

Prevalence of Internet Addiction among BDS Students in UCMS, Bhairahawa, Nepal

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ABSTRACT

Background: One's passion for the internet can be healthy, addictive and sometimes in between. Young (1998) characterized Internet addiction as staying online on an average of 38 hour or more per week, and concluded that Internet addiction can shatter families, relationships, and careers. Dental students are considered as high-risk group for internet addiction. The possible reasons could be available free time; no parental monitoring and sometimes to get away from hectic college routine. The aim of this cross-sectional questionnaire-based study was to determine the prevalence of internet addiction among BDS students in UCMS, Bhairahawa, Nepal. **Methods:** The present study includes a total of 169 BDS dental students, on the basis of complete enumeration system. Their responses to the "Internet Addiction Scale" questionnaire were collected and descriptive analysis was done using SPSS 20 software. **Results:** The result shows that among the participants 117 (69.23%) were conceived problematic and 11(6.51%) were conceived as significantly problematic in respect to internet addiction. **Conclusion:** The results suggested a significantly increasing trend in internet addiction among dental students.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, Internet, Internet Activities, Internet Addiction Symptoms, Social-Media, Internet Addiction Index (IAI).

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INTRODUCTION

The Internet is the greatest invention in the field of communication that has modified lives just like television did in the 1950s and 1960s.^[1] The Internet which is huge library of information is modifying people's lives by allowing them to communicate with several different kinds of people across the globe parted by space and time, and rescheduling time for their day-to-day activities. By utilizing the various social platforms available through the Internet use, the manner the people communicate is altered. The development of the Internet as a modern and advanced medium is accessible to the student population and has created a field for the different forms of abuse.^[1]

Psychologists and educators have been aware of the overuse and misuse of the internet use, resulting in physical and psychological problems.^[2,3] Among the more common problems is Internet addiction and is defined as "An individual's inability to control his or

her use of the internet, which eventually causes psychological, social, familial, occupational, financial and/or work difficulties in a person's life".^[4-7] Its symptoms may range from preoccupation, loss of control and function ,high tolerance to withdrawal, craving and poor decision ability.^[8]

Several researchers in different disciplines, such as education, psychology and sociology, have examined the affect of the Internet on people and society and described pros and cons of using the Internet. Students are in particular interesting subjects for studying the Internet for many reasons. First, the Internet is at the core of a new generation, known as the Net generation and Digital media surrounds the Net generation, who are savvy Modern technology users. The Internet has become a crucial portion and innate element of the Net-generation's lives. Secondly, the number of students who are using the Internet is rising fast every year. Students may utilize the Internet for several reasons, including acquiring knowledge and information, communicating with people, playing games, browsing and surfing different sorts of web sites, etc. Third, students are in a developmental phase. The reality that students expend more time utilizing the

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Internet indicates the potential impact of Internet use on students physical, social and mental growth.

The potential usage of the Internet has both positive and negative influence on the students. The positive influence of the Internet on students is related with educational or informational intents, which indicates that youngsters can gain lots of information and use them to their education. In addition to, there have been several concerns about the negative impact of the Internet on students regarding violent and sexual content and a displacement effect in such areas as social relationships, including interaction with family and friends, physical activity and different leisure activities, such as reading and playing, and a negative effect on psychological wellbeing, specified as loneliness.

The present survey was conducted with the aim to determine the prevalence of the internet addiction among dental students in UCMS, Bhairahawa, Nepal.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The study was conducted at UCMS College of dental surgery, Ranigaon, Bhairahawa, Nepal and was based on cross sectional questionnaire-based survey. After acquiring the formal ethical clearance from the Institutional Review Committee (IRC), data was collected from dental students during the month of September and October 2019. Dental students were briefed about the nature and the aim of the current survey. Dental students were insured about the confidentiality of the data and instructions were given concerning to the questionnaires. Average time taken by students in filling questionnaire was 20 minutes.

Sampling:

The questionnaire was given to 169 dental students to understand the addiction of the Internet. Sample size includes all the dental students, on the basis of complete enumeration system. Dental students who have not provided their consent for the survey are excluded from the study.

