

Facebook addiction and associated factors among science undergraduates who use Facebook at University of Jaffna

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Background and objective: Addiction to social media is an emerging social problem among young people. Among social media sites, Facebook is a popular social media platform. This study aims to assess levels of Facebook addiction and associated personal, educational, and Facebook-related factors among undergraduate Facebook users at the Faculty of Science, University of Jaffna.

Methods: This descriptive cross-sectional institution-based study was conducted among first to third year students of Faculty of Science, University of Jaffna. Proportionate stratified sampling was used to select participants across batches. Data were collected with a self-administered questionnaire. The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale was used to measure Facebook addiction. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data. Associations between Facebook addiction and selected factors were assessed by the chi-square test. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, Jaffna.

Results: Of the 345 science undergraduates who participated in the study, 87 (25.2%) did not use Facebook. Among 258 Facebook users, 121 (46.9 %) were not addicted, 88 (34.1 %) lightly addicted, 42 (16.2 %) moderately addicted, and 7 (2.7%) highly addicted. Being male ($p=0.001$), Sinhala ($p=0.001$), Buddhist ($p=0.001$), from a higher income background ($p=0.003$), in the second year ($p=0.044$), spending more time on Facebook ($p<0.001$), checking Facebook often ($p<0.001$), using mobile phones to access Facebook ($p=0.003$), and belonging to fewer groups that use it for educational purposes ($p=0.011$), was statistically associated with addiction.

Conclusion: Over half of science undergraduates who use Facebook at the University of Jaffna have scores compatible with addiction. Among them, a fifth are moderately or highly addicted. Several factors are associated with Facebook addiction. The findings may be used to prevent Facebook addiction among undergraduates of the University of Jaffna.

Keywords: Facebook Addiction, Undergraduates, Science, Jaffna