



TO STUDY THE PATTERN AND PERCENTAGE OF INTERNET ADDICTION IN FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT Life seems impossible without internet nowadays. From booking autos and taxis to ordering food online and shopping with online transaction has become today's lifestyle. So we conducted this study to understand pattern and percentage of internet addiction in first year medical students. Materials and methods : A cross sectional study was conducted using semi-structured proforma along with Young's internet addiction scale on 83 participants. Result: Out of 83 students, we found only 3 students (3.61 %) were addicts, 10 (12.05 %) were over users, 56 (67.47%) were average users and 14 (16.87%) were using internet less than the average

KEYWORDS : internet addiction, prevalence , medical students

INTRODUCTION

India is the second largest online market ranked only behind China with over 460 million internet users. By 2021, there will be about 635.8 million internet users in India as reported by internet and mobile association of India, I -Cube 2018 Study. Mobile internet usage is growing at the rate of nearly 85 % per annum, with nearly 75 % of non voice usage being devoted to entertainment where video and music streaming are major growth activities. ⁽¹⁾ The most vulnerable group exposed to internet fascination are recently admitted students to professional colleges with smart phone and internet at their disposal for being in contact with family and to meet their needs.

The term Internet Addiction was proposed by Dr Ivan Goldberg in 1995 for pathological compulsive internet use. ⁽²⁾

Young linked excessive internet use most closely to pathological gambling, a disorder of impulse control in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM -IV) and adapted the DSM- IV criteria to relate to internet use in the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by her. ⁽³⁾

There are limited number of studies estimating how common the issue of internet addiction is in India. ⁽⁴⁾

In a study carried out by Yadav et al, there was strong positive correlation between internet addiction and depression, anxiety and stress in high school students of Ahmedabad ⁽⁵⁾

So we conducted this study to understand pattern and percentage of internet addiction in first year medical students.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A cross sectional study was carried out in first year medical students of both sexes of Mumbai in February 2018. Permission from the Institutional Ethical Committee was taken prior to the study. All the students present on that day were included in the study after getting voluntary written consent.

Inclusion criteria were all students of first year, boys and girls included between the age group of 17-22, participating voluntarily and has been using internet from past 1 year were included.

The information was collected by using semi structured proforma that contained details of demographic data, purpose of using the internet by choosing amongst options like online games, social networking or downloading medial files etc and gadgets which is used for internet usage like mobiles, laptops, desktop or internet cafe and also the total duration spent on it per day.

The Young's IAT is the only available test whose psychometric properties have been tested by Widyanto and McMurrin ⁽⁶⁾. The IAT is the first validated instrument to assess internet addiction which consists of 20 item, 6 point Likert Scale with scores ranging from 0 to 5

for each item. It measures the severity of self reported compulsive use of the internet ⁽³⁾ Total internet addiction scores were calculated with possible scores for the sum of 20 items ranging from 0 to 100. The scale showed very good internal consistency with an alpha coefficient of 0.93 in the similar studies ⁽⁷⁾

RESULTS

The details of information filled by the first year medical students were entered in the Microsoft excel sheet and the percentage and proportions were calculated from the same.

There were total 83 students who participated in the study out of which 47 (56.63 %) were males and 36 (43.37 %) were females.

Table 1: Gender wise distribution of IAT scores

Score	Pattern	Males n- 47	Females n- 36	Total n- 83
0 – 19	Less than average user	2(4.26)	12 (33.33)	14 (6.87)
20 – 39	Average user	36 (76.60)	20 (55.56)	56 (67.47)
40 -69	Overusers	6 (12.77)	4 (11.11)	10 (12.05)
70 -100	Addicts	3 (6.38)	0	3 (6.38)

Figures given in parantheses indicate percentage. IAT: internet addiction test

We classified the students into different groups depending on Young's original criteria. We found that, out of 83 students, only 3 (6.38%) students were having internet addiction and all were males. There were 10 students (12.05 %) who are over users with frequent problems caused by their internet use out of which 6 (12.77 %) were males and 4 (11.11%) were females. Majority of the students 56 (67.47%) were average users with 36 (76.60%) males and 20 (55.56%) females whereas 14 students (16.87%) out of which 2(4.26%) were males and 12 (33.33%) were females.

We found that, internet over usage as well as internet addiction is more prevalent in males as compared to females whereas among less than average usage females predominated.

Table 2 : Purpose of internet usage

Purpose	Males n- 47	Females n-36	Total n- 83
Education	30 (63.83)	27 (75)	57 (68.87)
Online games	6 (12.77)	4 (11.11)	10 (12.05)
Downloading	34 (72.34)	18 (50)	52 (62.65)
Social networking	38 (80.85)	23 (63.89)	61 (73.49)

Figures given in parentheses indicate percentage.

When we entered the data to study the purpose of internet usage in these students, we found that male students are more inclined towards social networking site, downloading and online gaming as compared to females whereas females are more inclined towards academic or

education related browsing as shown by percentage distribution in table no 2.

DISCUSSION:

There are limited studies on the internet usage among adolescents in India so we had conducted this study. We found that rate of internet addiction is higher in males as compared to females. In our study, the percentage of internet addiction was 6.38 % and the addicts were mainly males whereas over users are 12.05 % which are more susceptible for internet addiction in future. Our study is in concordance with the study done by Ghamari et al⁽⁷⁾ among Iranian medical students and Siomos et al⁽⁸⁾, Xu et al⁽⁹⁾.

In this study we found, males students mainly use internet for non academic purpose like social networking and downloading media files as their first two priorities followed by academic purpose on third rank whereas females use internet mainly for social networking followed by academic purpose on the second priority.

So we concluded that, internet usage has tremendously increased in last decade from cities to villages may be due to availability of high speed internet, decrease in costs of smart phones and various internet plans that attracts every person may be rich or poor.

FUTURE PROSPECT OF THIS STUDY

There is still debate whether to call internet addiction as a distinct disorder by itself. As per DSM-V, internet addiction is not yet recognized as disorder but is being considered as an area in need for further research⁽³⁾ This requires widespread coverage of history taking and questionnaire filling from the high school students to professionals to gauge the intensity of these problems and to take an early intervention to prevent epidemic of internet addiction amongst the next generation.

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