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Assessing the Relationship between Quality of Sleep, Internet Addiction and Mental Well-Being among College

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to assess the relationship between the variables – sleep quality, internet addiction as well as the individual's general health with their mental well-being. A data of 56 college students (N=56) between the ages of 18 to 26 was analysed. Moreover, the tools that were used for data collection are –General Health Questionnaire of 12 items (GHQ12), the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index and the Internet Addiction test.

Keywords: Mental Health, Internet, Sleep, College Students

INTRODUCTION

Talking about mental health has become a stigma and it has been like that since ancient times, but nowadays as awareness is spreading more day by day, we see how crucial it is for our well-being. The American Psychological Association has defined mental health as a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, good behavioural adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life. Going into definitions may seem complicated but they give meaning to how we perceive terms.

The impactful relationship between mental health and internet is no joke. In present times, the usage of electronic devices has become the ultimate medium of making our lives easier, it has had significant effects on health, be it physical, mental, social or emotional. Being well mentally stabilizes our decision-making power, lifestyle,

mannerisms, and interpersonal relationships. In accordance with the World Health Organisation, problematic social media usage among adolescents with rates rising from 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022 has been detected, in the same context, 1 in 10 users struggled to control their screen time and experienced negative consequences. Our brain reaches its maximum size in early adolescence; this significantly shifts our perspective of giving preference to healthier internet habits than letting them go. Internet can get addictive, especially when almost everything is related with it. Internet addiction is something which people are suffering from and they do not even have the slightest idea of it. It's an exponentially variable.

In ancient times, people figured to get to bed at a reasonable hour, when the sun got down. But as centuries passed by, the world converted into such a place where greed became a factor of sleep nuisance.

Business owners sought to make growth plans by working at nights with their staff as a medium to get richer, students and academicians planned to study at late hours to get good grades or frankly, recognition, and several others who sacrificed their sleep to other illusioned demons. Irrespective of the cause, people risked sleeping for the sake of their body and mind.

Unfortunately, this circus has been going ever since man became disillusioned oh himself. Sleep quality is essential for understanding how sensible our cognitions, lifestyle, physical health and relationships are. In simpler terms, a goodnight's sleep is key. From the American Psychological Association's column on "Stress and sleep", it was found that even light sleep deprivation can affect memory, judgement and mood coupled with feelings of listlessness, and moreover, chronic sleep deprivation can contribute to health problems from obesity and high blood pressure to safety risks while driving. Mental disruptions can cause a disturbed sleep. The cruciality of recognizing the benefits of good sleep hygiene is valuable.

How mentally prepared we are for a certain situation affects its course and all of the things that come following. Here, mental health plays a centre role. By integrating it with sensible sleep harmony and reasonable internet usage, marginal nourishing changes can be seen.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For us to know more about how there's a relation between the key terms- mental health, internet addiction and sleep quality, it's central to refer to what has been done in the previous years.

A study done in 2020 by Lebni, Toghroli, Abbas, resulted in a positive correlation between internet addiction and mental health among students. Additionally, it concluded that their excessive internet usage led to anxiety, depression and adverse mental health. Internet is often considered as a healthy helpful medium, but like any other, it has its cons too, when used in an unrestrained manner.

The "Sleep patterns and mental health correlates in US adolescents" study by Zhang et al. in 2017 demonstrated how abnormal sleep patterns may serve as markers of prodromal or untreated mental disorders among adolescents coupled with suboptimal sleep patterns associated with an array of mental disorders and other health-related outcomes. Sleep has been an essential factor for the stability of our cognitions, it's central to pay attention to a healthy schedule of sleeping.

Baturay and Toker took it upon themselves to conduct a study on "internet addiction

among college students: Some causes and effects" in March of 2019. They included a sample of 159 undergraduate students. The results indicated that game addictions, neglecting daily chores, bad relationships with professors are significantly associated with internet addiction.

Furthermore, the use of internet for research purposes can decrease internet addiction, yet not at a significant level. Marginal difference can occur when we monitor our usage over the internet, we may come to know if we are working towards our betterment or detrimentally destroying ourselves.

Another study in 2013 on "Investigating the relationship of resilience to academic persistence in college students with mental health issues" by Michael T. Hartley aimed to expose the relationship between resilience, mental health and academic persistence. It achieved the conclusion that intrapersonal resilience may be a critical factor in students with the most psychological distress being able to complete credits over time. However, it also found a lack of a central interaction between the intra- and interpersonal resilience factors despite significant bivariate correlations. Not being able to keep a resilient attitude may affect how a student performs in their academics. This can be secured only when there's enough awareness about mental challenges.

METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the effect of internet addiction on mental health.

2. To study how the quality of sleep affects mental health.

3. To study the relation between overall health and mental health.

PROCEDURE:

The total number of college students, between the ages of 18 to 26, was 56 ($N_{females}$ = 48, N_{males} = 8). An online form was circulated among these participants from different academic institutions of India. The responses were recorded and compiled, then further interpretation and analysis was done based on the results.

INCLUSION CRITERION:

Following points were kept in mind while collecting data:

1. Subjects who belong to Indian academic institutions.

2. Subjects who have passed their class XII and are currently pursuing higher level education.

EXCLUSION CRITERION:

1. Subjects with ongoing medications, prescription drugs or any organic disorders are excluded.

2. Subjects with any medical, psychiatric or neurological illness(s) were excluded.

MEASURES:

Information about the following factors was also recorded through base questions in the form which was circulated among the participants:

1. Gender
2. Socio demographic details
3. Education programme participants are enrolled in

TOOLS USED:

GENERAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE (GHQ-12)

The general health questionnaire with 12 items is a tool used to assess psychological distress, common mental issues (anxiety, depression etc.), it is easy to administer and superficially covers the capability of an individual to make decisions, their sleep patterns and concentration power. Originally the GHQ included 60 items which was developed by David P. Goldberg in the year 1972 then in the later years it converted into a 12 item questionnaire. Additionally, the scoring is done on a likert scale basis.

PITTSBURGH SLEEP QUALITY INDEX (PSQI)

Sleep patterns contribute a lot in knowing how an individual understands their mental health. One of the many tools for the said purpose is the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), developed in the year 1989 by a team of researchers from the University of Pittsburgh which was developed initially for psychiatric population but it later came in use for psychological purpose(s) as well. The PSQI has a 4-point likert scale, also the highest score is 21 indicating very poor sleep quality and lowest being 0 which indicates the opposite. It has a total of 10 primary questions with some having multiple sub-questions. The final score of an individual gives an insight on 7 components –subjective sleep quality, sleep latency, sleep duration, sleep efficiency, sleep disturbance, use of sleep medication and daytime dysfunction.

INTERNET ADDICTION SCALE (IAT)

The internet addiction scale was developed by Dr. Kimberly Young in the year 1998 with a total of 20 items. The IAT has a 5-point likert scale scoring ranging from 0 to 5. Additionally, a score between 0-30 indicates a normal amount of internet usage; 31-49 indicates a mild level of internet addiction; 50-79 shows a moderate level and 80-100 directs to a severe dependency on internet. An individual's IAT score is directly proportional to their severity of internet usage problem.

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS:

N=56

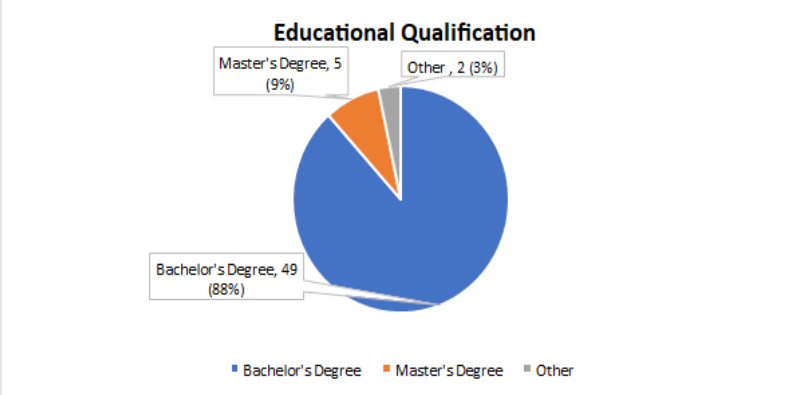
This study includes the sample of fifty six *young adults* (WHO age criterion is considered here) between the ages of 18 to 24.

The table (1) demonstrates the number of participants based on different sexes.

Table (1)

Gender	Frequency
Male	8
Female	48
Total	56

The figure (x) below shows the number of participants with their higher education level. **Figure (x)-**



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The participation in this study was purely voluntary and consensual. No information of any participant was disclosed. Each of them was given complete freedom over withdrawing at any moment they desired. Full confidentiality was maintained with their responses and data. Statistical analysis was done with the aid of JASP 0.95.4.

