

A Survey based on Side Effects of Internet Addiction on Youth during Quarantine Period

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Abstract

The fast-moving world where the society is advancing each second, the productivity got a break when Covid -19 pandemic was spread throughout the world. So as to limit the damage of this disease, Government of India imposed a lockdown. Due to this, people are entrapped in their homes and are becoming socially isolated. As a result of their boredom, Internet seems as a one-stop solution. But the extensive utility of internet during the period of Quarantine has its side effects. This paper aims to analyse the levels of internet addiction and the associated effects on people's mental and physical health as well as the various changes in their dietary habits associated with it. This paper also discusses preventive strategies that can be utilized during the quarantine period by individuals, which can help reduce/eliminate these problems.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, Quarantine, Lockdown, Psychological Effects.

Introduction

As Covid -19 virus has affected people from all around the globe, the best protective remedy from this virus is to stay at homes also called as staying Quarantine. On 25th March, lockdown was initiated all over India to prevent further transmission of this disease [1]. Lockdown is an effective measure to break the chain of transmission of novel CORONA virus and to keep the people safe.

Internet is a wide platform that is used by billions of people from all over the globe; it is constantly expanding and evolving. Internet has its advantages it helps to connect people to their loved ones; it helps in terms of education etc. Internet has gained popularity among peoples of all age groups and is being utilized by people immensely. Internet usage also has its negative effects when it is used more than required and in those cases a person becomes an internet addict and also faces various side effects that are associated with his/her mental and physical health as well as eating habits. India alone ranks 2nd in the world with the largest number of Internet users [2, 3]. And due to lockdown, people are using internet more frequently either for entertainment, schools or colleges, work from home etc. People are getting more exposure to the internet and that in turn is causing a lot of problems to Mental Health, Physical Activity of an individual and eating disorders. When Mental Health is discussed it means that the potential of an individual to recognize his/her abilities and to tackle the normal stresses of life and to work productively and make contributions for the society [4]. During this Lockdown period, the mental health of individuals is also a growing concern the more usage of internet

is a contributing factor towards it. Internet Addiction also causes effect in academics [5].

Physical Activity of an individual is also necessary to keep a person mentally healthy. Both limited and excessive physical activity can affect the overall mental health of an individual [6]. In this paper due to longer exposure to Internet, people are often having limited movement and less physical activity. Moreover, long duration of internet causes negatives moods and they are often related with various disorders, one of which is eating disorder [7]. Eating disorder is a type of mental disorder that can affect a person's mental or physical health, which is characterized by abnormal eating patterns [8].

Methodology

In our study, we adopted four different questionnaires that were made by google forms. In this web- based cross-sectional survey the questionnaires were broadcasted on the internet through WhatsApp, as it is the most widely used public platform [9].

The 4 different questionnaires were utilized for this study; the first questionnaire was Internet Addiction Test (IAT), Mental Health Inventory (MHI), Rapid Assessment of Physical Activity (RAPA), Eating Disorder Examination questionnaire (EDE-Q). Our target population was mainly from the North Indian Region. The web-based questionnaire was completely voluntary and non-commercial in nature and this mode was adopted to stick with the guidelines of the lockdown [9].

Results and Discussion

Internet addiction is a serious issue to a wide range of populations ranging from teens, students to adults (employees) and even to the old aged people due to the free time available to them during this lockdown period [10]. This has resulted in various problems like poor impulsive control, decreasing work performance, disturbing sleep cycle, poor ways of reducing stress etc [11]. Addiction to internet can also have significant health problems like Attention deficit disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and also it has made people obese as people are not doing any physical exercises and there is lack of control on eating [12]. For preventing Internet addiction, several strategies can be applied which includes using a timer/software which restrict the usage of video games/ computer, instead of communicating to the strangers through social media platforms, you can talk to your parents and grandparents and also help them with their work. It is very important to prioritize your needs and fixing a schedule, in free time you can read books. Substitute your negative behaviour for a more productive or healthy behaviour like doing exercise, doing drawing, painting etc which can help you stay in control of your internet addiction.

As we know that a healthy mind dwells in a healthy body. So, physical activity/exercise can improve one's mental health by reducing anxiety, depression and negative mood and by improving self-esteem and cognitive functions [13]. Yoga has been practiced in India since ages and it has several benefits like it helps in maintaining mental state and peace of mind. Teenagers who are involved in sports and physical activity tend to have low internet addiction and more concentrating powers and also good academic performers [14]. But, during this lockdown period when gyms, gardens etc. have been closed, one can stay fit by practicing yoga/ exercise at home and by playing indoor games for recreation purpose as well as for keeping mind stable and fit and get rid of this high Internet addictivity. It has also been found by psychologists, that lack of physical activity and high internet usage is also concerned with various psychological distresses including ADHD, Depression etc. So, to combat such disorders and to reduce the usage of Internet, it's important to be physically and mentally fit and active.

Conclusion

This paper can be served as a basis to conduct a post quarantine study to understand the psychological conditions of individuals after the quarantine period. However, sometimes it is difficult to determine an individual's mental state through online questionnaire and adoptive methodology but, considering the time world is in, online surveys and assessments are best to be adopted. The present paper reflects the psychological conditions that an individual is

likely to encounter during quarantine period of fourteen days and the isolation may lead to possible worthless internet addiction, initiator of many other physiological and mental health hazards.

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