

Original Research Article

Evaluation of Mobile Phone Dependence among the Students of Government Medical College

Dr. Sachin Sharma¹, Dr. Tanuja Brahmkar², Dr. Vishwanath GR³

¹Assistant Professor Department of Community Medicine USM-KLE-IMP Belagabi, India.

²Apollo Hospital Madurai, India.

³Medical Officer Mysuru, India.

*Corresponding Author

Dr. Tanuja Brahmkar

Abstract: Background: Nomophobia literally means no mobile phobia that is the fear of being out of mobile phone contact. The use of mobile phones has now increased worldwide during the last decade. Hence this study was carried out to evaluate mobile phone dependence among the study subjects. Methodology: The present study is a cross-sectional study conducted amongst 246 M.B.B.S. students from Govt. Medical College. A pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire was used to study mobile phone dependence among the study subjects. The individual responses were noted and the data was analysed using statistical software. Results: The study population comprised of 138(56.1%) males and 108 (43.9%) females. Majority of students were of age group 19-22 years. Overall 21.95% were found to be nomophobes, among them 14.6% were males and 7.3% were females. All students were having mobile phones, 75.6% had installed games. 42.68% get stressed/ anxious when their mobile run out of battery and 41.5% keep mobile switched off or silent when they go to sleep. 40.24% students would keep mobile phone on table in front of them when out for dinner and 35.4% use mobile while having food. 36.6% get anxious if they won't get an instant response to an SMS and 20.73 % always keep seeing mobile/waiting for a message or call to come. 12.2% students answered that the thought of turning off their mobile would send them in shiver. While attending classes 12.2 % of students don't switch off/ keep in silent mode and 10.97% receive call. Conclusion: The results of the study are suggestive of mobile phone dependence and most of the study subjects knew that mobile use could be an addiction. As nomophobia is an emerging problem, more studies are required to assess the real problem and to take the appropriate steps. The nomophobic students were convinced on the harmful effects of using mobile phones.

Keywords: Nomophobia, mobile phone, dependence.

INTRODUCTION

Nomophobia literally means no mobile phobia that is the fear of being out of mobile phone contact (Dixit, S. *et al.*, 2010). This term is coined during a research study to find out the psychological ramifications & stress level of mobile phone users (Cell phone. 2007). The use of mobile phones has now increased worldwide during the last decade. Indian market has emerged as the second-largest market after China for mobile phone handsets. Almost every person has a mobile phone & uses it regularly, but there are people who can't take their dinner without texting or furiously typing during classes. This type of users becomes anxious when they are separated from the phone (Cell phone. 2007). Mobile phone addiction appears to be a new disorder, it fulfils excessive use

along with loss of sense of or neglect of basic drives. Withdrawal includes anxiety, stress & depression along with arguments, social isolation & fatigue when phone network is not available or battery is about to die (Bhatia, M. S. 2008). So present study is carried out to evaluate the prevalence of nomophobia among the medical students and to study the various socio-demographic factors among them.

OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate prevalence of nomophobia among the study subjects.
- To find out various demographic & psychological factors of study subjects.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a cross sectional study carried out in the medical students of Government Medical College. Total 246 students of 1st year and 2nd year of M.B.B.S. were included in the study.

Data was collected using pre-designed, pre-tested structured questionnaire. Questionnaire consisted the information of socio-demographic variables like age, gender, class, place of stay etc. Questions focused on nomophobia were 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. Each question was given 3scales scoring from 1to 3. Scores were then added. Those found more than 24 were classified as nomophobes. Individual responses were noted and analysed using statistical soft wares.

Results

Total 246 students were included in a study. Table no. 1 shows the socio-demographic variables of the study subjects. Out of 246 students, 138 (56.09%) were males and 108(43.90) were females. Majority of students were of age group 19-22years. Majority were in 1st year (60.98%) and most of them were staying in hostels (86.59).

