

Role of Excessive Internet Abuse in Younger Generations

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ABSTRACT

Day by day Internet is getting a role of over involvement in our life and addiction to it is spreading in quite rapid mode in younger generation of population and therefore it is now slowly developing more frequently and getting recognized as a social cause for developing psychological and behavioral problems.

Aim: of this study is to assess the psychiatric problems mentally and behaviorally in younger age group of people due to the excessive mobile and internet use.

Method: 120 individuals from 15-40 years of age group with major complaints of inappropriate sleep pattern, aggressive behavior with internet usage for prolong duration of time were taken from Outpatient department of Maharishi Devraha Baba Autonomous State Medical College Deoria (U.P.) from 1 august 2022 to 1 March 2023. All of them gets examined for a detailed clinical history, mental status examination, psychological and overall complete pathological examination.

Results: The results of this study shows that an excessive usage of internet plays a significant role in an increment in mental and behavioural disorders.

Keywords: internet abuse, mobile abuse younger age group, mental and behavioral problems, psychiatric disorders

INTRODUCTION

Spending a lot of time on internet usage is quite common now a days. Presently internet had replaced almost each and every thing in today's world and somehow, we all have been getting indulged into this trap. A

need on the basis of regularity with compulsory and persistent use of internet for most of the hours throughout the days results in significant impairment in individual behavior and personality. Specifically, the most commonly involved people belongs to adolescents age group (12-19years of age) and those who are on the verge of emerging adults (20-29years of age) because usually they access the internet more than most of any other age groups and therefore they were developing a higher risk of overuse on internet. The problem of changes in behavior is therefore quite common in younger generation (1). Enhanced and compulsive use of Internet in younger generation is also a social problem because emerging generation is struggling for development of their future security and planning which overall depends on internet for higher education, basic studies, learning and social activities, this age group appears to be more susceptible to get indulged by media influences(2).

Physically a deterioration in strength and immunity due to inappropriate sleeping pattern, inadequate exercise and an increased risk of withdrawal symptoms including complaints of itching and burning in eyes, head ache, body ache, irritation, low mood, labile effect, anger, impulse control, anxiety, with episodic panic attack, extreme of agitation not listening to the commands of parents when they were restricted from using the technology. These symptoms might also be presented in severe form and

even turned into symptomatic effects such as increased heart rate stiff shoulders congestion of chest shortness or difficulty in breathing (3). Very frequently noticed psychiatric symptom is change in behavior. Adolescents are more vulnerable to an addictive behaviour for internet that slowly gets converted into medical emergency due to excessive Internet (4). Internet is an essential part of children, young or old (5).

(i) Many people remain indulged with thoughts of their previous online internet activity usage (6).

(ii) Have a persistent desire to stay online with increased duration of time to perceive an achievable desire of satisfaction (7).

(iii) Have no control or schedule regarding their wastage of time on internet usage.

(iv) Feeling irritation, lethargy with restless when forcefully restricted from internet or having problem with their electronic gadget.

(v) Always wants to be updated online even when it is not even actually required (8).

(vi) An overall compromise of health with endangering studies which further proceed to hamper both personal and professional opportunities in life due to excessive internet usage.

(vii) Denying and try to justify their over involvement in internet in front of their parents and Doctor.

(viii) Gives a sensation of relaxation with comfort ability on using internet whereas having a feeling helplessness, guilty, anxiety or depression whenever kept restricted from internet (9).

OBJECTIVES: is to assess the psychiatric problems mentally and behaviourally in younger age group due to excessive internet use.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

STUDY DESIGN: A Cross sectional hospital based study

VENUE: Maharishi Devraha Baba Autonomous State Medical College

Outpatient Department of Psychiatry from 1 August 2022 to 1 March 2023.

SAMPLE SIZE: 120

INCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Excessive internet/mobile phone use (10).
2. Comes under 15-40 yrs of age group.
3. Willing with written, informed consent.
4. Educational criteria fulfils high school (class 10th).

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Having any psychiatric illness or mentally challenged or retarded or received ECT for complaint of mental and behavioural symptoms due to psychoactive substance within the last 1 year (Excluding Tobacco use).
2. Any medical illness.
3. Not ready due to give consent.

TOOLS:

1. Socio-demographic and clinical Data sheet.

It contains age, sex, education, socioeconomic status. The clinical history of duration of illness, age of onset, number of episodes, history of psychotic features, past history treatment history etc.

2. Internet Addiction Test by Dr. Kimberly S. Young

a questionnaire that contains 20 questions to be answered. Each item is rated on a 5 point scale that range from 0-5 (11, 12).

A higher number of score denotes a higher severity level of internet use

0-30: normal.

31-49: mild.

50-79: moderate.

80-100: severe.

PROCEDURE

Detailed clinical history, mental status examination, general physical examination and routine blood investigations (complete blood count, Liver Function Test, Kidney

Function Test, blood sugar and thyroid profile) was done to rule out any medical or neurological abnormality.

