

## Instagram Addiction and Depression among College Students

Lancy D'Souza<sup>1\*</sup>, Hemamalini, M.J<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study attempted to find out the relationship between depression and Instagram addiction of students pursuing pre university and degree courses. The sample consisted of 131 students comprising of students aged between 14-23 years. The students completed Test for Instagram addiction (TIA) developed by D'Souza, Samyukta and Bivera (2018) and depression measurement from DASS (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Test for Instagram addiction measured addiction in 6 factors—Lack of control, Disengagement, Escapism, Health and interpersonal troubles, Excessive use and Obsession. Through DASS, the authors measured depression scores. Pearson's product moment correlations were employed to find out the relationship between factors of Instagram addiction and stress. Stepwise multiple regression was employed to find out the predictors of depression from components of the test of Instagram addiction. As the addiction to Instagram increased depression of the students also increased linearly and significantly. Health and interpersonal troubles and obsession component of Instagram addiction were the major predictors of depression.

**Keywords:** *Instagram Addiction, Depression, College Students*

Today, internet has entered into various domains of life of people in research, amusement, business, banking and communication networks. It is estimated that about 91% of 16-24 year olds use the Internet for social media in comparison to 51% of 55-64-year-olds and 23% of 65-year-olds and above (Chowdhry, 2018). Through internet the communication is made simple and fast, thereby avoiding controversial issues (Busari, 2016). Internet has become part and parcel of one's life. There is an extreme dependency on internet and applications related to it. It has taken over all other tasks of routine especially among adolescents. This affects their time and attention to be given to school/college work, domestic and responsibilities at home, and even interaction and relationships with others. Internet addiction disorder is overuse of internet with stress manifestation of signs of anger, tension and anxiety. Internet addiction disorders (IAD) is growing at a fast rate becoming a prevalent mental health problem around the world (Goldberg, 1995). Tao et al (2010) opine that internet addiction affects health badly and results in negative impact on eye-sight, sleep pattern and other different illnesses. Even proneness to eating disorders is highlighted by

<sup>1</sup> (Associate Professor of Psychology, Maharaja's College, University of Mysore, Mysore-570 005, India)

<sup>2</sup> (Placement officer, Maharani Lakshmi Ammanni College for women, 18th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru, India)

[\\*Responding Author](#)

Received: November 23, 2018; Revision Received: December 19, 2018; Accepted: December 26, 2018

© 2018 D'Souza, L & Hemamalini, M . J; licensee IJIP. This is an Open Access Research distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License ([www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0](http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0)), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any Medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## Instagram Addiction and Depression among College Students

their study due to internet addiction. In Nepal, Bhandari et al, (2017) found that Internet addiction mediated 16.5% of the indirect effect of sleep quality on depressive symptoms among undergraduate students. A recent study by D'Souza, Samyukta and Tejaswini (2018) revealed that as the internet addiction increased, sleep quality of the female students decreased linearly and significantly. 'Neglect work' and 'excessive use' of Internet were found to be the best predictors of sleep quality. In another study, it was found that peer stress factor of academic stress was found to be the major predictor of internet addiction (D'Souza, Manish & Raj, 2018). Sometimes even personality of an individual may also prone to Facebook and Internet addiction (D'Souza, Ravi, Lakshmeesh & Singh, 2018; D'Souza, 2018).

Internet is very attractive to adolescents and adults as it provides expressions of emotions through several social networking applications. Instagram is one such application, has taken over many other social networking applications. It is a photo sharing social networking app launched in the year 2010 has more than one billion monthly active users worldwide as of June 2018. It has high levels of user engagement and one of the fastest growing social networking sites at present. This media provides a platform for sharing photographs videos and messages in private and public way. Another study revealed that the Instagram is used as "Surveillance/Knowledge about others," "Documentation," "Coolness," and "Creativity." (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). But use of these social networking applications has several antecedents. Review on this line on Instagram did not yield any studies. However, related studies have revealed the following. A recent post Times health newsletter clearly revealed that Instagram is the worst social media network for mental health and wellbeing, based on a study on almost 1500 individuals aged between 14 to 24 years ([time.com/4793331/instagram-social-media-mental-health/2018](http://time.com/4793331/instagram-social-media-mental-health/2018)). A recent study by D'Souza and Ranganath has revealed that those who are more shy might end up developing Instagram addiction. D'Souza and Meenakshi (2018) reported that among dental students as the addiction on Instagram increased, sleep quality of the dental students decreased linearly and significantly. It was found that 'Lack of control' and 'Excessive use' factors of Test for Instagram addiction were the major predictors of sleep quality. So determining the effects of social media usage on teenagers is important since early adulthood is a potentially vulnerable time for emotional development. However, not many studies found to link between Instagram addiction and depression.

