

Original Research Article

Evaluation of Internet Addiction among Students of Medical College in Ahmedabad

Rachana Kapadia¹, Dhara Prajapati¹, Pratik Bharucha²

¹Resident, Community Medicine Department, B.J. Medical College, Ahmedabad.

²Emergency Medical Officer, Narayana Multispeciality Hospital, Ahmedabad.

Corresponding Author: Rachana Kapadia

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Internet has become world's biggest library where retrieval of scientific re-sources is only a mouse click away. Online gaming, compulsive use of social networking and marathon Symptoms are comparable to other behavioral addictions. Researchers believe that like other addictions, it often masks other problems such as depression, low self esteem, and social anxiety.

Methods: A cross sectional study was undertaken in 200 medical students of B. J. Medical College, Ahmedabad. They were interviewed using predesigned pretested questionnaire.

Results: Mean Age of starting Internet 16.76 (± 2.84) years. The average daily time spent on the internet was 4.27(± 2.53) hours. Category of internet addicts on the basis of scoring system adapted for the study reveals that 125 (62.5%) students had mild internet addiction and 40 (20%) had moderate internet addiction.

Conclusion: Awareness should be created among the students to improve ability to reduce the occurrence of internet addiction behavior promoting their healthy growth.

Key Words: Internet, Addiction, Medical students.

INTRODUCTION

Internet is increasingly having more influence on all aspects of the society as it has become an integral part of the daily lives of people in the modern era. Internet use has significantly increased globally and in India. Due to the advanced development of network construction in universities, the number of Internet-using university students is increasing. A series of problems resulting from the misuse of Internet accompanying the excessive use of Internet, arouse attentions of researchers all over the world.

[1,2] In fact, Younger Internet users (i.e.,

between 18 and 24 years old) were more at risk of becoming Internet addicts than older. [3]

The term "Internet Addictive Disorder," (IAD) was coined by a New York psychiatrist, Ivan Goldberg in 1995. [4] The IAD is a compulsive-impulsive spectrum disorder consists of at least three subtypes: excessive gaming, sexual preoccupations, and e-mail/text messaging. All of the variants share the following four components:

- 1) Excessive use, often associated with a loss of sense of time or a neglect of basic drives,
- 2) Withdrawal, including feelings of anger, tension, and/or depression when the computer is inaccessible,
- 3) Tolerance, including the need for better computer equipment, more software, or more hours of use, and
- 4) Negative repercussions, including arguments, lying, poor achievement, social isolation, and fatigue.

Types: - Internet Addiction is an impulsive-control problem and five subtypes have been defined:

1. Cyber sexual Addiction
2. Cyber-Relational Addiction
3. Net Compulsions
4. Information Overload
5. Computer Addiction

Therefore, the current study was carried out to find out Use internet and purpose of using internet among students of B.J. Medical College, Ahmedabad and to detect prevalence of internet addiction among medical students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional study was carried out from May 2015 and July 2015 among 200 medical students. To make our sample more representatives of target population we included undergraduate, interns and post graduate students of B.J. Medical College of Ahmedabad who gave consent and who were using internet for more than 1 hour a day were included in the study. Students were selected randomly. The data was collected by inter personal interviews using a standardized 'Internet Addiction Test' questionnaire. It is a type of questionnaire developed by Dr. Kimberly S. Young in 1998 [4] which were in English language. It chiefly contains two parts: The demographic aspects included name, age, sex and details about the usage of the internet.

There were 20 questions with 6 options for each. The scoring for each option was done as follows:

A = Rarely = 1; B = Occasionally = 2; C=Frequently=3; D = Often = 4; E = Always = 5 F=Not; Applicable=0;

Assessment:

- 20 - 49 points: an average on-line user. You may surf the Web a bit too long at times, but you have control over your usage.
- 50 -79 points: experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of the Internet. You should consider their full impact on your life.
- 80 - 100 points: Internet usage is causing significant problems in your life. You should evaluate the impact of the Internet on your life and address the problems directly caused by your Internet usage.

The data collected in the study was entered in Micro soft Excel spreadsheet and analyzed by using Epi Info.

RESULTS

Table-1: General Information of study Population (n=300)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	126	63
Female	74	37
Age in Years		
<20	7	3.5
20-22	136	68
23-25	34	17
26-28	19	9.5
>28	4	2
Students		
Under Graduates	142	71
Interns	22	11
Post Graduates	36	18

In the present study out of the 300 internet user subjects, 126(63%) were males and 74(37%) were females. The mean age of the sample was 21.75 (± 2.96) years. 142 (71%) participant were undergraduate students. (Table 1)

Mean Age of starting Internet 16.76 (± 2.84) years. The average daily time spent on the internet was 4.27(± 2.53) hours.

