



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON SOCIAL, ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Background: Social media has become an integral part of the lives of the medical students. Students spend more than usual hours on social networking and it affects their social, personal and professional lives.

Objectives: The objective of the study was to assess the pattern of usage of social media and its impact on the social, professional and academic lives of medical students.

Study design: It was a cross sectional questionnaire based study.

Material and methods: The study was conducted on 246 MBBS students. The data was collected with the help of questionnaire designed for gathering the effect of social media apps on social, academic and professional lives of students.

Results: Majority of the students (64.8%) had been using these apps for more than two years. Overall opinions on impact of social media usage were mixed. 87.6% of the participants believed that social media applications are effective communication applications. 76.4% reported that it decreased their concentration in studies.

Conclusion: Balanced use of social media is essential for maintaining academic responsibilities. While platforms such as whatsapp and facebook can provide valuable opportunities for recreation and education, excessive use may contribute to social networking site addiction, adversely affecting students academic performance and professional development.

Key words: Social media, medical students, academic, professional, social, impact

Introduction

Making life easier and more convenient for themselves have always motivated humans into looking out for different ways to achieve the same since the beginning which is supposedly the basis of all innovation. For a while now, technological advances have been consistently seen within the field of

social media and hence gaining its vast popularity among all age groups but especially among the youth worldwide.(1)

With the introduction of smartphones, and ease in access to internet, social networking sites, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp have become a part of daily life amongst the young including students affecting their not only social but also mental and physical wellbeing. (2) In today's digital age, social media stands out as a highly influential medium for both communication and learning. Its vast capabilities make it a valuable asset in educational environments. Educators and students utilize social networking platforms for exchanging ideas, teaching, learning, collaboration, and even leisure. These platforms support a variety of content formats, allowing users to share information through text, images, videos, audio clips, and contact references.(3)

The regular updates in the functioning of the social media apps have made them user friendly and more convenient. However, the variable uses and functions of the social media have also led to an increase in the frequency and duration of the usage of smartphones and social media platforms leading to a state of addiction which is leading to diminished performances in various aspects of life and feeling of depression and anxiety if the use is restricted.(4) Moreover, the omnipresence of these platforms can foster a sense of comparison, social pressure and disconnection among undergraduate students, amplifying the challenges they already face.(5)

Medicine is a profession deeply rooted in information, where rapid advancements and frequent scientific discoveries are the norm. Although the value of social media in knowledge and information exchange and promoting academic discussions is widely acknowledged, there remains a gap in understanding the main factors that either drive or hinder students from using social media as a productive learning resource.(6) Hence this study was planned to assess the pattern of social media usage and its effects on social, academic and professional life of medical students'.

Material and methods:

Study design:

A cross sectional, questionnaire-based study was conducted by the Department of Pharmacology of Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital, Faridkot (India) between October 2024 and May 2025.

Study population:

Phase 2 and phase 3 MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) students of Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital, Faridkot (India) were included in this study. A total of 306 MBBS students' were approached, out of which 246 MBBS students agreed to participate in the survey.

Inclusion criteria:

1. MBBS students willing to give consent for the study.
2. Phase 2 and phase 3 MBBS students.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Phase 1 and phase 4 MBBS students.
2. Paramedical students.

Sample size: The sample size was a convenience sample.

Data collection procedure: A pretested, validated, structured questionnaire was used for the study. The questionnaire was prepared to assess the impact of social media usage on social, academic and professional aspects of medical students, taking guidance from previous literature. It was divided into three parts: (i) Demographic information, including age and gender (ii) Pattern of social media usage in medical students (iii) Questions to assess the impact of social media usage on academic, professional and social life of MBBS students.

We prepared the questionnaire in the form of a google form and shared the responder link amongst the students of phase 2 and phase 3 MBBS students. The responses were collected directional to an email account of the editor of the google form. The responses presented itself in the form of excel sheet, and the data was studied the form of charts and graphs.

Ethical considerations:

The permission of Institutional Ethics Committee, Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital, Faridkot (India) was taken prior to initiation of the study GGS/ IEC/ /22.