RESULTS

The study shows that excessive internet use impairs the working efficiency of a person that leads to impairment in personality and behaviour that later on gets worsen and slowly appears to be emerged as a psychiatric disorder that can vary from mild to severe personality changes.

The whole sample taken here in the study fulfil the criteria of Internet overuse 32% of the patients taken in the study shows mild dependence on internet addiction whereas 78% of the patients shows moderate dependence on internet addiction and remaining 10% of the patients comes under the criteria of severe dependence on internet addiction disorder. 5% of the patients shows mild changes in their personality and behaviour due to excessive internet use, 86% of the patients shows a moderate level of changes in their personality whereas 9% of the patients shows severe symptoms of

personality disorders, the patients presented with the symptoms of personality changes that mainly includes the symptoms of anxiety disorder and antisocial personality disorder.

In this study we had seen that variations in mood is reported very commonly in patients of internet addiction, 8% of the patients showed a mild complaint of having bipolar disorder whereas 80 % of the patients showed a moderate level of symptoms of bipolar disorder and the remaining 12% presented with severe symptoms of bipolar disorder.

10% of patients suffered from mild symptoms of obsessions, 52% suffered from moderate symptoms. of OCD,38% of patients complaints about severe symptoms of OCD.

68% that is the maximum number of patients showed mild or very few symptoms of Schizophrenia, 22% showed moderate level of Schizophrenic symptoms, around 10% of patients had shown severe grade of schizophrenic symptoms.

Table1: Socio-demographic characteristics of patients

VARIABLES		PATIENTS
SEX	MALE	72
	FEMALE	48
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED	60
	UNMARRIED	60
RELIGION	HINDU	96
	NON-HINDU	24
OCCUPATION	EMPLOYED	76
	UNEMPLOYED	44
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS	LOWER	72
	MIDDLE	48
DOMICILE	RURAL	36
	URBAN	84

Table no. 1 shows socio demographic data of the patients who were involved in the present study 60% of the patients were male whereas 40% of them were female.50% were married whereas another 50% were unmarried.80% of the patients taken in the study belongs to Hindu families whereas rest of the 20% were from non- Hindu families.65% of them were employed whereas rest of the 35% were unemployed.30% of the patients belongs to

rural area whereas 70% of them belongs to urban background.

Table No.2: Age and Education level of the patients

VARIABLES	PATIENT (MEAN SD)
AGE (in years)	28.8± 4.6
EDUCATION (in years)	14.2± 2.8

Table no. 2 shows the variables age and education of the total number of patients involved in this study. The result shows that Age in years of the patients is 28.8± 4.6 and

the result of education level of the patients in years is 14.2 ± 2.8 .

Table no. 3 Clinical data of the patients

VARIABLE	RANGE	MEAN	SD
ONSET (in yrs)	13-35	22.4	6.67
DURATION OF ILLNESS	1-5	6.3	4.6

Table no.3 shows the overall clinical data of the patients involved in this study. The result shows that the patients shown an average range of onset of illness varies from 13-35 years of age with a mean value of

22.4 and a standard deviation of 6.67 in this study and the duration of illness varies from a range of 1-5years of age with a mean value of 6.3 and a standard deviation of 4.6 in this study.

Table no. 4: Treatment Data of patient

MEDICINE	NO. OF PATIENTS RECEIVING	%OF PATIENTS RECEIVING TREATMENT
SSRI	72	60
Escitalopram	48	40
Fluoxetine	24	20
MOOD STABILIZER	96	80
Sodium valproate	84	70
Oxcarbazepine	12	10
NSAIDS		
Naproxen Sodium	84	70
ANTACID &ANTIEMETIC		
Pantoprazole	108	90
Domperidome	36	30
BENZODIAZEPINES	60	50
Lorazepam	30	25
Clonazepam	6	5
Zolpidem	24	20

