dating and relationships. 103(44%) believed Tinder was used for casual dates and not for long term relationships. 71 (30%) believed Tinder was used for casual sex only. Sadly, 41 (17%) claimed that they did not know what Tinder was meant to be used for and had an account because their friends also had accounts. 62% (142) medical students had a Tinder account. 39 (nearly 40%) Post graduate students had a Tinder account as compared to 50 Under graduates. 40-45% of the total sample had a Tinder account. Majority of subjects had the account for the past 6 months to 1 year. 51% of the sample used Tinder for dating while 36% used Tinder for casual sexual encounters. Dating and sexuality were the main benefits of using a tinder account. 73% of students had gone out on a date via Tinder. 38% students visited Tinder multiple times (> 3) daily while 28% visited Tinder at least once a day. 78% admitted that their parents did not know about their Tinder accounts. 23% had a sibling that also had a Tinder account. 35% of those that used Tinder were already in some serious relationship and of these 40% had gone out on a date via Tinder despite being already in a serious relationship. 17% of medical students had contacted someone from the LGBTQ+ community using Tinder. They did not reveal further details of their sexual preferences or LGBTQ+ status in the survey. Majority believed Tinder was a medium for infidelity. 47% reported being anxious while using Tinder.

8% admitted to engaging in monetary transactions for sexual activity on Tinder. 31% felt that it was fine for married men and women to use Tinder for dating and casual sex.

## DISCUSSION

Data on the usage of Tinder in medical students is unavailable in India for use to compare our study findings to that of other studies. It was interesting to note that majority medical students believed that Tinder was meant for casual dating and casual sex. This is in keeping with the perceptions about Tinder worldwide.<sup>[11]</sup> Many students were regular users and admitted visiting Tinder multiple times a day. Majority believed that Tinder was a medium for infidelity and some had gone out on a date using Tinder despite being in a serious relationship. This is indicative of the fragility of relationships and how young adults may cheat on their partners as seen commonly.<sup>[12]</sup> They also believed it was fine for married men and women to use Tinder for casual dating and sex which also indicates the reasons why young adults in a modern world have many infidelity related issues in their marriages.<sup>[13]</sup> The current study is a pilot survey and had many limitations. It was a descriptive survey that did not address many confounding variables that may have affected Tinder use. It was cross sectional and circumscribed to a select group of medical students. There is a need for larger surveys in multiple population cohorts and from multiple cities to help us understand Indian youth and their attitudes and perceptions towards the use of Tinder.

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