In the present study an attempt is made to find out the relationship between depression and Instagram addiction among college students pursuing non-professional courses. In India, access to internet is very easy and economical; there is a high proneness to addiction to it. This may result in many psychological and physiological problems. There are controversies still exist whether depression leads to addiction or addiction leads to depression. However, in the present study, authors have made an attempt to find out how addiction to Instagram leads to depression. The other interests of the researchers are to find out the major predictors of depression of students by various components of Instagram. It is hypothesized that depression does influence Instagram addiction, and there will be definite predictors for depression.

## METHOD

### *Sample*

Students studying their pre university and colleges were selected for the purpose of the study from few colleges of Bengaluru city. A total of 135 students were randomly selected, studying Arts, Science and Commerce/management courses. Their age varied from 14 to 23 years with the mean age of  $19.36 \pm 1.73$  years.

### *Tools Employed*

#### **Test for Instagram Addiction (TIA). D'Souza, Samyukta and Bivera (2018)**

TIA is developed by D'Souza, Samyukta and Bivera in the year 2018. It contains 26 statements, which measure Instagram addiction of the individual in 6 which included components like Lack of control, Disengagement, Escapism, Health and interpersonal troubles, Excessive use and Obsession. To be answered in 5 point Likert scale was used for scoring ranging from All the time (5), most of the time (4), sometime (3), once in a while (OW), rarely/never (1). To find out the reliability, the Cronbach's reliability test was done and the alpha value obtained for the total inventory was 0.931 and for various components varied from 0.680 to 0.863. Further, when item to total scores correlations were performed; all the correlation coefficients obtained through Pearson's product moment correlation techniques were found to be highly significant, indicating that the TIA has high reliability and validity. Even the correlation coefficients obtained between components were found to be highly significant.

#### **Assessment of depression**

In the present study anxiety was assessed using DASS-21, developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995). DASS 21 comprises of 21 statements which measure Depression, anxiety, and stress of an Individual. In the present article, only anxiety scores were considered for the analysis. There are 7 statements in DASS, which exclusively measure depression of an individual. DASS has high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha of 0.94 and has been used widely all over the world (Gloster et al, 2008). In India also several researchers have used DASS scale for measuring depression, anxiety and stress (Bhasin, Sharma, & saini, 2010). The response to each question varies from "Did not apply to me at all" to "Applied to me very much, or most of the time". The scoring was done as per the instructions given by original authors separately for depression, anxiety and stress. To get a final score, total scores under anxiety were multiplied by 2.

### *Procedure*

The second author personally visited few colleges in Bengaluru city to collect the data. After taking the permission from the respective authorities, both test for Instagram addiction and Stress scale component of DASS were administered to a total of 134 students studying in various colleges of Bengaluru city. Before administrating the questionnaire, they were assured of confidentiality. They were asked to answer all the questions. In case of difficulty in understanding the item/s, in order to get good response they were made clear in their local language. Once the data were collected, they were scored and fed to the computer.

The data were analysed using, Pearson's product moment correlation and simple linear regression. Table 1 provides the results of Pearson's product moment correlations between factors of Instagram addiction and stress. Table 2 presents results of the stepwise multiple regression.

## Instagram Addiction and Depression among College Students

**Table 1: Results of product moment correlations between anxiety scores and factors of Instagram addiction**

Variable 1 Factors of TIA	Variable 2	Correlation coefficient
1. Lack of control	Depression	0.358***
2. Disengagement	Depression	0.292***
3. Escapism	Depression	0.297***
4. Health and interpersonal troubles	Depression	0.381***
5. Excessive Use	Depression	0.265**
6. Obsession	Depression	0.363***
Total scores	Depression	0.445***

Note: Df=133; \*\*\* P=.001, \*\*P=.01; \*P=.05

From the table 1, it is clear that depression scores were significantly and positively related to all the components of Test for Instagram Addiction (TIA). Depression was found to be significantly and positively related to lack of control ( $r=0.358$ ), disengagement ( $r=0.292$ ), escapism ( $r=0.297$ ), health and interpersonal troubles ( $r=0.381$ ), excessive use ( $r=0.265$ ), obsession ( $r=0.363$ ) and total Instagram addiction scores ( $r=0.445$ ). As the depression scores increased, lack of control, disengagement, escapism, health and interpersonal troubles, excessive use and obsession increased linearly and significantly, including total Instagram addiction scores.

