

NOMOPHOBIA AS A MODERN MEDICAL PROBLEM OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Introduction: Nomophobia is a condition which is best described as the fear of not having a mobile phone. When a person uses the mobile phone for a long period of time, they are faced with issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and extrovert personality. The problem caused by overuse of phone is one that is seen globally. Several disorders like social anxiety, panic disorder have similar symptoms to nomophobia. A few signs and symptoms of nomophobia include severe anxiety when in the presence of other people, difficulty in breathing, trembling and disorientation. Nomophobia and other mental disorders share very similar symptoms which makes it hard to be clinically diagnosed by doctors and family members therefore the symptoms should be carefully studied before nomophobia be diagnosed. Symptoms of nomophobia can include: anxiety, changes in breathing, trembling, sweating, agitation, disorientation, tachycardia.

Materials and methods: A survey was conducted among 40 individuals on how often they use their mobile phones, and their opinions towards the use of mobile phones in general.

Aim: To determine the rate of how people use their mobile phones.

Results and discussion: The survey demonstrated that out of all the different age groups that operate on mobile phones, younger people and teenagers between the ages of 16-25(75%) tend to use their device more frequently than all other age groups and adults older than 45 years old used their phones less (9.8%). A lot of people tend to use their mobile phones for over eight to ten hours (24.4%) each day for everyday activities especially accessing social media (63.4%), talking with friends and families (14.6%) and for work/business as well (9.8%). It is however rarer for people who use their mobile phone for extensive study and school related task (7.3%). Many people also testified that they can not stay without a mobile phone for more than a few days or go for long hours without phone usage or internet access (19.5%). According the opinion of some people, it is quite obvious that people do spend vast number of hours using their mobile because society has become very dependent on technology. Some other people also believe that we are living off our phones and seem to be forgetting about all the other activities or that our phones are multi-functional and serve as an access point for mass media consumption through social media, news, google etc. As a result of this we tend to rely on them heavily to perform many tasks. In the opinion of a healthcare worker many people suffer from musculoskeletal concerns as well related to prolonged use of mobile phone especially on the neck and back.

Conclusion and Prophylaxis: There are very few ways in which people can reduce technology dependency and the greatest being withdrawal. To an extent, cutting

down on our social media usage and mobile phone attachment can only be achieved by an individual's willingness to focus more on the reality in front of us than leaning towards the virtual world. We have to stay in the real world more than virtual world and re-establish the human-human interactions, face to face connections. For all that to be achieved we need to limit our use of mobile phones rather than banning it because we cannot escape the force of technological advancement. As much as mobile phones do carry a lot of weight in our everyday life, it is still possible to go without them. We cannot over emphasis the advantage and disadvantage of mobile phone as the time spent can yield good results and sometimes bad results.