Instrument: The 20-item Internet Addiction Index (IAI) developed by Young (1998) and additional items by Bianchi and Phillips (2005) were applied to measure the degree of Internet addiction in this survey.^[9-11] IAI identifies three levels of Internet dependency as mild, moderate, and severely addicted to internet. The answers are given on the 5-point Likert-type scale ("1" = not at all, "2" = rarely, "3" = occasionally, "4" = often, and "5" = always) and scores from 20 to 100. The score range is classified as:

- Scores ≤49 - conceived normal
- Score 50-79 - conceived problematic
- Score 80-100 - conceived as significantly problematic.

The reliability for the scale as indicated by Cronbach's α was remarkably high at .90. A composite IAI was constructed with data ranged from 20 to 100.

Statistical Analysis:

After the data collection, descriptive statistical analysis was done using SPSS 20.

RESULTS

Total 169 BDS students participated in the current study and filled the self-reported questionnaire. Among the participants 45 (26.62%) were male and 124 (73.38%) were female. The age range of sample varied from 17-25 with the mean age 19.38 and standard deviation of 1.84.

Table 1 show the prevalence of Internet addiction among the participants. The result shows that among the participants 117 (69.23%) were conceived problematic and 11(6.51%) were conceived as significantly problematic in respect to internet addiction as determined using 20-item Internet Addiction Index (IAI).

Among the participants with problematic addiction of internet 33 (19.53%) were male and 84 (49.70%) were females and with significantly problematic addiction of internet 7 (4.14%) were male and 4 (2.37%) were females.

Table 1: Prevalence of Internet Addiction Among the Participants

		Normal	Problematic	Significantly Problematic	Total
Frequency	Male	5	33	7	45
	Female	36	84	4	124
	Total	41	117	11	169
Percent	Male	2.95	19.53	4.14	26.62
	Female	21.31	49.70	2.37	73.38
	Total	24.26	69.23	6.51	100

DISCUSSION

Internet has become one of the most indispensable tool for information transfer and also plays a vital role in disseminating and developing the knowledge boundaries.^[12] In the field of education and research, the use of internet technology cannot be ignored, and

the excessive internet use may lead to its addiction that has behavioral and psychological effects on the students.^[13] The main objective of this study was to study the prevalence of internet addiction among dental students using 20 -item Internet Addiction Index (IAI). The studies conducted by Barber (1997),^[14] Brady (1996),^[15] Frangos and Frangos

(2009),^[16] and Griffith (2000),^[17] showed an increased prevalence and consequences of Internet Addiction on the students. This was consistent with our study which showed a further increase in degree of Internet Addiction among students.

This trend of constantly increasing Internet Addiction can be explained by increasing ease in accessibility of internet through devices like android mobiles, tablets, laptops etc as well as high speed internet services like third-generation/fourth-generation (3G/4G) and optical fiber broadband services. These services are getting cheaper and widely available geographically day by day further contributing in increasing trend of Internet Addiction.

In terms of gender differences, this study showed that females are addicted more to the internet as compared to their male counterparts. This finding is comparable to that reported by Scherer (1997) and Rucker et al (2015).^[18,19] This may be explained a change in social trend with females using more internet across the world, their social nature and the need to be in constant contact with friends to seek social support online more than their male counterparts.^[20]

Another possible explanation for increase in female addiction to internet is lack of family supervision and providing equal freedom to both males and females in comparison to earlier times. In the eastern culture, girls are not allowed to go out as compared to boys, thus turning them to the internet as the alternate source for entertainment activities as compared to outdoor activities.^[21] This is in contrast to the study done by Tsai et al (2009),^[22] which showed that excess family supervision in eastern cultures has lead to reduction of Internet Addiction among females.

CONCLUSION

Internet addiction worsened today by both fixed devices such as desktop computers utilized at home and by android mobile-devices, remains almost entirely something that is connected with students. As with a range of additional technologies, students have indeed been eager adopters of the Internet. Beyond just acknowledging about the risk of Internet addiction, parents, educators, psychologists, social workers, and policy makers should be aware of the threats that Internet addiction might cause to students, particularly the fundamental threats of health and psychological risk.

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