

To Explore Status of Nomophobia among Students of Dr. S.N. Medical College Jodhpur

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Mobile phone provided a variety of functions that touch upon every aspect of social life. Nomophobia is the collection of symptoms or behavior related to the fear of being out of mobile phone contact. The aim of our study was to explore the status of nomophobia among medical students. By simple random sampling method 200 MBBS students (115 males and 85 females) were included for study. A pre-designed and pre tested questionnaire (6, 7) was used to study mobile phone dependence. We have categorized nomophobia result according to questionnaire positivity in three ranges mild (5-10), moderate (11-16) and severe (16-20) and students which scored less than 5 were said not to be nomophobic. In overall group of 200 students 47 (23.30%) were found mild nomophobic, 111 (55.5%) were moderate and 42 (21%) were found severe nomophobic. We also concluded that this disorder is equally prevalent among the study group irrespective of gender.

Keywords: Nomophobia, mobile phone, medical students, questionnaire.

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INTRODUCTION

Mobile phone provides a variety of functions that touch upon every aspect of social life. More than one out of six people worldwide now have mobile phones and for many people mobile phone has become an essential part of everyday life [1]. Healthy people depend on Mobile phone for work and socializing; however, they do not despair or become nervous when they are unable to make a call or connect to the Internet. But excessive use of mobile phone creates various complications and one of them is increasing very rapidly is Nomophobia.

Nomophobia [2] is a term first coined by British researchers during 2008 to denote people who experienced anxiety when they had no access to mobile phone. It literally means no mobile phobia i.e. the fear of being out of mobile phone contact [3]. People who suffer with nomophobia report worry over running out of battery power, area of no network, forget their phone, have run out of balance etc. and they constantly check for new mails, text messages and calls and they don't even want to go the restroom without their phones.

Anxiety expert and clinical psychologist Lee-Ann Hartman says symptoms of nomophobia are

similar to other anxiety disorders that experience like panic attacks, shortness of breath, nausea sweating, dizziness, trembling, chest pain, and elevated heart rate etc. So, Nomophobia is a term that refers to a collection of behaviors or symptoms related to mobile phone [4].

Studies show that “mobile phone usage is a compulsive and addictive disorder which looks set to become one of the biggest non-drug addictions in the 21st century”[5]. Since very scarce data is available regarding the psychological dependency on mobile phone we explored the psychological dependency and its draw backs among medical students of Dr. S.N. Medical College Jodhpur”.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study included 200 M.B.B.S. students from Dr. S.N. Medical College, Jodhpur. Initially, students from different batches and those pursuing internship, both day scholars and hostlers, using mobile phone for more than one-year duration for at least 1-2 h per day were included for the study. Six hundred students of the college met for the above inclusion criteria of which every third student was selected by systematic random sampling. A pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire [6] designed on the lines developed

by Dr. Marcus L. Raines [7] was used to study mobile phone dependence among the study subjects. The mobile phone dependent students were then designated as nomophobes.

The data was collected to elicit information on demographic and psychographic aspects of the respondents. The demographic variables included were age, gender, education and residence. The psychographic variables included were attitude towards usage of cellular phones, mobile phones dependence and associated anxiety. The questionnaire focusing on nomophobia had eight components: *duration of having mobile phone with self; anxiety and stress experienced because of faulty connections; loss of mobile and battery discharge; amount spent per month on recharge, reaction shown to phone ringing at inappropriate times; frequency of change of phone/sim cards and reactions because of inability of using the phone for a period of one week.* Every question consists of three options depicting maximum to minimum mobile phone association and was mandatory to answer. Involvement of students in sports and social activities was not included in the study.

RESULTS

For this study we have taken the data from 200 students with age 19-25 year of Dr. S.N. Medical College. Among them 115 (57.5%) were males and 85 (42.5%) were females. Most of the students were using mobile phone more than three years. We have categorized nomophobia result according to questionnaire positivity in three ranges mild (5-10), moderate (11-16) and severe (16-20) and students which scored less than 5 were said not to be nomophobic. In overall group of 200 students 47 (23.30%) were found mild nomophobic, 111 (55.5%) were moderate and 42 (21%) were found severe nomophobic.

If we see the result gender wise then out of 115, 18 (16%) males were having mild, 67 (58.26%) moderate and 30 (26%) had severe nomophobia while in females out of 85 students 29 (34.11%) were mild, 44 (51.76%) moderate and 12 (14%) were having severe nomophobia. These values show that this disorder is equally prevalent among the study group irrespective of gender.

