

## Life Long Physiological Distress Due To Excessive Use of Social Media – A Damnation Disguised

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**Abstract: Introduction:** Social media is a forum that helps to interact between people by which they are provided the opportunity to share their ideas, pictures and much more over the internet. Now-a-days social media is being used excessively, influencing, modernizing and becoming a useful source of communication especially among university level students. Although social media is a proven opportunity for students but on a closer look it seems negatively affecting the way of thinking, lifestyle, health and relations as well. The impetus behind this study was to assess the influence of social media on the mental and physical well-being of young generation. **Objective:** To find out the cause of excessive indulgence in social media and its impact on students. **Materials & Method:** This study was carried out using close-ended questionnaires, which were distributed randomly among students. The survey was conducted for about four months, starting from May 2019 to August 2019. The analysis was carried out by simple cumulative statistical function. **Result:** The study pointed out some important negative aspects of social media among which weakened relationships, irregular sleeping patterns, increased stress and unstable emotions are a few to mention. **Conclusion:** Social media negatively influences the students both mentally and physically.

**Keywords:** Social media, social apps addiction, friends and family relations, stress.

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### Introduction

Social media is a service that actually describes the interaction between people by which they are provided the opportunity to share their ideas, pictures, videos and much more over the internet (1). Features and characteristics of social media provides many facilities on a single platform, including texting, audio and video sharing, publishing and so on, at very cheaper cost (2). Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the use of social media has increased greatly. Now-a-days the advancement in technology has provided an easy approach to social media which has created an imbalance between the time spent on social media in comparison to the time spent with family & friends (3).

Social media is being used excessively, influencing, modernizing and becoming a useful source of communication especially among young educated individuals, especially students of university level (4) (5). Most of the young generation is rapidly shifting from electronic media such as television, radios to social media. Although social media is preferred by people of almost all age groups but the majority is of students. The attraction and craze of the youth towards social media have led to many questions regarding its impact on the students and society (6). Although social media has a proven positive effect for students but on closer look it has negative effect on the way of thinking, lifestyle, health and relations as well (7).

Social media is believed to influence the lifestyle and mentality of people (8). It is a great way of communication but the addiction to it has become a cause of social loneliness, the face to face interaction and communication is decreasing day by day (9). No matter how much media

develops, its way of communication can never be equivalent to actual meet ups, one can never express his/her actual feelings over media, due to which it causes misunderstanding, stress and eventually depression. Despite that, people are addicted to the fantasy of social media for preferring media for communication, even with people to whom they can meet easily. This high rate of social media usage, especially among university students, has a pivotal role in irregular sleeping patterns, late night sleeping schedules and short sleep durations (10).

Poor sleep is found to be the most important negative outcome of social media addiction, because the sleeping time is mostly being displaced to spend more time on social media (11). Due to these sleep disturbances and less sleeping duration mental wellbeing of an individual is disturbed and the individual suffers from mood swings (12). With the advancement and development of different social applications, young adults appear to spend hours on social media unnecessarily for casual chats and postings (13). To name a few; WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, twitter and Facebook are among the popular social applications which has greatly enhanced the trend of posting personal life events and statuses, these are increasing the inferiority complex among the people who cannot afford to have a high lifestyle (14).

In a nutshell, social media have many impacts on a person, some of which are positive and some of them are negative. Social media makes communication easy, it is useful for local business and is a good source of entertainment but the frequent use of social media ends up to addiction which leads to social loneliness, it reduces physical activities making a person unhealthy and lazy (15). The negative influence of social media seems to effect the students both mentally and physically. Social media increases loneliness, stress, depression, poor sleeps and weak relations (16) (17).

#### **AIM:**

This study was carried out to trace out the actual impact social media, to understand how social media influences a person's lifestyle thoughts and health and to determine the positive and negative aspects of social media.

#### **Significance of The Study:**

This study is to provide awareness among students that how the social life, health and way of thinking is influenced due to social media addiction.

