



A study to assess the impact of internet addiction on psychosocial health among adolescents in selected schools in Durgapur, West Bengal

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.66856/ijasr.2026.11.3.11060>

Abstract

Internet addiction is a modern-day addiction among adolescents. One way to describe persons with internet addiction is that they find virtual environment to be more attractive than everyday reality. Their daily lives are dominated with their need to be online. Sadly, this addiction is affecting millions of adolescents and their families in every aspect of their life. Internet addiction harms mental health by eroding real-life relationships and exacerbating mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and psychiatric disorders. A cross-sectional descriptive study was undertaken to assess the impact of Internet Addiction on Psychosocial Health among adolescents in selected schools in Durgapur, West Bengal. The objective of the study were to assess the level of internet addiction among adolescents in selected schools in Durgapur, West Bengal, to assess psychosocial health among adolescents in selected schools in Durgapur, West Bengal and to determine the correlation between the internet addiction and psychosocial health among adolescents. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used to select 200 samples at selected schools in Durgapur, West Bengal. Modified Internet Addiction Test and Self Structured Rating Scale was used to assess the impact of Internet Addiction on psychosocial health. The findings reveals that 1.5% responded had severe dependence of internet addiction, 70.5% adolescents had Moderate level, 25.5% of adolescents had Mild level of Internet Addiction and 2.5% of adolescents were not Internet Addicted (i.e. Normal Level). The findings also reveals that 2% adolescents had Severe impact of Internet Addiction on Psychosocial Health, 76% adolescents had Moderate impact, 20% adolescents had Mild impact and 2% adolescents had no Impact of Internet Addiction on Psychosocial Health. There was a significant correlation between the Internet Addiction and Psychosocial Health among adolescents ($r = 0.701$). The researcher recommended that a similar study can be replicated on a larger sample and also at different settings. The study has implications in the field of nursing education, nursing practice, nursing administrative news and nursing research.

Keywords: Internet addiction, psychosocial health, adolescents and school

Introduction

Most traditional communications media including telephone, music, film, and television are being reshaped or redefined by the Internet. The Internet has enabled or accelerated new forms of human interactions through instant messaging, Internet forums, and social networking. Online shopping has boomed both for major retail outlets and small artisans and traders.

In modern times, the use of the internet is becoming more and more widespread in the daily lives of people. The use of online media facilitates the life of individuals as it makes possible the satisfaction of their interests and the fulfilment of goals concerning their academic, personal and social life. Adolescents belong to the portion of the population with a strong preoccupation with the internet. In the digital world, young people have the opportunity to gather information, interact with other people and build their personal identity which is one of the most critical psychological processes that take place during puberty. However, the widespread use of the internet poses significant risks which are mainly related to addiction.

India is a country of billion people and measly about 52 million active users in year. Overall, 71 million users accessed Internet in year 2009, with 52 million "active" users who accessed it at least once in a month. Youth in India is getting hooked onto Internet— Overall 72% of young people access Internet on regular basis.

The Internet is a virtual treasure trove of information. Any kind of information on any topic under the sun is available on the Internet, Students and children are among the top users who surf the Internet for research.

Internet addiction disorder (IAD) is a modern-day addiction. Persons with IAD can exhibit symptoms, suffer drawbacks, and face consequences that are similar to individuals addicted to alcohol, gambling, narcotics, shopping, and other compulsive behaviors. Sadly, this addiction is affecting millions of adolescents and their families in every aspect of their life. The primary areas affected include school, family, work and relationships.

Despite the potential negative effects on children using the Internet, more than 30% of surveyed parents had not discussed the downside of Internet use with their children, and 62% of parents of teenagers did not realize that their children had visited inappropriate Web sites. Recognizing the ever-serious negative aspects of children using the Internet and parents' possible underestimation of, or ignorance about, their children's Internet usage and its effects, this study explores the degree of children's exposure to negative Internet content and detects the possible discrepancy between what parents think their children are doing online and their children's actual activities.

As the Internet increasingly becomes part of our lives, Internet addiction disorder has received much attention. Internet addicts may withdraw from social and interpersonal interactions other than those on the Internet. Their family

relationships and academic or occupational functioning may deteriorate. Several withdrawal symptoms have been identified, including nervousness, agitation, and aggression, as well as an addiction syndrome that includes the presence of withdrawal symptoms, increasing tolerance, and loss of control. A high rate of co morbid mental disorders has also been reported, especially depressive symptoms and social impairment.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of adolescents (70.5%) had a moderate level of internet addiction, while 25.5% had mild addiction, 2.5% had a normal level, and only 1.5% had severe dependence. Regarding psychosocial health, 59% of the adolescents had normal psychosocial health, whereas 23% were in the borderline category and 18% had abnormal psychosocial health.

The correlation analysis showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.7$) between internet addiction and psychosocial health scores, indicating that higher levels of internet addiction were associated with greater psychosocial difficulties among adolescents.

These findings suggest that internet addiction has a significant adverse impact on adolescents' psychosocial well-being, highlighting the need for early identification, awareness programs, parental supervision, and school-based interventions to promote healthy internet use and improve psychosocial health.

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