

Questionnaire-Based Analysis on the Emerging Concern of Instagram Addiction Among Oral Health Care Undergraduate Students in an Institute: A Cross-Sectional Survey

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Int J Health Environ Res 2024;2:8–11.

Abstract

Introduction Instagram is a cutting-edge technology where the user generates its content which is easily graspable for everyone at any time. Out of many social Web sites, it is the most popular social networking platform among the newer generation. The present study is based on the use of Instagram among the students pursuing dental course in a private dental college in Punjab, India.

Materials and Methods The present study includes 100 consenting students of first year pursuing dental course. Test for Instagram addiction was assessed using Likert scale to measure response to different set of statements under following categories: disengagement, lack of control, health and interpersonal troubles, escapism, obsession, and excessive use. Response under different categories were compiled and evaluated.

Results Results revealed bearable dependence on this social media. Health and interpersonal trouble did not show marked effect. “Excessive use” and “obsession” were also seen in very few participants. Remaining categories showed a mixed response.

Conclusion The scores showed mild to moderate Instagram addiction among the professional students. The need of the hour is to develop strategies for the users to come out of this invisible prison.

Keywords

- Instagram
- addiction
- obsession
- escapism
- invisible prison

Introduction

Social media has emerged as a cutting-edge technology where the user generates its content which is easily graspable for everyone at any time. It is one of the most sophisticated

sciences creating a “dopamine loop” that secretes the same neurotransmitter which works with the brain reward system. This initiates the cycle of motivation, reward, and reinforcement. It is the most powerful magnifier of our time that can either enlighten or engulf us. Gen Z and Millennials are the first

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0044-1787265>.
ISSN XXXX-XXXX.

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fully “digitally native” generation, dominating in harnessing information as compared to other generations. There are many social networking sites like Instagram, Facebook, Tinder, TikTok, PUBG, Snapchat, FaceTime, etc. Instagram is one of the applications that has taken over others.

Instagram is a Meta-operated image-centric social media platform that was launched in October 6, 2010.¹ It has a high level of user engagement and provides a platform for sharing photographs, videos, and messages in a private and a public way.² It is used as “surveillance/knowledge about others,” “documentation,” “coolness,” and “creativity.”³ Extroverts use it for social enhancement whereas introverts for social compensation.⁴ To add more, research suggests that problematic Internet use is associated with decline in the size of social circle, depression, loneliness, lower self-esteem and life satisfaction, sensation seeking, poor mental health, and low family involvement.⁵

Students are particularly susceptible to becoming dependent on the Internet due to a number of factors, including increased familiarity with rapidly evolving technology, ease of use, time constraints, availability of the Internet, emotional and developmental characteristics of young adults, a sense of independence, and little to no parental supervision.⁶

Millions of students are enrolled in professional and nonprofessional courses to further their knowledge. The goal of the current study was to determine how much Instagram addiction there is among students pursuing dental course.

Materials and Method

Participants in undergraduate dentistry education courses were chosen for this investigation. One hundred students, aged between 17 and 22, were chosen from a private dental institution in Ludhiana, Punjab, India. Google Forms were used to gather responses from the students. When responding to the statements on the Test for Instagram Addiction (TIA), the subjects’ verbal agreement were obtained. They were assured of confidentiality. The statements were read aloud and explained. Standard test construction procedures served as the foundation for the test’s development. The 5-point Likert scale was used to score the questionnaire. Scores ranged from all the time (AT) (score 5), most of the time (MT) (score 4), sometime (ST) (score 3), once in a while (OW) (score 2), and rarely/never (N/R) (score 1).⁷

A total of 26 statements were designed measuring Instagram addiction of the individual in 6 categories, namely, lack of control, disengagement, escapism, health and interpersonal troubles, excessive use, and obsession.⁸ The values in the table denotes the number of students who responded in various categories. These values were then calculated and assessed accordingly by using Likert scale criteria.

The above mentioned categories were described as:

1. Lack of control: This is when the user has an immense urge and cannot surpass. It has an evident impact on his/her performance in either studies or work.

2. Disengagement: The withdrawal from society or work is observed due to engagement in Instagram activities.
3. Escapism: This is a habitual attempt to dodge the reality by diverging the mind.
4. Health and interpersonal troubles: This indicates compromise in physical health and relations.
5. Excessive use: The bigger the score, more the apprehension and addiction.
6. Obsession: The compulsion of sharing and checking for the responses or comments.