#### **Hypotheses:**

- Social media may cause disturbance in sleeping patterns leading to a stressed, demotivated and distracted life.
- Social media may cause weakening of immediate relations.

#### **Methodology:**

The present report is a survey-based quantitative cross-sectional and gender adjusted study. Questionnaires are the most suitable form to collect primary data, thus this study uses the same tool (18) The questionnaire was self-designed and was entirely MCQs based and consists of 22 questions, from which the time spent on social media, purpose of usage and its effects on various life aspects of the respondents were obtained. The population of the study includes 162 students (aged between 17–25 years), belonging mostly to middle-class income families. The obtained results were analyzed by simple cumulative statistical function using MS Excel and MS Word (2013) (19). Exclusion criteria was followed, that those were not included who were:

- a) Not students.
- b) Above the age of 25 years, and
- c) Belonging to cities other than Karachi.

#### **Results:**

In the present study 162 respondents were enrolled among which 81 (50%) respondents were female and 81 (50%) were male. The respondents belonged to various ethnicities and were aged between 17-25 years. A major population of respondents belong to middle class. (Table. 1).

**TABLE. 1 (Demographic Data)**

PARAMETER	MALE (%)	STANDARD DEVIATON (MALE)	FEMALE (%)	STANDARD DEVIATON (FEMALE)
Age	17-25 years	± 2.12	17-25 years	± 2.11
Ethnicity				
1. Urdu speaking	66.67	± 1.056	82.71	± 0.689
2. Punjabi	14.81		9.87	
3. Sindhi	12.34		6.17	
4. Pashto	3.70		0	
5. Balochi	1.23		1.23	
6. Hindko	1.23		0	
Social status				
1. Lower class	9.87	± 0.384	2.46	± 0.223
2. Middle class	85.18		95.06	
3. Upper class	4.93		2.46	
Preferred gadget				
1. Computer	0	± 0.218	0	± 0.156
2. Laptop / Tablet	4.93		2.46	
3. Mobile phone	95.06		97.53	

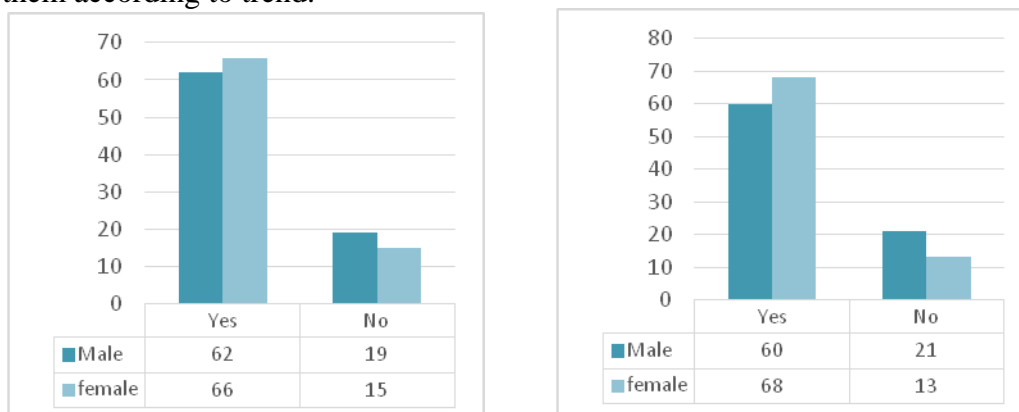
As it was expected, the results clearly showed that social media seems to have negative impact on many aspects in the lives of students. Another aspect that was evident from our study was that in comparison to male respondents, female respondents appears to be significantly affected and addicted to the social media.

