

Original Article

PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES USED BY MEDICAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social media use is becoming an addiction among medical students. This overuse of social media is leading to academic and mental instability in medical students. This study aimed to find out the prevalence of different social media website usage in medical students

Material and Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted on MBBS students in the third, fourth, and fifth years. 230 Questionnaires, containing 10 questions each, were distributed among the students at Farooq Hospital, Westwood, Lahore. 195 students filled out the questionnaires to participating in the study. SPSS version 20 has been used for data analysis.

Results: Among 195 students, 99.5 % used Snapchat, 96.9 % used WhatsApp, 96.4 % used Facebook, 95.3 % used Instagram, and 76.9 % used Tiktok.

Conclusion: The majority of medical students use different social media websites. Snapchat is appeared to be the most popular website among them. Most students spend less than 1 hour on social media per day.

Key Words: Social Media, Medical Students, Questionnaires

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INTRODUCTION

Social media websites are modern technologies that provide virtual means of communication.¹ That provides a platform for the exchange of news, entertainment, information and ideas. Hence, it virtually connects people all across the globe. Famous social media websites, especially among youngsters, include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat and Tiktok.¹ More than three billion people all over the world use social media websites.² About 71 % of the people in the world who use the internet for social media are youngsters.³

Social media use has tremendously increased in the past decade due to the easy availability and affordability of gadgets and the internet.⁴ It has been seen that this usage has specifically increased among youngsters. In Pakistan, there are 25 million internet users according to the Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan (ISPAK).⁵ This alarmingly increased use of social media has reached the point of addiction. In some studies, this social media addiction has been related to drug abuse.⁶

Excessive use of social media has badly affected the academics of students.⁷ It has also adversely affected the mental well-being of the students.^{8,9} Worldwide, social media overuse has been noticed among medical students.¹⁰ Medical students find it as a medium of escape from their stressful academic life. But, the usage of social media to the point of addiction is leading to the compromise of the physical and

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psychological health of medical students. Social media addiction refers to the uncontrolled desire to use social media.¹¹

Among medical students, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp are very popular websites.¹²

In the current study, the prevalence of different social media website usage has been studied among medical students. The time spent, every day, on these websites has also been studied.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted at Farooq Hospital Westwood, Lahore. The duration of the study was from 26th May to 25th July. Third, fourth, and fifth-year MBBS students were included in the study. Both males and females with the age range of 17-25 years participated. Students of BDS, nursing, physiotherapy, etc were excluded from the study. 230 Questionnaires, containing 10 questions each, were distributed, under the supervision of facilitators, among third, fourth, and fifth-year MBBS students. Out of 230 students, 195 students filled the questionnaires. The data collected were analyzed by SPSS version 20.

RESULTS

Questionnaires were distributed to 230 students but only 195 students completed the questionnaires. So, the data of those 195 students were analyzed. The prevalence of usage of Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok, and WhatsApp was noted. The total time spent on these websites per day was also calculated.

It was found that 96.4 % of students used Facebook. About 95.3 % of students used Instagram. Almost 99.5 % of students spend time on Snapchat. Around 76.9 % of students used Tiktok. 96.9 % of students used WhatsApp. This data showed that Snapchat was the most popular social media website among medical students. The second most popular social media website, among medical students, was WhatsApp. Tiktok seemed to

be the least favorite website among medical students. (Figure-1)

Thirty-eight-point-three percent (38.3%) of students spent less than 1 hour on Facebook. 23.4% of students spent more than 4 hours on Facebook. About 17%, 12.2 %, 4.7 %, and 4.2% of students spend 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, and 4 hours on Facebook respectively. It showed that most of the students spent less than 1 hour on Facebook.

As regards Instagram, 24.1% of students spent less than 1 hour on Instagram. 26.3% of students spent more than 4 hours on Instagram. About 11.8%, 15 %, 12.9 %, and 9.1% of students spent 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, and 4 hours on Instagram respectively. This shows that most of the students spent more than 4 hours on Instagram.

About 56.7 % of students spend less than 1 hour on Snapchat. About 7.21 % of students remained involved for more than 4 hours on Snapchat. About 14.9%, 9.27 %, 5.15 %, and 1.03 % of students remained involved for 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, and 4 hours on Snapchat respectively. This showed that most of the students spent less than 1 hour on Snapchat.

Around 80 % of students spent less than 1 hour on Tiktok. 6.66 % of students spent more than 4 hours on Tiktok. About 5.33 %, 4.66 %, 2 %, and 1.33 % of students spent 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, and 4 hours on Tiktok respectively. This showed that most students spent less than 4 hours on Tiktok.

23.2 % of students spent less than 1 hour on WhatsApp. 29.6 % of students spent more than 4 hours on WhatsApp. About 17.4 %, 12.6 %, 12.1 %, and 10.05 % of students spent 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, and 4 hours on WhatsApp respectively. This shows that most students spent less than 4 hours on WhatsApp.

