

OP 03 Psychological impact of social network sites and related socio economic factors leading to its dependency among the medical students studying at Jaffna Medical Faculty

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INTRODUCTION: Social networking sites (SNS) are virtual communities where users can create their own public profiles, contact with friends, and share their interests. Despite the beneficial aspects of the social network sites, various negative impacts on the general health of users have been constantly increasing.

OBJECTIVES: Purpose of the study was to find out SNS dependency and its impact on the psychological aspects in the medical students of faculty of medicine, University of Jaffna.

METHODS: The study was done among 349 medical students except those who were sit the final year. Self-administered questionnaire was used.

RESULTS: Among the participants, 85.7% (n=299) were using social network sites and 7.9% (n=23) of SNS users were dependent to social network sites which was assessed by Bergen social network addiction scale. SNS was used with the purpose of eliminating loneliness by 43.8% (n=130) and among them 14% (n=18) were dependent to SNS and 43 were over using SNS (>1 hour usage / day) and loneliness was significantly associated with the SNS dependency and over usage. Among SNS dependent medical students, 10.5% of students had anxiety but none of them had depression. Over usage of social network sites were higher among senior students, males, students who were having own computers, own network connections, high speed internet connection and family income more than 25,000/=. Considerable amount of people preferred SNS to keep in touch with their friends (81.1%) and to avoid face to face contact (32.9%). There were reported sexual harassments (10.9%) and privacy problems (33.7%). Certain amount of medical students were using SNS during lectures (25.1%), late at nights and more than four hours per day (4.47%) which seems to be hazardous.

CONCLUSION: Thus, it is worthy for the parents, lecturers, mental health professionals and medical students themselves to pay more attention to the problematic social network sites usage of this young population.