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Nomophobia: Growing fear of being without smartphone

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Abstract

A psychological illness where people dread losing their connection to their mobile phones is known as nomophobia, or NO mobile phone phobia. Based on definitions from the DSM-IV, the term "nomophobia" refers to a "phobia for a particular or specific things." When someone uses their phone excessively, there are a number of psychological issues at play, such as low self-esteem and an outgoing personality. The weight of this issue is currently growing on a global scale. NOMOPHOBIC symptoms may also be triggered by other mental illnesses, such as panic disorder, social anxiety, or social phobia. It is very difficult to tell if a patient develops NOMOPHOBIC symptoms as a result of an addiction to cell phones or if their anxiety issues are present ^[1]. Instances of nomophobia include the following signs and symptoms: tachycardia, anxiety, shaking, sweating, agitation, and altered breathing patterns. Nomophobia can also serve as a stand-in for other mental illnesses. As such, we must exercise extreme caution while diagnosing it. Nomophobia can also be triggered by certain mental illnesses, and vice versa. Because nomophobia shares clinical symptoms with other diseases, it can be extremely tough for clinicians to diagnose and treat patients due to its complexity ^[2].

Keywords: Nomophobia, mobile phone, phobia

Introduction

An irrational fear of a thing or circumstance characterizes a phobia, a subtype of anxiety illness. In this case, the anxiety is of being out of cell phone service range or without a phone. Although there is no official diagnosis for nomophobia, there are certain symptoms that are frequently linked to this anxiety, such as the difficulty to switch off your phone, Checking your phone frequently for missed calls, emails, or messages Even when your phone is almost completely charged, charging your battery Bringing your phone around wherever you go even to the restroom Checking repeatedly to make sure you have your phone, dread of not having access to Wi-Fi or a cell phone data connection. Global mobile phone subscriptions have increased from 12.4 million to over 5.6 billion in the last 20 years, accounting for about 70% of the world's population. The World Health Organization designated mobile phone radiation as a carcinogenic issue on May 31, 2011, after confirming that using a phone is in fact a health risk.

Need for the study

A study was conducted among undergraduate students in Health Services, found that out of 547 males, 23% of the students were labelled as nomophobic, while 64% students were at risk of developing nomophobia. Almost 77% students checked their cell phones more than 35 times per day. Another study revealed that more than 50% nomophobics never switch off their mobile phones According to the Lancet medical journal says that a 34year –old woman used her mobile messaging service to such a great extent, that she landed up in the hospital and had to be treated for severe wrist pain. To promote the cope with the fear of not having access to their mobile phone is called Nomo phobia, this term was first used by YouGov. The reasons for not being able to access may be the mobile is not having signal or another reason may be mobile is not having battery. Nomophobia is very latest and is found all around world so there is lot of scope to research in this field. How to prevent it is really challenging tasks one can think to create platform regularly assist user and alarm him if one crosses the limit.

Literature survey

Vibha, K Surinder, K Amandeep (2020) ^[6] conducted a Quantitative non-experimental descriptive research study on nomophobia among students the aim of the study was to assess the nomophobia among nursing students in selected Institutes, 200 nursing students were selected by using randomized sampling technique from selected institutes of Malwa region. 5 point rating scale was used to collect the data on nomophobia. It revealed that out of 200 nursing students, majority 96 (48%) had mild nomophobia whose mean and SD was 29.99±5.54, followed by least 12(6%) had severe nomophobia whose mean and SD was 66.33±4.29, study concluded that the mild level of nomophobia prevails among nursing students.

Sood, R.S. & Butt, A.A. (2020) ^[7] conducted a study on, "Nomophobia: Review on smart phone addiction in Indian perspective". The aim of this study was to define the aspects of Nomophobia by following a phenomenological approach. It also deals with the impact of nomophobia on people's daily lives, the symptoms and signs of nomophobia, the usability of smart phones and their future consequences. It was a qualitative study. The findings revealed that 43% of Indians over 18 years of age are addicted to nomophobia. The study also reveals that females are more addicted in nomophobia than males. It was also found that 26 to 35 age group are more nomo-phobic than other established age groups.

Sureka, V. *et al.* (2020) ^[8] conducted a study on, "Prevalence of nomophobia and its association with stress, anxiety and depression among students". The aim of this study was to understand the prevalence of nomophobia and try to find out the association of nomophobia with stress, anxiety and depression. It was a cross sectional study which was conducted among first year medical and dental college students. The results of the study showed a wide prevalence of nomophobia among students. Nomophobia was significantly associated with stress and depression. Chronic mobile phone users have also reported very low quality of sleep leading to mental health issues.

Setia, R. & Tiwari, S (2021) ^[9] conducted a study on, "Nomophobia among youth in Indian perspective". The aim of the study was to find out the prevalence of nomophobia among youth in India aged above 18 years to 40 years. The findings of the study revealed that college going students are more prone to nomophobia as compared to working professionals and there exists that 100% of the population who owns a smartphone is nomophobic to some extent of degree. Also findings suggests that nomophobia is related to FOMO because mostly youngsters are nowadays connected to others through the social lives and identify they have built and seek external validation and recognition from others. However, it is seen that when age increases nomophobia decreases, moreover in terms of smart phone usage frequency it is different, as usage frequency of smart phones increases, nomophobia increases as well.

Kubrusly, M. *et al.* (2021) ^[10] conducted a study on, "Nomophobia among medical students and its association with depression, anxiety, stress and academic performance". The aim of this study was to assess the effect of nomophobia on medical students at a private institution and its association with depression, anxiety, stress and academic performance. It was a cross-sectional observational study. Nomophobia was measured by using the Nomophobia

Questionnaire (NMP- Q). The findings of the study revealed that all students had some degree of nomophobia. 64.5% had a moderate or severe level of nomophobia. More than 50% of the students had higher than mild degrees of stress. The study also revealed that nomophobia is likely to increase anxiety, stress and depression and as a result leads to a decrease in academic performance.

Characteristics of nomophobia

- Not being able to communicate with others
- Feeling generally disconnected
- Not being able to access information
- Giving up a convenience

Symptoms: Symptoms of nomophobia are similar to other phobias and anxiety disorders. They can include

- Anxiety
- changes in breathing,
- Trembling
- Sweating
- Agitation
- Disorientation
- Tachycardia, which is a fast heartbeat that can be irregular or regular

Treatment

- **Behavioural therapies:** A standard treatment approach for phobias includes a variety of potential behavioural therapies. These therapies help to address the underlying fears and beliefs surrounding the phobia. In the case of nomophobia, the therapies could help address a person's fear of losing their phone, not being connected, and the implications of not having access to their phone. Some therapies for phobias
- **Cognitive behavioural therapy:** In this therapy, a person confronts the underlying thoughts that contribute to the phobia.
- **Desensitization, or exposure therapy:** This approach involves gradually exposing a person to the thing they fear. In nomophobia, a doctor may expose a person to a lack of access to their phone.
- **Hypnotherapy:** Hypnotherapy involves a therapist guiding a person through imagery to help them develop self-soothing techniques when confronted with not having access to a phone.
- **Support groups:** A person may be able to find a support group that helps to address the fear and anxiety associated with not having access to a phone.

Prevention

1. Turn off your cell phone at least an hour before bed.
2. Get the sleep you need
3. Explore your creativity
4. Be sure you get enough sunlight
5. Exercise with others for support
6. Choose an exercise you enjoy
7. Work out to change the way you feel
8. Keep friends and family in your life
9. Get involved in your community

Conflict of Interest: Not available

Financial Support: Not available

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