Statistical analysis:

The data entry was done in a predesigned Microsoft Excel sheet and a descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages were calculated.

Results:

The study surveyed 246 medical students to understand their social media usage habits. The participant pool consisted of 55.3% females and 55.7% males. The majority of participants were 20 years old.

The study found that 64.8% of students had been using social media platforms for more than two years. In terms of frequency, 17.2% of students reported opening these applications whenever a notification was received, while 55.8% revealed that they use the apps more than 10 times per day. The time duration of daily use varied, ranging from less than 1 hour to more than 3-5 hours depending on individual schedules. A quarter of participants (25.3%) indicated that their usage depended upon their daily routine, whereas 36.9% reported using social media for 3-5 hours daily. Such substantial usage was perceived to reduce the time available for productive activities. More than half of the respondents (58.45%) reported keeping their internet connection active throughout the day.

Regarding academic impact, 87.6% of the students indicated that they were members of educational group and majority (86.7%) believed these groups contributed positively to their academic life. Additionally, 65.2% reported accessing social media during clinical rounds and 91.8% acknowledged that this sometimes led to absenteeism, thereby affecting their attendance. Nevertheless, most students (85.8-87.6%) agreed that these platforms served as effective communication tools, enhancing interaction between classmates and faculty and aiding in receiving timely updates on lecture schedules and faculty announcements (98.3%).

When students were asked about negative impacts of social media 78.1% of students agreed that social media reduced their study duration and 76.4% reported that it decreased their concentration during studies. Overall opinions on its impact on academic performance were mixed.

Social media was also found to significantly affect students social lives, with 56.7% acknowledging that its use reduced their participation in sports and outdoor activities. Moreover 43.3% stated that mobile phone use had decreased their physical interaction with family and friends.

Discussion:

Social media has become an integral part of modern society with multifaceted functionalities that influence users academic, personal and social lives. While these platforms offer opportunities for communication, networking and learning, excessive use has been associated with problematic behaviours, aggression, sleep disturbances (7). Studies have also linked abnormal smartphone use to both physical and mental health issues (8).

The present study explored the patterns of social media usage among medical students in Punjab and examined its influence on academic, personal and professional domains. Our results showed that the majority of students were active users with whatsapp, instagram and youtube, being the most frequently accessed platforms. This pattern is consistent with findings from other regions of India and abroad, where high engagement of medical students with social media has been documented (9, 10, 11).

In terms of academic impact, many students reported using social media as a source of educational content, accessing medical lectures, case discussions and recent research updates. Similar observations have been reported by (12, 13) who found that social media can serve as an effective supplementary learning tool when used judiciously. However our study also revealed that excessive non academic usage was associated with reduced study time and occasional disturbances in concentration. This dual effect highlights the need for balanced usage strategies.

Evidence from other regions supports our findings. For instance, a study from a medical college in Andhara Pradesh found that 89.2% of medical students were active social media users, closely aligning with our observation that 94.7% of students reported regular use (14).

Given the high prevalence of use and the potential for both positive and negative outcomes, it is crucial to promote awareness about responsible social media habits among medical students. Offline activities like sports, reading and music should be promoted among students. Medical colleges can hold workshops on time management and promoting balance through awareness, self control and healthier alternatives.

Limitations:

This study was limited by its cross sectional design and reliance on self reported data, which may be influenced by recall bias and social desirability bias. Furthermore, the sample was restricted to medical students in Punjab, limiting the generalizability of the results to other regions.

