A study to assess the symptoms of anxiety among medical students with internet addiction

* Dr G Suresh Kumar[1], Dr. N. Harikrishna[2], Dr. H V Suresh[3]

Associate Professor[1], Associate Professor[2], Postgraduate[3]
Government hospital for mental care & Department of Psychiatry, Andhra Medical College,
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh,India.
corresponding author : Dr N.Harikrishna

I. Background

In the 21st century, we have witnessed an explosion in the internet usage.

Though the benefits offered by internet are many, there is a rising concern about its negative effects. Adolescents and young adults are particularly more vulnerable to the psychological effects of internet

Globally there is an 82 % increase in 2009 with an average of 5.5 hours spend on internet and other social networks (Nielsenwire, 2010).This wide usage of internet made people get addicted to it. The prevalence of internet addiction in various studies have been in the range of 4 to 7 %

The term " Internet addiction disorder " was first coined by New York psychiatrist Ivan Goldberg (1995) which means excessive use of internet with symptoms like anger, tension, and anxiety.

Dr. Young(1996) defined it as, "an individual's inability to control his or her use of the internet, which eventually causes psychological, social, school, and/or work difficulties in a person's life".

Internet addiction is an impulse control disorder which does not involve intoxication (Young, 1999). It is a psychological dependence on the internet, regardless of the activity once logged in (kandell, 1998)

Like other addictions, internet addiction may mask other problems such as depression, low self-esteem, and social anxiety.

Internet addiction can result in serious psychosocial, academic and occupational dysfunction

Various types of internet addiction-web surfing, pornography, chatting and video games characterized by dry eyes, headache, sleep disturbance, neglect of family, problems with school or job etc.(ASAM, 2012)

Problematic internet use may serve to worsen to social fears and avoidance to face the social interactions (Lee & Stapinski, 2012)

Adolescents with internet addiction showed reduce functional connectivity spanning distributed network(Hong, 2013)

Aims and objectives
To study the anxiety symptoms in the medical graduates with internet addiction

Study questions
To what extent students are addicted to internet?
What is the relationship between internet addiction and anxiety symptoms among the students?

II. Methodology

A two-stagecross-sectional study was carried out on 100 medical students(who were currently posted as interns in various medical and surgical specialties)of Andhra Medical College/ King George Hospital, Visakhapatnam, after taking the informed consent.The tools employed to conduct the study were Internet addiction test (IAT) & Beck's Anxiety Inventory (BAI).

In the first stage, students were asked to fill IAT questionnaire and those who scored high were included into the 2nd stage.In the 2nd stage, these students were asked to fill the BAI, to assess the anxiety levels in them.

Study tools
Internet addiction test
Reliable and a valid measure of addictive use of internet Developed by Dr. Kimberly Young. 20 item scale that measures mild, moderate and severe level of internet addiction. Each item is scored from 0-5. The scores are graded as 0-30 (None), 31 to 49 (Normal internet usage/ Average web surfing), 50 to 79 (Moderate), 80 to 100

(Severe). Higher the score, greater is the level of internet addiction.

Beck's anxiety inventory

The Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) is a questionnaire of 21 items to measure anxiety

Each question is rated from 0 to 4. Not at all (0), mildly (1), moderately (2), severely (3)

From 0 to 7 (low anxiety), 8 to 15 (mild anxiety), 16 to 25 (moderate anxiety), 26 to 63 (high anxiety). The maximum total score is 63.

III. Results

Data is analyzed and results are obtained and tabulated as follows

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Males	50	50
Female	50	50

Table 1 shows frequency and percentage of students with respect togender. Female students (f= 50) are equal in number as compared to male students (f=50)
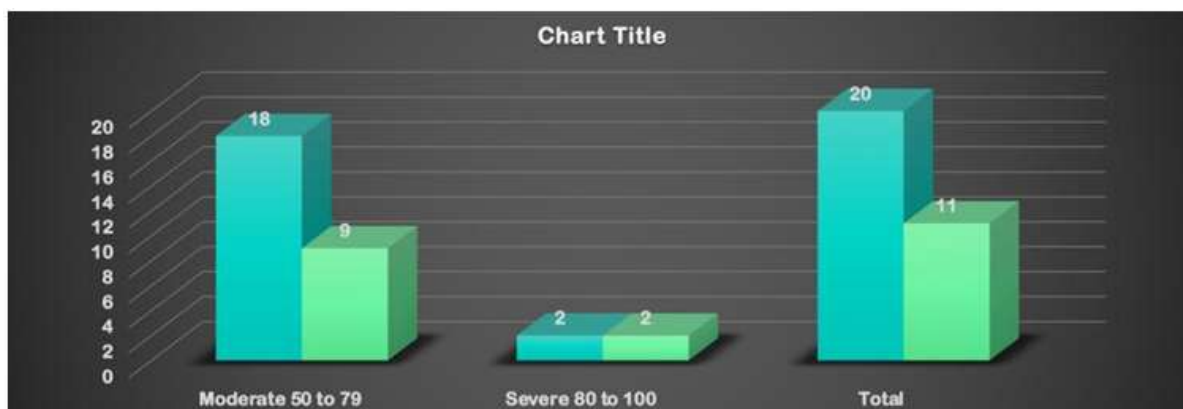
Severity of internet addiction	Frequency	Percentage
None	46	46
Normal usage	23	23
Moderate	27	27
Severe	04	04