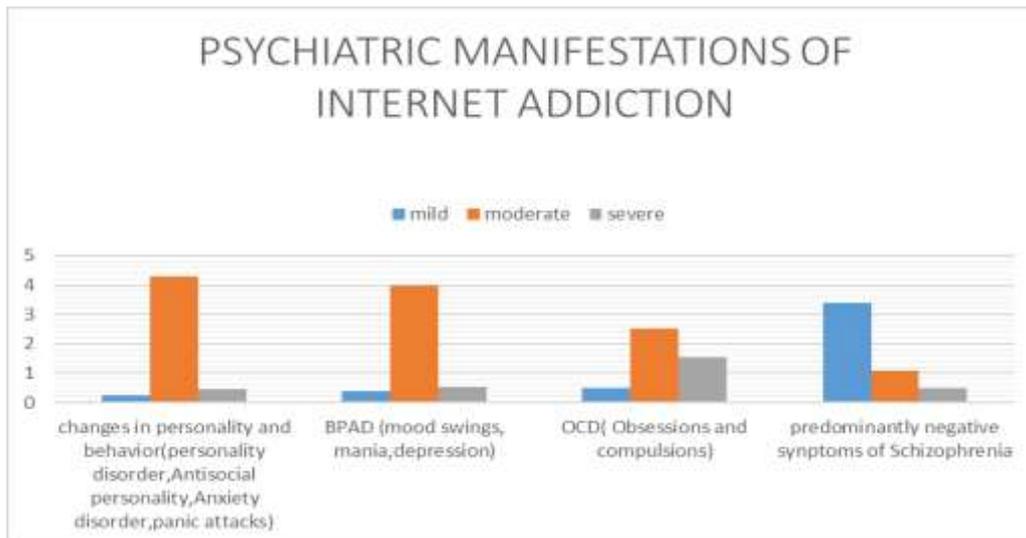
Table no 4: shows treatment history of the patients under this study 60%of the patients were taking SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) which is most commonly prescribed for low mood, decreased interest, inappropriate sleep, 80% of the patients were kept on mood stabilizers for their varied range of affect, impulsivity, anger outburst, irritability, aggression, 70%of them were kept on NSAID mainly used here is

Naproxen sodium for complaints of headache, burning, itching redness or watering from Eyes due to prolong screen exposure. 90%of the patients were kept of antacid Pantoprazole for complaints of abdominal pain, regurgitation, acid reflux uneasiness in chest decrease appetite. 30% of the patients were kept on antiemetic Domperidone for complaint of nausea, uneasiness and decrease intake of food. 50% of the patients were kept on benzodiazepines for inappropriate sleep.

Table no.5: Severity of internet overuse of Internet addiction test

Severity	Percentage	Mean \pm SD
Normal	Nil	Nil
Mild	32	49.03 ± 5.74
Moderate	78	69.41 ± 5.31
Severe	10	82.1 ± 2.16

Table no. 5 shows the results of internet addiction test which depicts the severity of internet overuse in terms of normal, mild, moderate and severe grade of usage of internet in daily routine life. None of the patients involved in this study comes under the criteria of minimal or normal usage of internet. 32%of the patients with a mean \pm SD of 49.03 ± 5.74 had shown mild severity of internet usage 78%of the patients with the mean \pm SD of 69.41 ± 5.31 had shown the moderate severity of internet usage whereas the remaining 10% of the patients with a mean \pm SD of 82.1 ± 2.16 had shown the severe level of intensity of Internet usage. The above pie chart shows the extents of internet addiction in the patients involved in this study in terms of mild, moderate and severe.



The above mentioned chart shows the overall psychiatric manifestations due to excessive internet usage in the patient involved in this study.

DISCUSSION

Psychiatric symptoms were found very frequently in persons who have prolonged exposure to internet usage, it may vary from mild, moderate to severe but reflects a great impact on personal well-being with impairment in social life along with a broad spectrum of personality derangement and directly related to providing an impairment in mental and behavioural activities of an individual.

This study is done in order to find out the rapid increase in mental stress with behavioural modification due to excessive spending of time on mobile, internet, social media, gaming or persistent watching content of no use on mobile that later on gets converted into compulsive behaviour to be always indulged in expenditure of precious time on internet (15).

Withdrawal from Internet leads to anxiety from being away from internet. These rapid modification in circumstances must be required to be taken seriously as an alarming indicator for the upcoming threat (16).

Disturbance in maintaining a balance in fast running life will get converted into mental pressure in life which further gets deteriorated beyond an extent due to unnoticeable negligent behaviour which ultimately hampers the life of others (17) (18).

* Feeling anxious whenever withdrawn from mobile phone or social media, felt insecure, increased heart rate, decreased appetite, decreased sleep, gets violent, started shouting without any appropriate reason, crying shows anxiety disorder.(19).

*Behaves beyond basic social manners and lacks empathy towards others shows antisocial personality disorder (20) (21)(22). A labile effect with symptoms of occasional low mood varying with elated mood sometimes goes beyond ecstasy, (21)(22) crying spells to anger outburst with early morning awakening or no sleep at all(23)(24),extreme level of energy ,highly talkative or didn't speak at all shows bipolar affective disorder .

Repetitively returning back to internet use is also found very frequently. A repetitive urge to be online with an urge to check the previous online activity, inability to stop from staying away from internet, compulsive mobile and internet use shows obsessive compulsive disorder (25)

Excessive internet usage makes a person totally withdrawal from social life, lack of initiation of work, lack of enthusiasm and interest, not motivated at all, unable to perceive pleasure in any of activities, inappropriate and disturbed and appetite sleep, remains in their own life, prefers to be alone, abusive, assaultive, neglects self-care) (26) (27) most of the patients in this

study had shown a variety of Schizophrenia symptoms.

Declaration by Authors

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