**TABLE. 2 (Data evaluation)**

PARAMETERS	MALE (%)	STANDARD DEVIATON (MALE)	FEMALE (%)	STANDARD DEVIATON (FEMALE)
Relationship with family/friends				
1. Weakened	39.5	± 0.920	33.33	± 0.890
2. Strengthened	16.04		19.75	
3. No impact	44.44		46.9	
Family time				
1. Enjoy	23.45	± 0.810	41.97	± 0.746
2. Annoy	29.62		39.50	
3. Don't care	46.91		18.51	
Negative emotions				
1. Yes	74.07	± 0.440	83.91	± 0.369
2. No	25.92		16.04	
Social media time				
1. 3 hrs.	46.91	± 0.862	39.50	± 0.848
2. 5 hrs.	23.45		28.39	
3. >5 hrs.	29.26		32.09	
Satisfactory communication				
1. Yes	20.98	± 1.161	16.04	± 1.129
2. No	35.80		37.03	

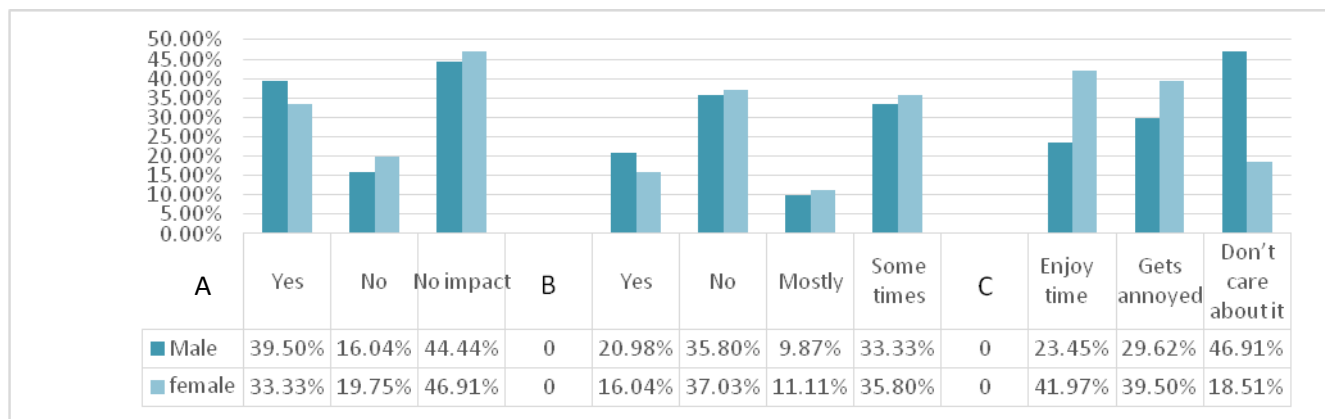
3. Mostly	9.87		11.11	
4. Sometimes	33.33		35.80	
Sleeping disorders				
1. Yes	76.54	$\pm 0.426$	81.48	$\pm 0.390$
2. No	23.45		18.51	
Loneliness				
1. Increase	40.74	$\pm 0.845$	44.44	$\pm 0.871$
2. Decrease	28.39		23.45	
3. No impact	30.86		32.09	
Purpose of social media use				
1. Keep in touch with family & friends	23.45		28.39	
2. Chit chat	0		1.23	
3. Buying & selling	7.4	$\pm 1.843$	0	$\pm 2.040$
4. To be socially active	11.11		12.34	
5. Keep yourself updated and trending	38.27		27.16	
6. For time pass	19.75		30.86	

As seen in (Table.2) about 29.26% male and 32.09% female respondents use social media for more than five hours on regular basis. And according to our study 40.74% males and 44.44% females finds social media a major cause of increasing loneliness. Another important finding was that more than 50% of each male and female respondents use social media only for time pass and to keep them according to trend.



**Fig.1** a) Social media a cause of sleeping disorders, b) Social media cause negative emotions

Fig.1 shows how the physiological mechanisms of students are being disturbed 76.5% males and 81.48% females feels that social media addiction is being a cause of irregular sleeping patterns and sleep disorders. Whereas, 74.07% males and 83.95% females takes social media as a cause of negative emotions such as aggression.



