



## PHANTOM VIBRATION SYNDROME

## Nursing

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## ABSTRACT

Phantom vibration syndrome or phantom ringing syndrome is This is the perception that one's mobile is vibrating or ringing when it is not.<sup>1</sup> It is characterised as a tactile hallucination since the brain perceives a sensation that is not present.

Psychologists suggested that physical sensations, such as an itch, may be misinterpreted by the brain as a vibrating phone.

Majority of cell phone users report experiencing phantom vibrations, with reported rates ranging from 27.4% to 89%.<sup>2</sup>



## KEYWORDS

## INTRODUCTION

According to Michael Rothberg, the term is not a syndrome, but is better characterised as a tactile hallucination since the brain perceives a sensation that is not actually present.<sup>3</sup> WebMD published an article on phantom vibration syndrome with Rothberg as a source.<sup>4</sup> Several other articles have been published in 2010s, including in NPR, Bustle, CBS News, and Psychology Today. [4][5][6][7]

Phantom ringing may be experienced while taking a shower, watching television, or using a noisy device. Humans are particularly sensitive to auditory tones between 1,000 and 6,000 hertz, and basic mobile phone ringtones often fall within this range.<sup>1</sup> Phantom vibrations develop after carrying a cell phone set to use vibrating alerts.<sup>9</sup> Researcher Michelle Drouin found that almost 9 of 10 undergraduates at her college experienced phantom vibrations.[9][10]

## Prevalence Of Phantom Vibration Syndrome

PVS is a disorder of emerging technology; 90 percent of phone users suffer from 'phantom vibration syndrome'. Many studies have been conducted to assess the prevalence of PVS. In 2010, Rothberg et al conducted a study on PVS among medical staff. Nearly 70 percent people experience PVS during activity of daily living. Goyal (2015) conducted a survey on PVS among 300 postgraduate students belonging to different fields of specialisation at Kurukshetra University; 74 percent of students were found to have both phantom vibrations and ringing syndrome, whereas 17 percent felt phantom vibration exclusively and 4 percent faced only phantom ringing syndrome.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PVS

1. Psychological Stress
2. Anxiety
3. Hallucinations
4. Depressions
5. Attention deficit
6. Over Vigilance
7. Emotional Disturbance

## CAUSES

The cause of phantom vibrations is not known.<sup>9</sup> Preliminary research suggests it is related to over-involvement with one's cell phone.<sup>9</sup> Vibrations typically begin occurring after carrying a phone for between one month and one year.<sup>9</sup> It has been suggested that, when anticipating a phone call, the cerebral cortex may misinterpret other sensory input (such as muscle contractions, pressure from clothing, or music) as a phone vibration or ring tone.<sup>7</sup> This may be understood as a human signal detection issue, with potentially significant influences from psychological attributes. Factors such as experiences, expectations, and psychological states influence the threshold for signal detection. Some phantom vibration experiences may be a type of pareidolia and can therefore be examined as a psychological

phenomenon influenced by individual variances in personality, condition, and context. Attachment anxiety can also be seen as a predictor for the frequency of phantom vibration experiences since it is associated with psychological attributes related to insecurity in interpersonal relationships.

## EPIDEMIOLOGY:

In most studies, a majority of cell phone users report experiencing occasional phantom vibrations or ringing, with reported rates ranging from 29.6% to 89%. [8] Once every two weeks is a typical frequency for the sensations, though a minority experience them daily. [8] Some individuals may be seriously bothered by the sensations.<sup>9</sup>

## MANAGEMENT:

Little research has been done on treatment for phantom vibrations.<sup>9</sup> Few suggested measures can be taken for managing PVS:

- Time bound use of cell phones
- Decrease the possible dependency on cell phones
- Frequently change the alert modes like vibration to ringing
- Life style modifications
- Counselling and guidance regarding hallucinations and affective aspects
- Using different devices
- Carrying cell phone in different pockets or positions
- Avoid the vibration mode of cell phone.

## COMMON COMPLICATIONS OF PVS

1. Burnout syndrome
2. Psychological affective disorders
3. Depressive psychosis
4. Pathological stress

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