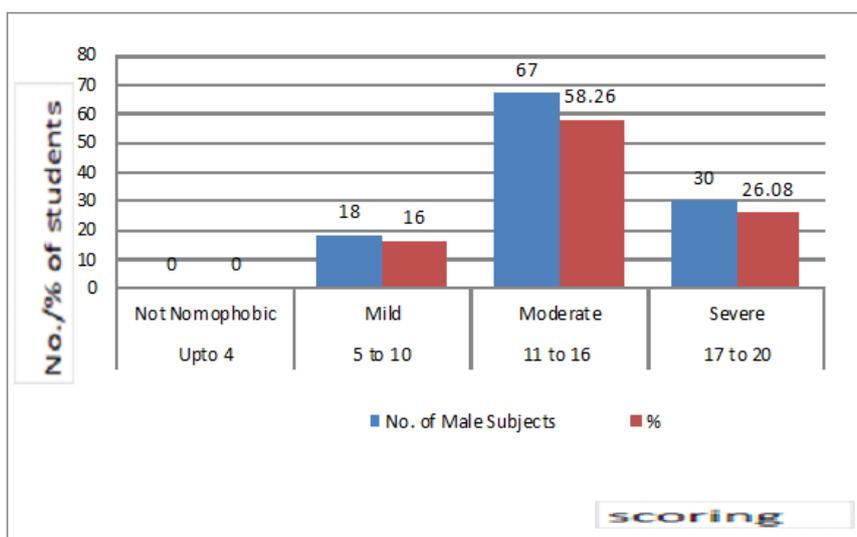


Fig-1

Table-1: Nomophobia Scoring Among Male Students

Max. Score	Category	No. of Male Subjects	%
Upto 4	Not Nomophobic	0	0
5 to 10	Mild	18	16
11 to 16	Moderate	67	58.26
17 to 20	Severe	30	26.08

Table-2: Nomophobia Scoring Among Female Students

Max. Score	Category	No. of Female Subjects	%
Upto 4	Not Nomophobic	0	0
5 to 10	Mild	29	34.11
11 to 16	Moderate	44	51.76
17 to 20	Severe	12	14.01

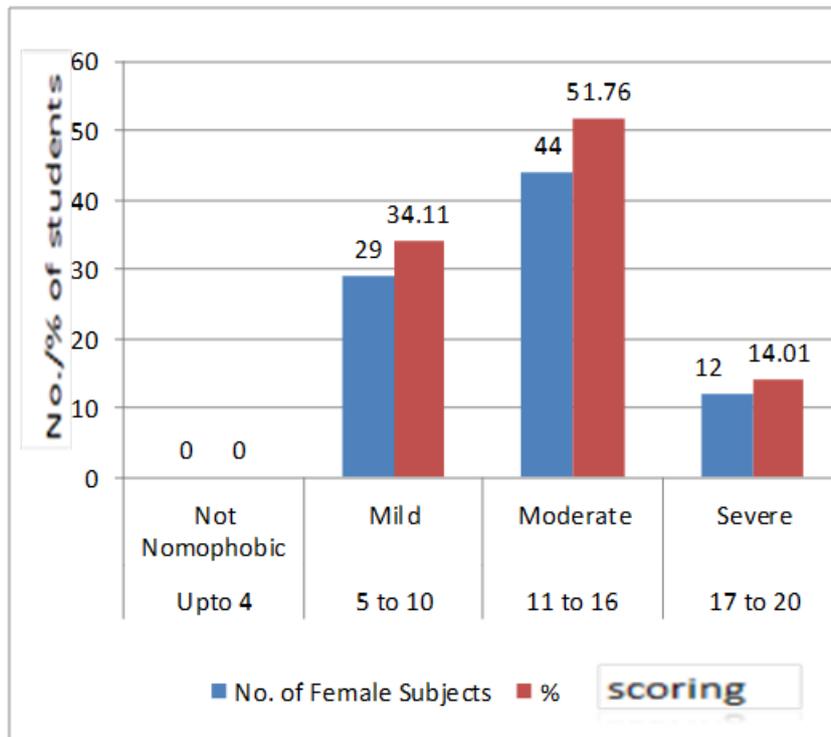


Fig-2

Table-3: Nomophobia Scoring Among Total Students

Max. Score	Category	No. of Total Subjects	%
Upto 4	Not Nomophobic	0	0
5 to 10	Mild	47	23.30
11 to 16	Moderate	111	55.50
17 to 20	Severe	42	21.00