Results

In the present study response was received from 100 students. The age range of the study participants was 17 for the youngest and 22 for the oldest. Majority of the participants (54%) were staying in the hostel. The results were thoroughly studied and interpreted. Out of different categories evaluated, “health and interpersonal troubles” was the only category which showed almost negligible effect of Instagram addiction in more than 75% of study participants (► Fig. 1). Out of other categories, “lack of control” was seen in 13 to 29% individuals while 40 to 55% did not show any effect of Instagram on their routine performance and productivity (► Fig. 2). Likewise, the other components as routine work, failure to cut down the time, and willingness to stop oneself showed mild to moderate dependence. The “disengagement” category also showed insignificant effect (6–19%) of Instagram use (► Fig. 3). “Escapism” was seen in 36 to 58% participants while 33 to 58% participants did not show any effect (► Fig. 4). “Excessive use” and “obsession” was seen in less than 31% students (► Figs. 5 and 6).

Discussion

Internet addiction is an impulse-control disorder that does not involve an intoxicant.⁹ Other factors attributing to this are staying away from family leading to online companionship, dealing with academic pressure, boredom, and curiosity. The

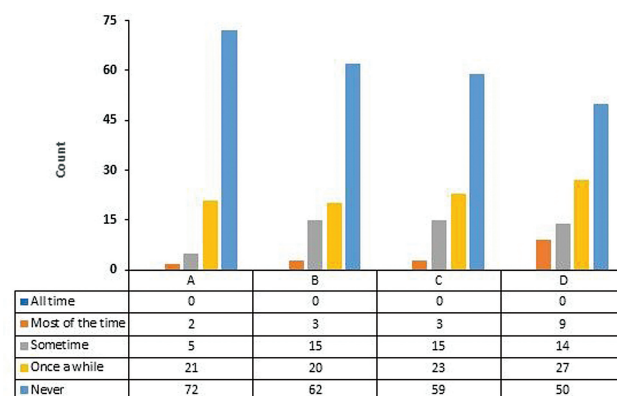


Fig. 1 Distribution of participants under the category “health and interpersonal troubles” based on following statements—I forget to eat in time due to use of Instagram (A), I have backache due to use of Instagram (B), since I started using Instagram, my interaction with my family has reduced (C), Instagram use has negatively affected my physical health (D).

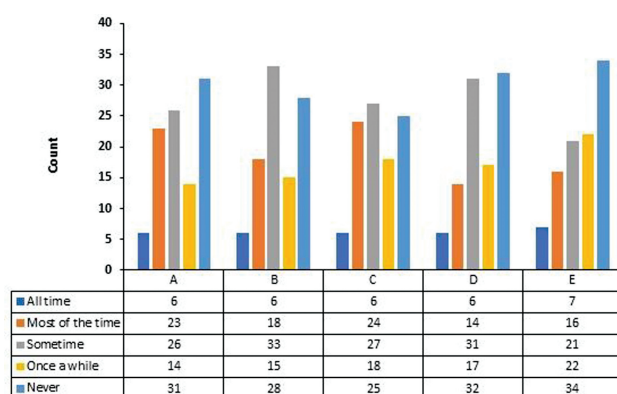


Fig. 2 Distribution of participants under the category “lack of control” based on the following statements—My performance or productivity (work/studies) has been affected due to Instagram (A), I am not able to concentrate on my studies/work due to use of Instagram (B), I say “just a few more minutes” to myself when online but continue to use it (C), my routine is disturbed due to use of Instagram (E), I try to cut down the use of Instagram but fail to do so (F).

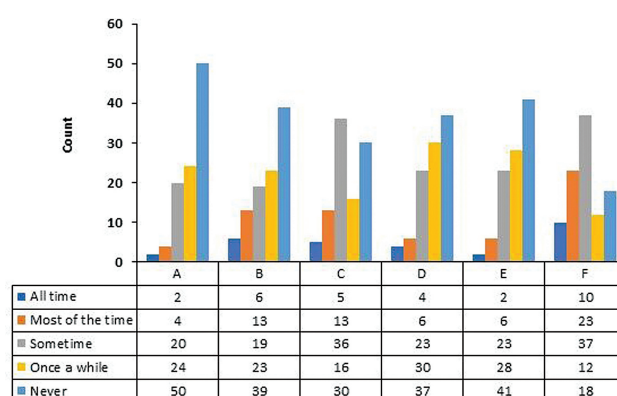


Fig. 3 Distribution of participants under the category “disengagement” based on the following statements—People often comment negatively on the amount of time I spend on Instagram (A), going to Instagram is the first thing I do when I wake up (B), I feel energized and happy while using Instagram (C), I feel like I am missing something when I am unable to use Instagram (D), I have an urge to spend more and more time on Instagram (E), I spend longer time than what I meant to on Instagram (F).

present study is an attempt to shed light on how deep rooted is the impact of Instagram on youngsters. The various statements were pigeonholed and the inferences drawn. At present, the results showed bearable dependence on this social media. The most appreciable part noted is that the physical health did not show negative response. Despite that, one needs to formulate new ways to curb the increasing attachment and adopt healthy ways.

