PREVALENCE OF INTERNET ADDICTION AND THEIR USAGE PATTERN AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades with the advent of new age smart phones, tablets and computers, the internet is readily accessible to the general population at their fingertips. There have been growing concerns globally for what has been labelled as "Internet Addiction." A descriptive survey was conducted to assess the prevalence of internet addiction and the usage pattern among college students. 288 students were selected using convenience sampling technique. Data was collected using socio-demographic questionnaire, modified internet addiction test by Dr.Young and structured questionnaire for internet usage pattern. The Prevalence of internet addiction among college students were found to be 26%. Majority (98.3%) of college students were using internet on their mobile phone and 97.2% were using YouTube as the most frequently used application followed by whats app. 79.9% were using internet at home and majority (86.5%) of college students were using internet for educational purposes.33.7 % of college students were using internet for 1-2 hours per day and 33.3 % were using 3-4 hours per day. In my study it was concluded that there is high prevalence of internet addiction among college students.

KEYWORDS: Internet Addiction, Prevalence, College Students

India stands second in the world with approximately 500 million Internet users. Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) is an inability of individuals to control their Internet use, an addictive behaviour, resulting in psychological, academic, family, social and work dysfunction. (Maheshwari and Preksha, 2018) (Young, 1998)

Besides educational purposes, young people are spending most of their time in online activities including pornography, gambling, online video games, excessive chatting, cyber bullying and cybercrimes etc. (Soleymani MR, Garivani A, Farashbandi FZ; 2016). Internet overuse can lead to sedentary lifestyles, weight gain and a decline in physical fitness. (Cocke A; 2018).People should be made aware and sensitized about the negative consequences of irresponsible internet use. It is also important to understand the usage pattern of internet among students to lay foundation to develop guidelines for safe practices of internet use to prevent health complications. The objective of the study were to assess the prevalence of internet addiction and the internet usage patterns among the college students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive survey approach was used to assess the prevalence of internet addiction among college students at PGDAV College, New Delhi. Total 288 students were selected using non-probability convenience sampling technique. The data was collected from 8th October 2019 to 22nd October 2019. Data was collected through questionnaires consisting of socio demographic profile, internet usage profile and modified internet addiction test by Dr. Young (1998). The Internet Addiction Test (IAT) by Dr. Young is a standardized tool that had been modified according to the need, purpose and cultural sensitivity for obtaining data .The validity and reliability of the tool was established. It consisted of 24 questions measured on a 5 point likert scale (0-never,1-rarely,2-occasionally ,3-frequently,4-often,5-always)covering the areas like preoccupation with internet, excessive use, neglecting work, anticipation, lack of control, neglecting social life and physical health. Scores range from 0-30 depicts no addiction, 31-60 depicts mild addiction, 61-90 depicts moderate addiction and 91-120 depicts severe addiction. Students fell in the score range of moderate and severe internet addiction were only taken up to assess the prevalence of Internet addiction. The internet usage profile questionnaire consisted of items like source of internet use, place and purpose of using internet, application most frequently used etc. Data was analysed by descriptive statistics as per the study objective using SPSS 21.

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RESULTS

Table 1 depicts that majority of the students 93.75% were in the age group of 16-20 years. Majority 57% participants were females. Most 44% of them belonged to 1st year. Majority 59.72% of them belonged to nuclear family and majority 82.6% of them residing at home. Education status of father 49.3% and education status of mother 31.6% of most of the college students were graduate and above. About 38.2% of students belonged to upper middle class.

Table 1: Description of the socio Demographic characteristics of college students

S.NO.	Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	**Age (in years)**		
	16-20	270	93.75
	21-24	18	6.25
2.	**Gender**		
	Male	123	42.71
	Female	165	57.29
3.	**Academic year**		
	1st	127	44.09
	2nd	79	27.43
	3rd	82	28.47
4.	**Type of family**		
	Joint	116	40.27
	Nuclear	172	59.72
5.	**Place of residing**		
	Home	238	82.6
	Hostel	50	17.4
6.	**Educational status of the father**		
	Illiterate	15	5.2
	Elementary	45	15.6
	Secondary	86	29.9
	Graduate & above	142	49.3
7.	**Educational status of the mother**		
	Illiterate	57	19.8
	Elementary	62	21.5
	Secondary	78	27
	Graduate & above	91	31.6
8	**Socio –economic status ***		
	Upper class (I)	43	14.9
	Upper middle class (II)	110	38.2
	Lower middle class(III)	68	23.6
	Upper lower class (IV)	59	20.5
	Lower class (V)	8	2.8

*(According to Kuppuswamy scale 2018)

Data presented in table 2 depicts that majority 166 (57.6%) of college students had mild internet addiction followed by 68 (23.6%) had moderate, few 7(2.4%) had severe internet addiction and 47 (16.3%) had no internet addiction. Hence, it can be concluded that more than half 166 (57.6%) of college students had mild internet addiction

Table: 2 Distribution of students as per level of internet addiction

Level of addiction	Score	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Normal	0-30	47	16.3
Mild	31-60	166	57.6
Moderate	61-90	68	23.6
Severe	91-120	7	2.4

(N=288)

Table 3 depicts that out of 288 college students 75 (26%) were addicted to internet followed by 213 (74%) who were not addicted to internet. Hence, it is concluded that the prevalence of internet addiction was 26% among college students.