### REGRESSION ANALYSIS

**Table 2: Results of stepwise multiple regression (IV= Factors of TIA; DV= Depression)**

Model	Variables entered	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
1	Health and interpersonal troubles	.381	.145	.139
2	Obsession	.433	.188	.175

  

Beta coefficients		
	Step I	Step II
1.	Health and interpersonal troubles	.269
2.	Obsession	.234

To find out the major predictors of depression by components of TIA, Stepwise multiple regression was employed. When all the scores of 6 factors of Instagram addiction tests were regressed on the depression scores, stepwise multiple regressions revealed that only two factors of TIA were found to be the major predictors of sleep quality. The first factor entered into the equation was health and interpersonal troubles with correlation coefficient of .381, squared R value of .145 and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of .139. The second factor of TIA to enter into the equation was obsession along with health and interpersonal troubles, with the combined correlation coefficient of .433, squared R value of .188 and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of

## Instagram Addiction and Depression among College Students

.175. In other words, both lack of control and excessive use factors of TIA contributed to 17.5 % of the depression among the present sample of students. The beta values for the first predicted models health and interpersonal troubles at steps I and II were 0.381 and 0.269 respectively. The beta coefficient for the second predicted model-obsession was found to be .234 at step II.

### DISCUSSION

#### *Major findings of the study*

- As the addiction to Instagram increased depression of the students also increased linearly and significantly.
- Health and interpersonal troubles and obsession component of Instagram addiction were the major predictors of depression.

Instagram addiction was found to significantly influence depression among college students. Further regression analysis revealed that health and interpersonal troubles and obsession were the major predictors of depression. Time.com (2018), study revealed that Instagram is associated with high levels of depression, anxiety; bullying and fear of missing out phenomenon (FOMO). There are not many studies available to substantiate our findings which are directly related to Instagram addiction and depression.

However, few studies related to depression and social network addiction are in agreement with the findings of the present study. McNicole and Thorsteinsson (2017) found that internet addiction was associated with increased levels of psychological distress. Studies by Müller, Beutel and Wölfling (2014), Morrision and Gore (2010) and Leung (2006) found significant relationships between internet addiction and depression and other co-morbid disorders.

Several strategies can be planned to avoid addiction to Instagram. According to Busari (2016) use of internet must be alternatively replaced with less risky and healthy activities, which might include Yoga practising, exercising, meditation and involving in sports activities. The addiction towards social networking applications like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc., are on increase day by day. Therapies like Cognitive behaviour therapy may play a major role in reducing the addiction to internet/social networking applications by changing their thought process from negative to automated positive thoughts for a better living. Future research should focus on these lines to underpin the ill effects of Instagram addiction.

### REFERENCES

- Bhandari, Parash., Neupane, Dipika., Rijal, Shristi., Thapa, Kiran.,, Mishra, Shiva & Kumar Poudyal, Amod. (2017). Sleep quality, internet addiction and depressive symptoms among undergraduate students in Nepal. *BMC Psychiatry*. 17. 106. 10.1186/s12888-017-1275-5.
- Bhasin S.K, Sharma R, & Saini N.K.(2010). Depression, anxiety and stress among adolescent students belonging to affluent families: A school-based study. *Indian J Pediatr*. 77, 161–165. [PubMed]
- Busari A.O. (2016). Academic Stress and Internet Addiction among Adolescents: Solution Focused Social Interest Programme as Treatment Option. *J MentDisord Treat* 2:114. doi:10.4172/2471-271X.1000114.