RESULTS

General Health Questionnaire-12

Table (2)-

Severity Levels	Frequency	Percentage
No distress	22	39.2%
Distress	20	35.7%
Moderate distress	11	19.6%
Severe distress	3	5%

Table (2) denotes the distress level along with their respective percentages of respondents. It indicates 39.2% people had no stress whereas 35.2% were distressed. Along with this, a 19.6% of individuals faced moderately higher amounts of distress and 5% of the respondents faced severe distress in the past month.

Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index

Table (3)-

Sleep Quality	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	33	58.9%
Fairly good	16	28.5%
Very bad	7	12.5%
Fairly bad	0	0

The above mentioned table (3) displays the quality of sleep the respondents felt in the past month. It can be clear that more than half the respondents were able to receive a quality sleep whereas 28.5% respondents received fairly good sleep in the past month. In addition to this, 12.5% individuals reported a very bad sleep.

Internet Addiction

Table (4)-

Usage Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	24	42.8%
Mild	16	28.5%
Moderate	15	26.7%
Severe	1	1%

The table (4) reveals the internet dependence of individuals who participated in this study. It is evident that 42.8% of the respondents' usage of the internet was of the normal amount whereas only 1% had severe dependence on it. Additionally, the mildly dependent (28.5%) as well as the moderately dependent (26.7%) respondents were nearly the same percentage.

Correlation Analysis-

Table (5)-

VARIABLES	*GHQ-12*	*PSQI*	*IA*
GHQ-12	1	**0.384****	**0.590*****
PSQI	**0.384****	1	**0.436*****
IA	**0.590*****	**0.436*****	1

The table (5) signifies the respective correlation values for GHQ-12, IA and PSQI with each other. It can be seen that the Pearson's r value for GHQ-12 and IA came out to be +0.590 (two-tailed) with a p-value less than 0.001, this indicates that there's a *strongly significant positive relationship*. Additionally, the r value for PSQI and IA is +0.436 with a p-value less than 0.001, meaning that there's a *moderately positive relationship*. Lastly, the r value for GHQ-12 and PSQI is +0.384 with a p-value of 0.003, indicating a *weak positive relationship*.

DISCUSSION

The current study involved 56 respondents, among them 39.2% had no significant stress, 35.7% had some level of distress as well as 19.6% and 5% faced mild to severe levels of distress respectively. These findings are consistent with that of a study done by Hamza et al. (2011). Respondents' internet dependence was also carried out through the IA score, these included- 42.8% had a normal IA, 28.5% were mildly addicted, 26.7% of them were moderately addicted to the internet with 1% cases of severe dependence. Similar results were found in a previous study by Ko et al. (2009) which included high school adolescents in Taiwan. Furthermore, 58.9% of the participants reported very good quality of sleep, 28.5% had fairly good quality and remaining 12.5% received fairly bad quality of sleep. Congruent observations were seen in a previous study by Gupta, S. and Aneja, J. (2019). The principle finding of the current study was that the level of distress faced was directly proportional to dependence on the internet as concluded by the correlation value of General Health Questionnaire-12 and Internet Addiction scores. Coupled with this result was the similar relation between sleep harmony and internet dependence. Comparable outcomes were observed in the study done Shen et al. (2023) which learned that stress had an impactful association with internet usage. Moreover, a study by Alotaibi et al. (2020) discovered that the quality of sleep in medical students was restless and their stress levels increased. Additionally, it became apparent that the data didn't support the intended relationship between sleep quality and levels of distress with weaker than expected figures. This indifference may have been due to a small sample size, rather a future research with such a data which would be substantially larger and more diverse may yield comparatively more fruitful results.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to assess the relationship between sleep quality, internet addiction, general health, and mental well-being among 56 college students aged 18–26 years. The findings indicate that sleep quality, level of internet addiction, and general health are significantly associated with mental well-being. Poor sleep quality and higher levels of internet addiction were linked to lower mental well-being, while better general health was associated with improved psychological functioning. These results highlight the interconnected nature of physical health, lifestyle behaviors, and psychological well-being, emphasizing the need for promoting healthy sleep habits, balanced internet use, and overall health awareness to enhance mental well-being among college students.

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affirm that there is no conflict of interest financial, personal, academic, or professional regarding the subject, findings, or publication of this article.

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