**Fig.2** effect of social media on family relations and communication, a) social media have weakened relationship, b) social media communication satisfies, c) feeling when social media is unavailable

Fig.2 includes three important aspects. In part A, 39.5% males and 33.33% females find social media a cause of weakening relationships. In part B, 35.80% male and 37.03% female respondents are not satisfied with the social media communication, whereas, 33.33% males and 35.80% are rarely satisfied. In part C of the figure, only 29.62% males but 39.50% females gets annoyed when the social media services goes unavailable.

**DISCUSSION:**

Before carrying out the analysis few results were hypothesized which matched our results. It is believed that social media helps to strengthen the immediate family relationship but our results are quite contradictory showing about 32 (39.5%) male and 27 (33.33%) female respondents believed that social media weakened the relationships while only 13(16.04%) of males and 16 (19.75%) females informed that it is a way of strengthening relations, as noted in another study (20). An important aspect was that 95.06% male and 97.53% female respondents were smart phone users, who preferred using smartphones to accesses the internet, which was quite contradictory to the results of some other studies (21). The opportunity that smart phones gives for using social applications anywhere is being abused.

Secondly social media is gradually setting its impact on mental loneliness of students, the present study shows 33 (40.74%) male and 36 (44.44%) female respondents believed that media is increasing loneliness, which shows that media is connecting people virtually rendering people mentally lonely (22). Social media was found to greatly increase the stress and negative emotions among students of university level. This study reveals that 60 (74.07%) male and 68 (83.91%) female students believed that it was a cause of negative emotions such as aggression and stress (23). The explanation clarifies a major issue of our society especially among young generation. As hypothesized, social media is found to be the cause of irregular sleeping patterns such as late night sleeps. This was proved when the results were analyzed and it was found that 62 (76.54%) male and 66 (81.48%) female respondents believed that social media was the cause of sleep disturbance in their life and society quite similar to another study (24).

It has been suggested that a major chunk of young people have become so much addicted to social media that when they are unable to access social media services they gets annoyed and bored (25). Another important point to be considered is that only a minor population of students included in our study are satisfied with the social media communication, yet they are spending hours on social media. Most of them preferred face to face communication and found it better than communication through social media (26). However, it is quite notable and alarming in the present report that people still spend hours and hours on social media.

Overall from our study, it is evident that female students appears to be much more addicted to social media than male students. A greater population of female students are using social media for more than five hours a day! This addiction clearly shows that how female student respondents are getting more effected and a larger population of females observes the physiological distresses due to social media addiction as compared to male respondents.

**Limitations of Study:**

As mentioned earlier, this research was carried out among students, so this study is limited to the students of various science and social science departments of different institution within Karachi, and includes only the students of age group 17-25 years. Further studies are encouraged to analyze the deteriorating effects of social media in population at scale.

**Conclusion:**

Our study indicates that social media undesirably affects the students leading to stress and unstable emotions, destroying physical and mental health of students. The availability by smartphones to use social media anywhere anytime is being a cause of sleeping problems due to late night use of social media applications. Social media addiction have weakened the relations and has become a cause of societal loneliness.

This study summarizes that the abuse of social media has surpassed its productivity. It is observed that there is a cycle of negative aspect of social media that keeps going on, and the disproportionate use of social media leads to wastage of time and social media addiction. It is concluded that inability to comprehend reality and episodes of negative emotions, leads to mood swings weakened relationships, loneliness and stress, followed by the reinforcement to use social media again and again (27).

**ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

Not applicable.

**HUMAN AND ANIMAL RIGHTS**

No animals were used in this study. The study on humans was conducted in accordance with the ethical rules of the Helsinki Declaration and Good Clinical Practice.

**CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION**

Not applicable.

**AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS**

None.

**FUNDING**

None.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest, financial or otherwise.

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