Some studies have also shown lower prevalence of Internet addiction. A study on Turkish college students showed prevalence of Internet addiction to be 9.7%.¹⁰ In another study among Iranian medical students the prevalence was 10.8%.¹¹ According to a survey on medical experts done in Mangalore city, there were no serious addicts. The reasons for the disparity in prevalence include the use of diverse

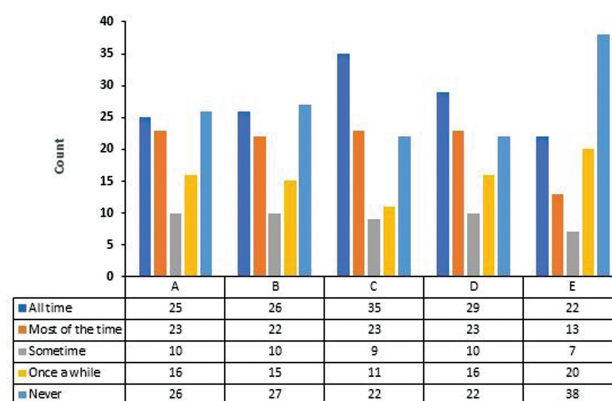


Fig. 4 Distribution of participants under the category “escapism” based on the following statements—I keep checking what the recent updates or the current trends are (A), I block disturbing thoughts by using Instagram (B), I use Instagram when I am stressed (C), when I want to get away from certain thoughts I use Instagram (D), I use Instagram as a get away from reality (E).

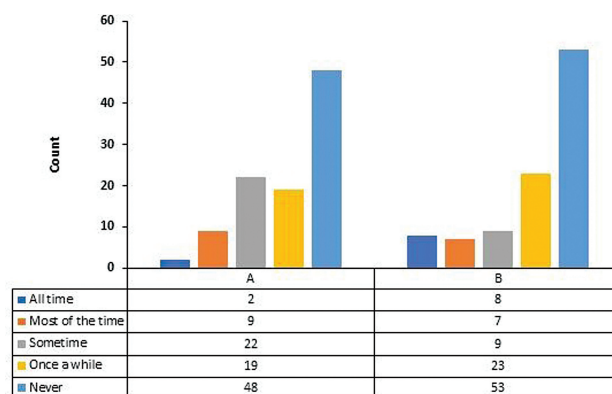


Fig. 5 Distribution of participants under the category “excessive use” based on the following statements—I become restless when I am denied/unable to use Instagram (A), I try to hide my time spent on Instagram from others (B).

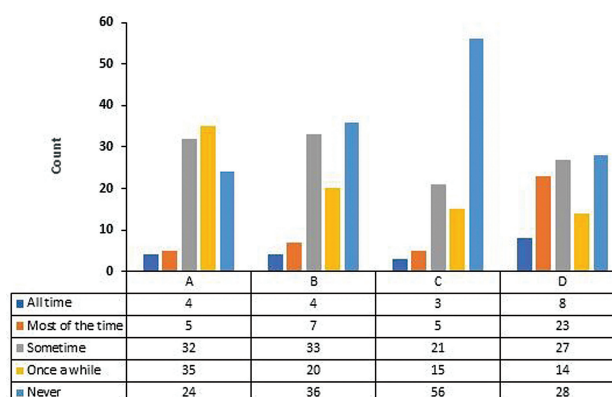


Fig. 6 Distribution of participants under the category “obsession” based on the following statements—I often upload photos or videos on Instagram (A), I feel compelled to post pictures soon after a meeting or an event (B), I feel unhappy over the number of likes and the comments I get (C), I keep checking how many people have liked or commented or viewed my posts (D).

methodologies to assess addiction, the study of distinct ethnic groups, and the use of advanced technologies such as smartphones and digital watches.¹² The limitation of this study was that the students were selected from only one dental school and were of first year professional course, hence the results cannot be generalized.

Conclusion

This study tries to develop and corroborate Test for Instagram Addiction. It also identifies and shows concern for this new menace among students. It is therefore endorsed that measures should be taken for its advantageous use. Even if the percentage scores are less, there is an urgent need to come up with plans to break out of this unseen prison and save the students.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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