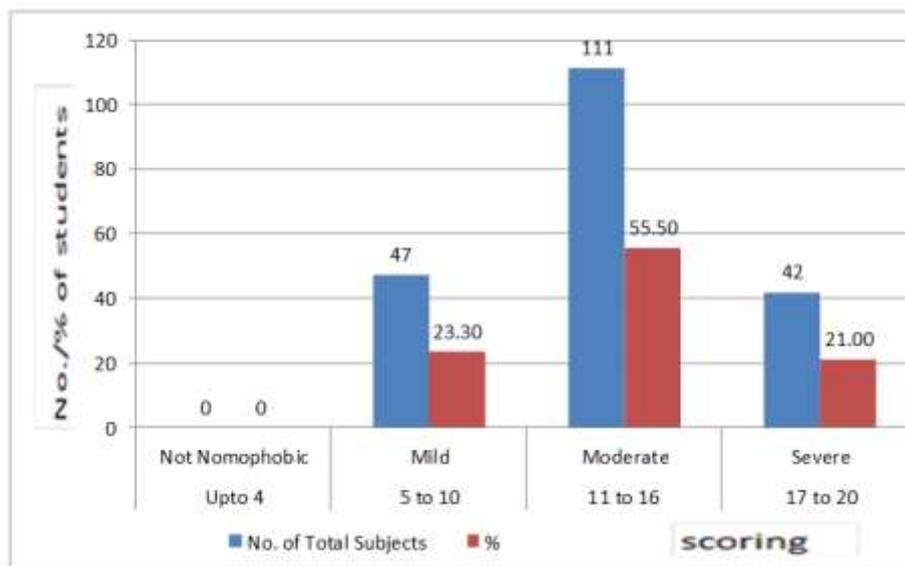


Fig-3

According to the questionnaire in present study approximately 88% males and 80% females use their mobile phone whole day even they sleep by their mobile turning on, 60% male and 75% female students check their mobile phone immediately after their

lecture, 47% males and 67% female students feel rejected when they don't have a call on their mobile phone, 41% males and 35% female students think that mobile phone has affected their studies and hampering their academic performance, 89% males and 75%

female students feel distressed when their mobile phone is not workable due battery discharge, network coverage or zero balance, 75% males and 60% females feel totally dependent on mobile phone and 77% males and 71% females feel insecure without mobile phone.

DISCUSSION

These results give an alarming indication that as days goes by the youth is getting more and more dependent on mobile phones, which may lead to serious psychiatric and psychological problems among the users. To avoid the stress induced because of malfunctioning of mobile phones, people using it should carry a charger all the time, prepaid phone card to make emergency call in case their mobile is not functioning, credit balance in their mobile, should supply family members and friends alternate contact number and store important phone numbers somewhere else as backup in the case they lose their mobile phone. People should assess their addiction with mobile phone (nomophobia status) with the help of online teaching sites, which can help reduce the anxiety levels because of mobile phone overuse.

The literature [8] reveals that, due to the specific characteristics of their disease, patients with Psychological disease are more anxious and worried about various daily issues than healthy people. People with agoraphobia [2] fear public places and the inability to receive immediate aid may be responsible for developing an excessive attachment to a mobile phone among this particular population. In these cases, a mobile phone makes people with anxiety disorders [9] feel more secure as a mobile phone allows them to be rescued from an attack. Healthy people also depend on mobile phones for work and socializing; however, they do not despair or become nervous when they are unable to make a call or connect to the Internet.

Mobile phones and new technologies have both positive and negative aspects. They have not only helped improve worldwide communication, newer technology through new social media, social network sites, social informatics, and “social software” (an expression coined by Clay Shirky) [10] enables us to perform many jobs quickly and efficiently [11-13]. On the other hand, mobile devices can have a dangerous impact on human health, and the long-term usage leads to addictive behavior [14].

The results of the study are suggestive of mobile phone dependence among students of S.N. Medical College, Jodhpur. The data is indicative of nomophobia to be an emerging problem of the modern era and need severe intervention in moderate to severe nomophobic students.

With its novel approach to investigating nomophobia as a theoretical construct, this study provides a better understanding of the dimensions of

nomophobia. However, there are certain limitations that should be addressed. One limitation is pertinent to the sample used in the study. Sample size of this study is 200 undergraduate students in the S. N. medical college, which is a too small in size and may be a limitation to the generalizability of the study's findings and results. This limitation should be considered when interpreting these findings and results. Multicentric studies are required to assess the real problem and thereby take appropriate steps to tackle the growing problem.

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