Conclusion: Our study highlights the importance of balancing social media use with academic responsibilities. Positive use of whatsapp and facebook for recreational and educational purposes can be beneficial, excessive use can lead to social networking site addiction. Ultimately derailing students from their academic and professional goals. It is important to balance social media use with academic responsibilities. to promote responsible social media use among students

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Table 1 Demographic details of study participants

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percent
18	25	10.1%
19	47	19.1%
20	70	28.5%
21	47	19.1%
22	37	15.0%
23	15	6.1%
24	4	1.6%
25	1	0.4%
Gender		
Male	110	44.7%
Female	136	55.3%
Total	246	100%

Table II: Pattern of social media usage

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Do you use any kind of social media app		
Yes	233	94.7%
No	8	3.3%
Not anymore	5	2%
Years of usage of any social media platform		
Less than 1 year	17	7.3%
1-2 years	65	27.9%
More than 2 years	151	64.8%
Frequency of use of social media apps		
>1 times a day	30	12.9%
>10 times a day	130	55.8%
>25 times a day	33	14.2%
Every time a notification is received	40	17.2%
Duration of social media apps used per day		
1-2hrs	63	27%
3-5hrs	86	36.9%
6-7hrs	15	6.4%
Over 8hrs	6	2.6%
Variable with the day	59	25.3%
No idea	4	1.7%
Does your notification display on your lock screen		
Yes	106	45.5%
No	127	54.5%
Update your status stories/post/instagram notes/display screen picture/any other for)		
<1 day	3	1.3%
<1 week	50	21.5%
< 1month	118	50.6%
< 1 year	62	26.6%
Have you installed an app lock		
Yes	65	27.9%
No	168	72.1%
Use your phone while eating		
Yes	121	51.9%
No	112	48.1%
Keep your internet on for 24 hours		
Yes	136	58.45
No	97	41.6%

Table III: Impact of social media usage on academic and professional life of study participants

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Are you a part educational group on facebook/whatsapp/instagram/any other social media platform		
Yes	204	87.6%
No	29	12.4%
Found the group activity beneficial for academic/personal life		
Yes	202	86.7%
No	31	13.3%
Opened social media apps during lecture/labs/clinical rounds		
Yes	152	65.2%
No	81	34.8%
How often?		
Often	35	17.9%
Sometimes	72	36.7%
Rarely	89	45.4%
Absent from academics/activities/clinical rounds because of social media use		
Yes	214	91.8%
No	19	8.2%
Make more spelling errors of English characters due to use of using social media apps		
Yes	50	21.5%
No	183	78.5%
Effect of whatsapp/ facebook usage on academic performance		
Positive	79	33.9%
Negative	83	35.6%
No effect	71	30.5%
Usage of online social network has positive impact on academic performance :-		
A) These are effect communication applications		
Yes	204	87.6%
No	29	12.4%
B) Improves interaction between classmate/lecturers		
Yes	200	85.8%
No	33	14.2%
C) Helpful in receiving updates related to change in schedule from lecturers and faculty		
Yes	229	98.3%
No	4	1.7%
Usage of online apps social network has negative impacts on academic performance because		
A) Impairs study duration		
Yes	182	78.1%
No	51	21.9%
B) Reduce concentration studies		
Yes	178	76.4%
No	55	23.6%

Table IV: Impact of social media usage on social life of study participants

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Do you wake up in the middle of the night		
1 Time	24	10.3%
>1 time	8	3.4%
Not at all	200	85.5%
As soon as the notification is received	1	0.4%
Do you use social media apps as soon as you wake from sleep		
Yes	79	33.9%
No	154	66.1%
Does social media usage lowers your sport activity in real life		
Yes	132	56.7%
No	101	43.3%
does social media usage lower your interaction with family/ friends and colleagues physically		
Yes	101	43.3%
No	132	56.7%
Does social media communication effects your mood and behaviour		
Yes	142	60.9%
No	91	39.1%
Has your sleep hampered due to social media apps		
Yes	88	37.8%
No	145	62.2%
Do you panic when you misplace your phone		
Yes	184	79%
No	49	21%
Do you feel annoyed when your friends do not respond		
Yes	121	51.9%
No	112	48.1%
Have you ever attempted to minimise the use of social media		
Yes	207	88.8%
No	26	11.2%
Were you successful in minimising the use of social media		
Yes	153	65.7%
No	80	34.3%
Duration for how long can you go without using social media		
Few hours	141	60.5%
1 week	64	27.5%
1 month	28	12%