Table:- 1 Demographic profile of study subjects. N=246

Variables	Categories	No. Of Males (%)	No. Of Females (%)	Total (%)
Age groups(in years)	19-20	85(57.8)	62(42.2)	147(59.76)
	21-22	53(53.5)	46(46.5)	99 (40.24)
Class	I	88(58.67)	62(41.33)	150(60.98)
	II	56(58.33)	40(41.67)	96(39.02)
Residence	Hostel	119(55.87)	94(44.13)	213(86.59)
	Localite	19(57.58)	14(42.42)	33(13.41)
Total		138(56.09)	108(43.90)	246(100)

Figure 1 shows the prevalence of nomophobia. Overall 54 out of 246 (21.95%) were found to be nomophobes, among them 14.6% (36) were males and 7.3% (18) were females. Prevalence of nomophobes was more in males (26.08%) than females (16.67%). 44out of 213 hostellites (20.66%) and 10 out of 33 localites (30.30%) were found to be nomophobic. No statistically significant association was observed in relation to gender (z is 1.7715; p is .07672) and place of stay (z is 1.2457; p is .2113) with nomophobia.

All students were having mobile phones. 50% had android mobile followed by java mobile phones as shown in fig. 2.

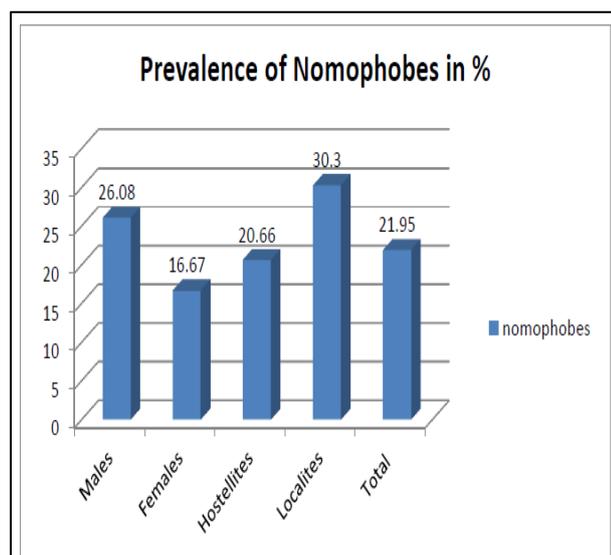


Fig.1-Prevalence of nomophobia according to Gender and place of stay.

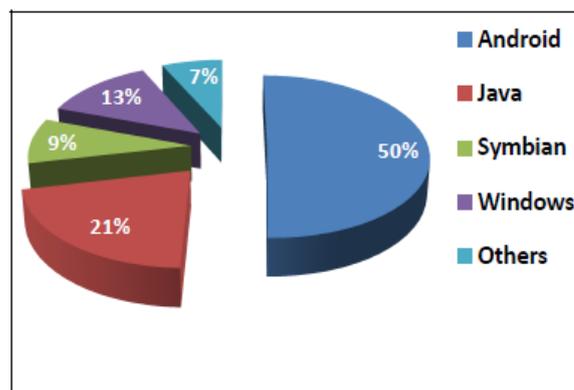


Fig.2- Type of mobile phones (software)

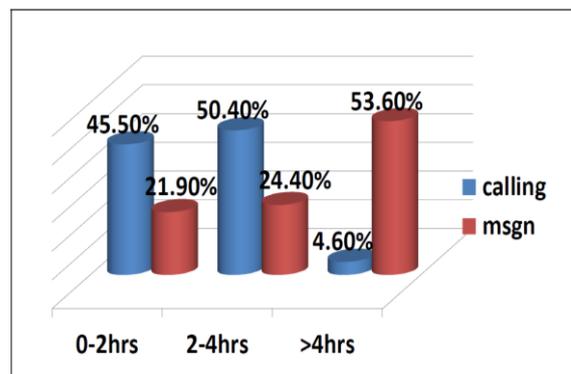


Fig.3-Time duration usage of mobile.

All students were having mobile phones, among them 29.26% were having two handsets each and remaining students had one handset each. On an average each student spent about 150 – 200 rupees/month including internet recharge.

Maximum they used it for messaging and calling, and the maximum usage of internet was for chatting while others use it for browsing, downloading or playing online games.

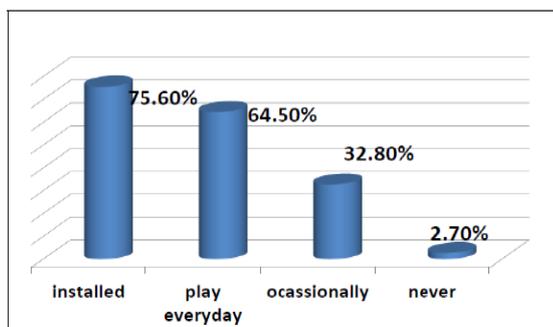


Fig.4- Pattern of playing games

75.6% had installed games. 64.5% were playing games every day. 32.8% played occasionally. Only 2.7% had never played games on mobile though they have installed games in mobile.