Table 3 depicts that majority 98.3% of the students were using internet on their mobile phones. YouTube (97.2%) was the most frequently used application followed by whats apps. Most (79.9%) of them were using internet at their home and for educational purposes. Average time spend on internet was between 1-2 hours /day (33.7%) followed by 3-4 hours/day (33.3%).the difference was very minute.
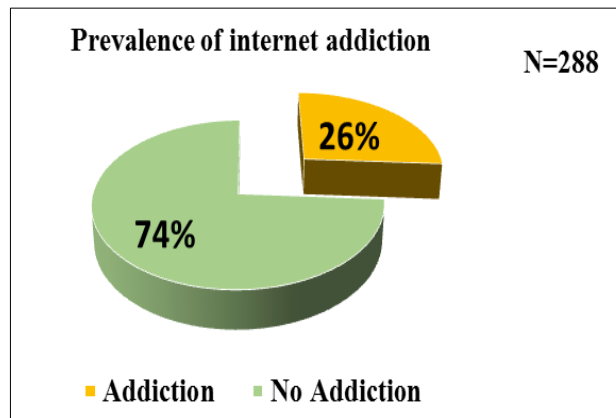

Figure 1: The pie diagram showing the prevalence of internet addiction

Table 3: The internet usage pattern of the college students

S.No	Pattern of internet usage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Source of internet usage ***		
	Mobile Phone	283	98.3
	Laptop	86	29.9
	Computers	44	15.3
2.	**Application used frequently on internet**		
	YouTube	280	97.2
	Google	243	84.3
	What's app	176	61.1
	Facebook	88	30.6
	Instagram	56	19.4
	Twitter	26	9
	Others	4	1.4
3.	**Place of using internet ***		
	Home	230	79.9
	College	107	37.2
	Public places	80	27.8
	Hostel	40	13.9
	Library	24	8.3
	Cyber café	19	6.6
4.	**Purpose of using internet ***		
	Educational purposes	249	86.5
	Chatting	169	58.7
	Email	116	40.3
	Gaming	116	40.3
	Shopping	71	24.7
	Pornography	42	14.6
5	**Average internet usage (in hours/day)**		
	< 1 hours	34	11.8
	1-2 hours	97	33.7
	3-4 hours	96	33.3
	>5 hours	61	21.2

* Percentage exceeds due to multiple responses

DISCUSSION

Internet addiction is well-defined as any online-related, compulsive behaviour which interferes with the normal living and causes severe stress on family, friends, loved ones and one`s work environment. (Young K, Pistner M, O'Mara J, Buchanan;1999)

Students need more internet than other population based on their educational and research needs, in addition to entertainment, chatting, online shopping etc. There is little empirical data on prevalence of internet addiction and the usage patterns. It is high time to sensitize students about the emerging behaviour disorder based on the data of prevalence of internet addiction and its usage pattern and develop safe practices guidelines for internet use. Excessive internet use such as playing games, shopping, chatting, watching pornography, and so on, is a cause of reduced physical activity and sleep time, which had adverse effects on physical and mental health. Developing prevention interventions should primarily target children and adolescents at risk of Internet addiction but also parents, teachers, peers, and others who are part of the formative environment of children and adolescents. (Vondráčková P, Gabrhelík R.; 2016)

The prevalence of internet addiction was found to be 19.85%, with moderate and severe addiction being 19.5% and 0.4%, respectively in a study to estimate the prevalence, understand the pattern, and to determine the association between psychopathology and internet addiction among health profession undergraduates. (Gedam SR, Ghosh S, Modi L, Goyal A, Mansharamani ;2017).These findings are consistent with the current study where 26% prevalence was determined. Moderate and severe internet addiction being 23.6% and 2.4% respectively.

In a study to find out the burden of IA among college students in Delhi, its risk factors and association with depression, anxiety, and stress among the non-professional college students of the University of Delhi, 25.3% prevalence of IA was reported. (by Gupta A, Khan A, Maroof, Rajoura OP, Srivastava S;2017) which were in accord with the current study. However, face-to-face interviews were chosen as method of data collection which was different from the present study where self –reported questionnaire were used.

The findings of the current study are also in agreement with the study where 55 % and 17.67 % of the participants had mild and moderate addiction and only 1.33 % of them were severely addicted and 84.8 % had yelling and annoying behaviour while 86.5 % had secretive and defensive behaviour (Thakur A, Peepre K, Vaswani A,Gupta K, Verma A, Singh D;2016.) In the current study 57.6% and 23.6% of the participants were mild and moderately addicted and 2.4% were severely addicted. However, no behavioural and health problems were explored.

A study on prevalence, usage pattern, and risk of internet addiction (IA) among undergraduate students of a health institution from Delhi by Young's IA test reported 98% of the students were using internet for educational purposes, 95% for entertainment, 92.5% for accessing social sites, 76.2% for checking E-mails and 45% for pornographic websites. (Sulania A, Sachdeva S , Dwivedi N; 2016) which is in agreement with the current study where majority 86.5% of students were using internet for educational purposes. It is seen that the use of internet among students for educational purposes is enormous.

Our study is not without limitations. The non-probability convenience sampling technique was used which limits the generalization of the study results. In addition, No intervention was given to sensitize students about the safe and responsible use of internet for educational and other purposes and to develop preventive practices to avoid health complications. . Furthermore, the study presents the findings of students of single college in the capital city, the colleges in the rural or sub urban area could have different findings.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings that the prevalence of internet addiction among the college students is high. There is need to develop awareness about the features of internet addiction and various preventive strategies to overcome it.

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