Table 2-shows that 27% (27) of students are having moderate internetaddiction who are liable to become severely addicted to internet over a time period. In present sample, 4% (4) have severe internet addiction. A total of 31% are addicted.
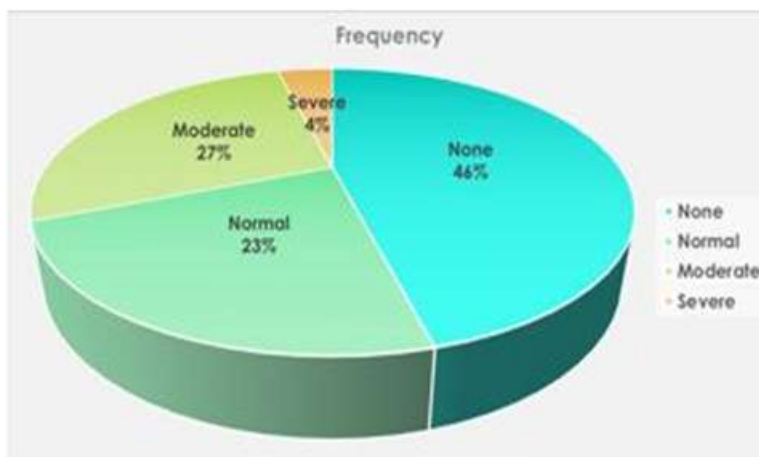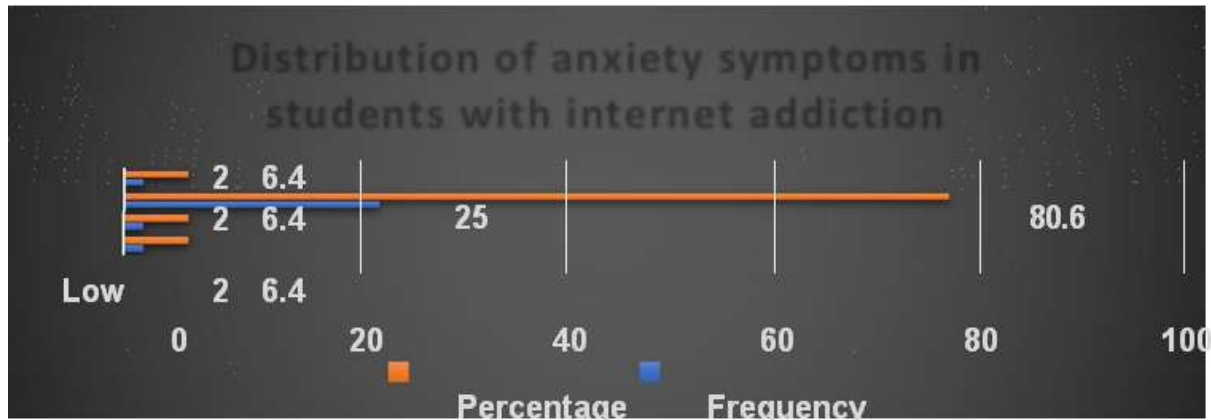

Severity	Males	Females
Moderate	18	9
Severe	2	2
Total	20	11

Table 3-Distribution of severity of internet addiction among males andfemale

Anxiety symptoms	Frequency	Percentage
Low	2	6.4
Mild	2	6.4
Moderate	25	80.6
Severe	2	6.4

Table 4shows that moderate levels of anxiety are found in 80.6 % ofindividuals with internet addiction

IV. Discussion

The study highlights the effects of internet addiction on the psychological status of an individual. According to a study done by (Nima et al; 2012), there exists a significant correlation between IA and level of anxiety. The results of my study are similar to above study, in which about 80% of the students with internet addiction have moderate levels of anxiety. These students who suffer from anxiety have a great deal of struggle in the community in interacting with other in a healthy, positive and a meaningful way

V. Conclusion

Though internet is a useful tool that makes life easy, but it's excessive use adversely affects one's mental health, leading to anxiety and other related mental health issues- Downside of technology

Further studies are needed in this field, to gather more knowledge on Internet addiction and it's effects on mental health

References

[1]. Kaplan and Sadock's synopsis of psychiatry 11th ed
[2]. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 4 No. 1; January 2014
[3]. The Relationship between Internet Addiction and Anxiety among students of University of Sargodha
[4]. Quality of life in medical students with internet addiction Article in ActamedicaIranica·November2016
[5]. Internet 'Addiction' Linked to Drug-like Withdrawal-PLoS One study Feb 2013/online published article/medscape
[6]. Block, Jerald J. (2008) . "Issues for DSM-V: Internet Addiction". American Journal of Psychiatry. 165 (3)
[7]. Internet Addiction Test (IAT): Which is the Best Factorial Solution? J Med Internet Res. 2013 Oct; 15(10)
[8]. Beck's AT –an inventory for measuring clinical anxiety-Journal for consulting and clinical psychology