Internet has become a need of daily routine life and this can be shown by the result that 192 (96%) students had internet connection in mobile. The most common purpose for internet use was found for entertainment (83.5%) followed closely by chatting and

study (80.5%). Most used site was Google and Reason of internet preference for internet over Text book was easy accessibility. 41% students spent 200-299 Rs. monthly for internet connection. (Table 2)

Table-2 Information Regarding Internet Usage among study population

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Place & mean of access*		
Personal Desktop	45	22.5
Laptop	61	30.5
Mobile phone	192	96
Cyber café	29	14.5
Library	34	17
Main purpose of using internet*		
Email	123	61.5
Chatting	161	80.5
Research	98	49
Study	161	80.5
Online shopping	122	61
Entertainment	167	83.5
Commonly used Websites		
Google	107	53.5
Facebook /whats app	38	19
Wikipedia	23	11.5
You-tube/Torrent	32	16
Reasons preference for internet over books		
Time Saving	44	22
Easy accessibility	83	41.5
Latest Knowledge	71	35.5
Never Prefer	2	1
Monthly Expenditure on Internet(Rs.)		
<100	9	4.5
100-199	54	27
200-299	82	41
300-399	7	3.5
400-499	10	5
500 or more	38	19

* Multiple answer were given

Mean Age of starting Internet 16.76 (± 2.84) years. The average daily time spent on the internet was 4.27 (± 2.53) hours. Internet has become a need of daily routine life and this can be shown by the result that 192 (96%) students had internet connection in mobile. The most common purpose for internet use was found for entertainment (83.5%) followed closely by chatting and study (80.5%). Most used site was Google and Reason of internet preference for internet over Text book was easy accessibility. 41% students spent 200-299 Rs. monthly for internet connection. (Table 2)

Table-3: Analysis on prevalence of internet addiction in internet users (n=200)

Score	Frequency	Percentage
<20: normal internet users	35	17.5
20-49: mild internet addicts	125	62.5
50-79: moderate internet addicts	40	20
80-100: severe internet addicts	00	00

Overall analysis to find out proportion of study subjects falling in the category of internet addicts on the basis of scoring system adapted for the study reveals that 125 (62.5%) students had mild internet addiction and 40(20%) had moderate internet addiction. (Table 3)

DISCUSSION

This study is a preliminary study of internet behavior pattern in a sample representing Medical students. The mean age of the sample was 21.75 (± 2.96) years. 142 (71%) participant were undergraduate students. Mean Age of starting Internet 16.76 (± 2.84) years. The average daily time spent on the internet was 4.27 (± 2.53) hours. A study done in Mangalore, Vidya Mavila Chathoth Et al; among medical students reported the mean age of the sample was 18.49 (± 0.71) years. The mean duration of internet use was 6.46 (± 2.31) years. The average daily time spent on the internet was 2.10 (± 1.19) hours. ^[5]

Present study shows that 192 (96%) students had internet connection in mobile. The most common purpose for internet use was found for entertainment (83.5%) followed closely by chatting and studies (80.5%). These findings were different compare to study done by Chhari Neeraj Et al; in Madhya Pradesh showing most UG students (74%) use the internet for e-mail/chatting purpose, only 2% uses internet for research work. ^[6]

Present study reveals that 125 (62.5%) students had mild internet addiction and 40 (20%) had moderate internet addiction which is differ compare to study done in Indore Medical students showing 23 (9.5%) subjects have been found to be internet addicts i.e. have scores between 80-100. ^[7]

CONCLUSION

The data is indicative of Internet addiction to be an emerging problem of the modern era. Internet addiction has commonly been viewed as an extremely broad topic with few common definitions and little guidance. Researchers should work to develop a standardized definition of Internet addiction with supporting justification Multi centric studies are required to assess the real problem and

thereby take appropriate steps to tackle the growing problem. It is therefore recommended that measures should be taken to promote awareness of problematic internet use and develop a healthy internet culture. Initiative must be taken to create opportunities for recreation, relaxation and extracurricular activities. Awareness should be created among the students to improve ability to reduce the occurrence of internet addiction behavior promoting their healthy growth.

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