When average time spent on each website, it was found that the majority (45%) of the students spent less than 1 hour on social media websites. And about 19 % of students spent more than 4 hours on these social media websites. (Figure 2)

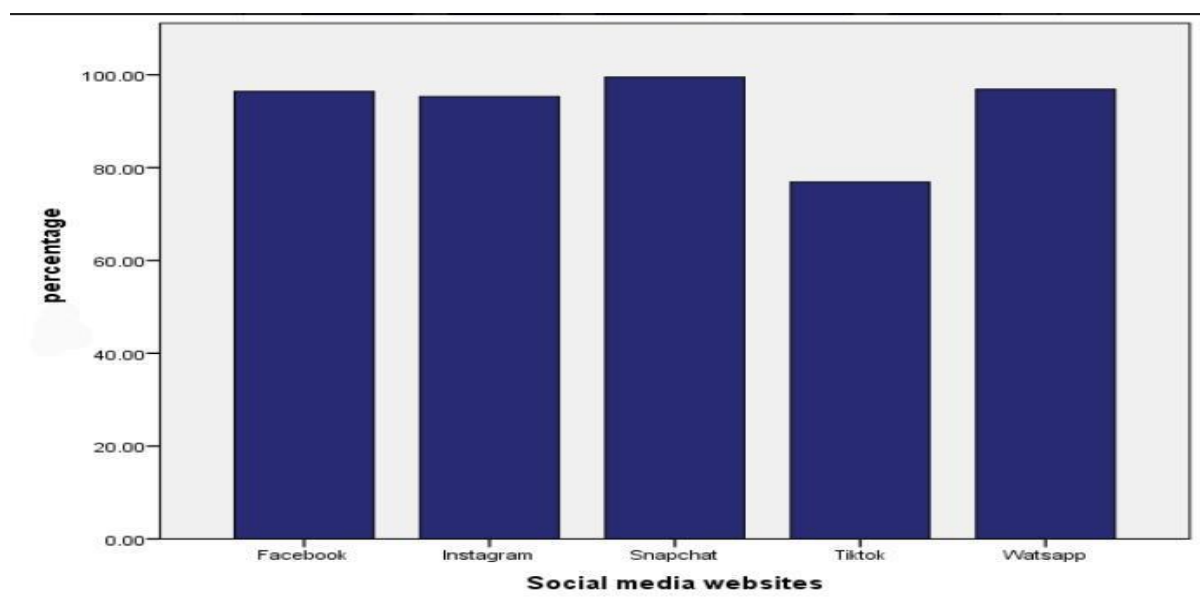


Figure-1. Different social media website usage among medical students.

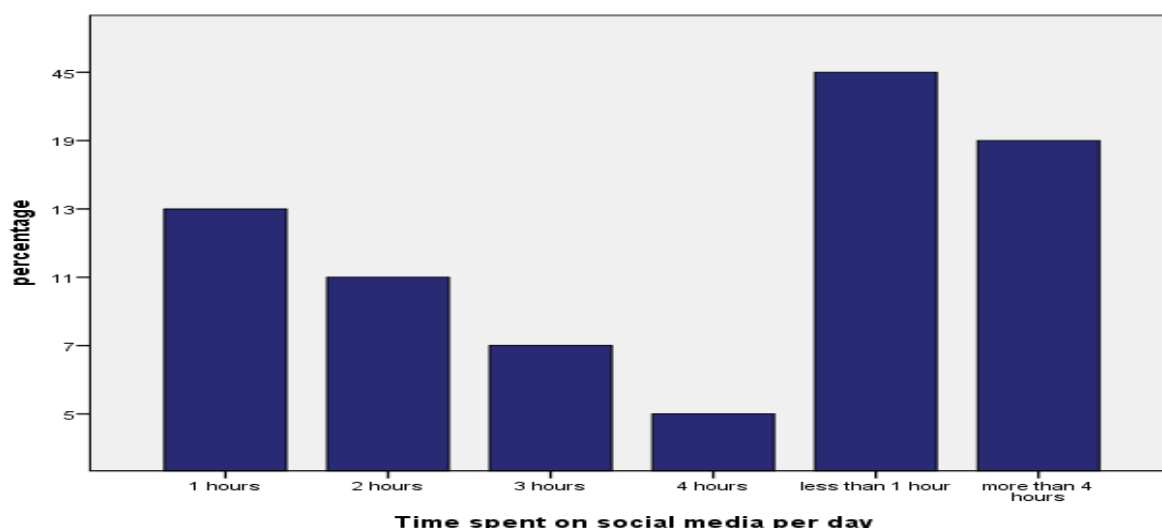


Figure-2. The time spent by students on social media websites per day

DISCUSSION

The results of the present showed that Snapchat was the most popular social media website among medical students. The second most popular website was Facebook. And WhatsApp was the third most famous website among them. Most of the students spent less than 1 hour on social media.

Snapchat appeared to be the most popular website in Kuwait too. In 2019,¹² a study was conducted on 692 college students. The data

collected revealed that Snapchat was the most popular website among students. The reason for its popularity was that Snapchat provided them with a platform for entertainment, self-expression and self-presentation.

The results of the current study are consistent with the study conducted in Pakistan in 2016 at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences Jamshoro, Pakistan too.¹³ In that study, Facebook and WhatsApp were found to be two popular websites among medical

students. In the current study, similar findings were observed that Facebook and WhatsApp were popular social media websites among medical students.

A similar study was done on medical students, in Saudi Arabia. It revealed that a higher number of medical students used Facebook. The major reason for Facebook usage was entertainment.¹⁴

A study conducted in India on medical students revealed a greater number of WhatsApp users. The students told various reasons for excessive WhatsApp usage. They used WhatsApp mostly because of the easy way of communication and feasible means of chatting with friends.¹⁵

The interesting fact that was revealed in the current study was that most of the students spend less than 1 hour on social media websites per day.

CONCLUSION

Most students visit social media websites daily. Snapchat is the most popular website among them. Most students spend less than 1 hour on social media per day.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

SK: Planning and Manuscript writing

MSA: Manuscript review

ZM: Data collection

FA: Data collection

AJ: Data collection

SS: Data collection

AUQ: Data collection

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