## Instagram Addiction and Depression among College Students

- Chowdhry, A. (2018). Study Says Instagram Is Ranked The Worst Social App For Causing Young People To Feel Depressed. [www.forbes.com/sites/amitchowdhry/2017/05/31/instagram-depression/#76e25d377453](http://www.forbes.com/sites/amitchowdhry/2017/05/31/instagram-depression/#76e25d377453)
- D'Souza, L. (2018). Personality correlates of Facebook addiction among college students. Paper presented at 5<sup>th</sup> Academic conference on Social sciences, Singapore (7-8<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).
- D'Souza, L. & Meenakshi, S.(2018). Relationship between Instagram addiction and sleep quality among dental students. *International Journal of research in Engineering, IT and social sciences*, 8 (10), 103-108
- D'Souza, L. & Ranganatha, P. R (2018). Shyness Correlates of Instagram Addiction among College Students.*International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6(4), 23-28. DIP:18.01.043/20180604, DOI:10.25215/0604.043
- D'Souza, L., Manish, S. & Raj, S (2018). Relationship between academic stress and internet addiction among college students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6(2), 100-108. DIP: 18.01.010/20180602, DOI: 10.25215/0602.010
- D'Souza, L, Ravi, M, Lakshmeesh, D M & Singh, M (2018). Shyness Correlates of Facebook Addiction among College Students.*International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6(3), 96-103. DIP:18.01.050/20180603, DOI:10.25215/0603.050
- D'Souza, L., Samyukta, A & Tejaswini, S.M.(2018). Relationship between InternetAddiction and Sleep Quality among Female Students, *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6 (1), 83-88.DIP: 18.01.088/20180601, DOI: 10.25215/0601.088
- D'Souza, L., Samyukta, A., & Bivera, T.J. (2018). Development and validation of test for Instagram addiction (TIA).*International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6 (3), 4-14.DIP:18.01.081/20180603, DOI:10.25215/0603.081
- Gloster AT, Rhoades H.M, Novy D, Klotsche J, Senior A, Kunik M, et al.(2008). Psychometric properties of the depression anxiety and stress scale-21 in older primary care patients. *J Affect Disord*. 110, 248-259.[PMC free article] [PubMed]
- Goldberg,I.(1995). *Internet addictive disorder (IAD) diagnostic criteria*. from[www.psychom.net/iadcriteria.html](http://www.psychom.net/iadcriteria.html)
- Leung L.(2006). Stressful life events, motives for Internet use, and social support among digital kids. *CyberPsychology&Behavior* 2006; 10:204–214 [PubMed]
- Lovibond S H., & Lovibond P F (1995).Manual for the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales.(2nd. Ed.) Sydney: Psychology Foundation. [www.psy.unsw.edu.au/dass/](http://www.psy.unsw.edu.au/dass/)
- McNicol, M. L., & Thorsteinsson, E. B. (2017). Internet Addiction, Psychological Distress, and Coping Responses Among Adolescents and Adults. *Cyberpsychology, behavior and social networking*, 20(5), 296-304.
- Morrison C.M, & Gore H. (2010). The relationship between excessive Internet use and depression: a questionnaire-based study of 1,319 young people and adults. *Psychopathology* ,43, 121–26 [PubMed]
- Müller K.W, Beutel M.E, & Wölfling K. A (2014). contribution to the clinical characterization of Internet addiction in a sample of treatment seekers: validity of assessment, severity of psychopathology and type of co-morbidity. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 55,770–777 [PubMed]
- Sheldon, P., & Bryant, K. (2016). Instagram: Motives for its use and relationship to narcissism and contextual age. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 58, 89-97.time.com (2018). [time.com/4793331/instagram-social-media-mental-health/2018](http://time.com/4793331/instagram-social-media-mental-health/2018)
- Tao R, Huang X, Wang J, Zhang H, Zhang Y, et al. (2010) Proposed diagnostic criteria for internet addiction. *Addiction* 105, 556-564.

## Instagram Addiction and Depression among College Students

### **Web resources**

Chowdhry, A. (2018). Study Says Instagram Is Ranked The Worst Social App For Causing Young People To Feel Depressed. [www.forbes.com/sites/amitchowdhry/2017/05/31/instagram-depression/#76e25d377453](http://www.forbes.com/sites/amitchowdhry/2017/05/31/instagram-depression/#76e25d377453)  
[www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm](http://www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm), 2018  
<http://time.com/4793331/instagram-social-media-mental-health/2018>

### **Acknowledgments**

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be mentioned.

### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** D'Souza, L & Hemamalini, M . J (2018). Instagram Addiction and Depression among College Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 6(4), 96-102. DIP:18.01.091/20180604, DOI:10.25215/0604.091