42.68% get stressed/ anxious when their mobile run out of battery and 41.5% keep mobile switched off or silent when they go to sleep. 40.24% students would keep mobile phone on table in front of them when out for dinner and 35.4% use mobile while having food. 36.6% get anxious if they won't get an instant response to an SMS and 20.73 % always keep seeing mobile/waiting for a message or call to come. 12.2% students answered that the thought of turning off their mobile would send them in shiver. While attending classes 12.2 % of students don't switch off/ keep in silent mode and 10.97% receive call. Only 22.75% of students knew the meaning of Nomophobia and 71.2% students were aware of hazards of using mobile phone.

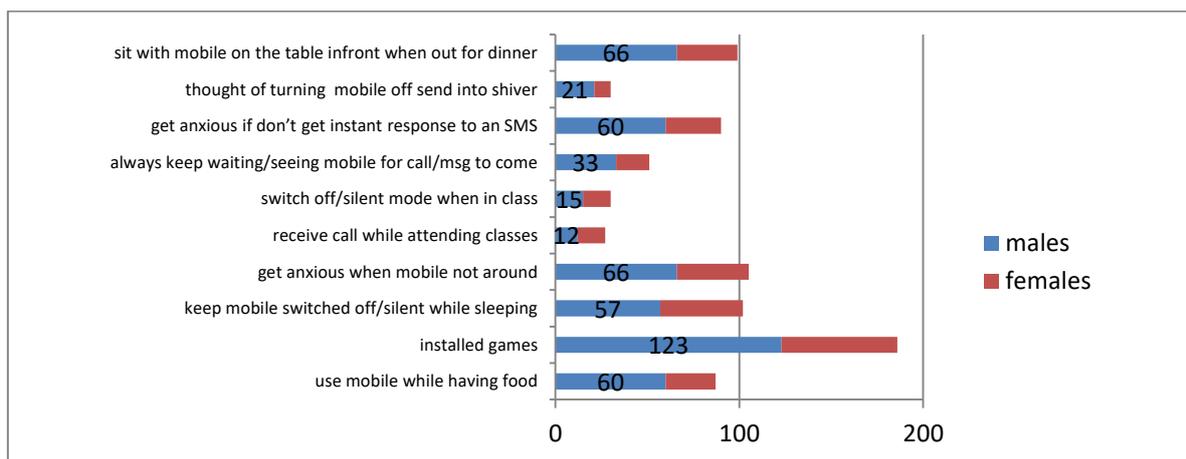


Fig.5- Responses of study subjects to some interesting questions.

DISCUSSION

The study population comprised of 246 students. All students were having mobile phones, among them 29.26% were having two handsets each and remaining students had one handset each. On an average each student spent about 150 – 200 rupees/month including internet recharge. Maximum they used it for messaging and calling, and the maximum usage of internet was for chatting while others use it for browsing, downloading or playing online games. Overall 21.95% were found to be nomophobes, among them 14.6% were males and 7.3% were females. Prevalence of nomophobes was more in males (26.08%) than females (16.67%) which is in accordance with the study by Dixit *et al.*, (2010). Prevalence was found more in localities than that in hostellites which is in contrast to the study by Dixit *et al.*, (2010). However no statistically significant association was observed in relation to gender (z is

1.7715 ; p is .07672) and place of stay (z is 1.2457; p is .2113) with nomophobia.

As most of the students were residing in hostel, they used mobile phone maximum to call their family members. Only 22.75% of students knew the meaning of Nomophobia and 71.2% students were aware of hazards of using mobile phone. The present study may not reflect the scenario worldwide since millions of cellular mobile subscribers are added every month indicating that full blown nomophobia has all the possibilities to reach to the epidemic scale. The results of the study are suggestive of mobile phone dependence and most of the study subjects knew that mobile use could be an addiction. The nomophobic students were convinced on the harmful effects of using mobile phones.

As nomophobia is an emerging problem, more studies are required to assess the real problem and to take the appropriate steps. So, try to go mobile free for a day or two. Awareness regarding this in medical students should be initiated. Installation of mobile jammers in classrooms & libraries should be promoted.

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