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EFFECT OF USE OF MOBILE PHONES ON SLEEP AND GENERAL HEALTH OF ADOLESCENTS OF AGE GROUP 16-19 YEARS

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Statement of the problem: Today mobile phones have become an indispensable tool because of the countless perks it provides. However, this extensive use has led to exposure to a dangerous level of electromagnetic waves. Adolescents are at an age where good quality sleep, mental and physical wellbeing is of utmost importance. Sadly, to keep up with today's fast paced, technologically oriented society, they engage in habitual mobile phone use which affects their cognitive function and general wellbeing. Difficulty in "shutting off" leads to various sleep disturbances.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to address the increasing extent of mobile phone use among adolescents and its effect on their general health and sleep. Less research has been done in this field and holds great significance today.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A cross sectional study was performed under which a total of 225 High School and College students were interviewed in the form of a semi-structured questionnaire assessing their frequency and pattern of mobile use. General health questionnaire-12 and Pittsburgh sleep Quality index questionnaire-9 were included to assess their levels of stress and sleep problems respectively. The students were interviewed after taking a written informed consent and being assured of their confidentiality.

Findings: This study revealed that more than half (~60%) of the adolescents used mobile phones regularly. A significant association was found between the usage hours and physical symptoms reported as well as with calculated levels of distress. Association between poor quality sleep and hours of calling and internet usage was also found.

Conclusion & Significance: This raises an important question of how this overuse can affect our future and how can we make amends. A huge step would be to help our children keep a check on their levels of use and involve in other recreational activities.

Biography

Arti Uniyal has recently graduated from Maulana Azad Medical College. She performed this research during her third year of medical school with the guidance of Dr. Pragya Sharma of the Department of Community Medicine. At a very young age she developed the quest for research and realized the relevance of this research topic in today's world. Her research received recognition by the Indian council of Medical Research and she was awarded for the same. She is currently pursuing her internship and continues to gain experience in medical skills as well as dedicatedly involves in more research in the medical field.

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