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SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION IN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS - PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ASPECTS

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ABSTRACT

In a contemporary society in which individuals declare themselves increasingly busy, it appears that the prominent modality of relaxation and sometimes getting informed is the Internet. The modern age is defined by consumerism, advanced technology, globalization and explosive development of Mass Media. Adolescents and young adults have various information alternatives at their disposal, but also a high level of expectations from their social and professional environment. Therefore, feelings of doubt, anxiety and uncertainty may emerge, and different inferiority complexes can develop, making one reach an impossibility of developing one's identity, in a form of compensatory mechanisms that appear at the attitudinal and behavioral level.

The present article aims to present the results of studies performed by our team on different groups of subjects aged from 15 to 24 years, as a starting point for informing the population about the medical risks they are exposed to, to prevent the effects of these behaviours that affect the overall functioning of the individual.

Keywords: adolescents, young adults, social media, addiction, psychoeducation

INTRODUCTION

Excessive use of the internet on mobile phones is already considered a public health problem in most developed countries. There are numerous worldwide studies in the field of new addictions that highlight the unhealthy, psychopathological aspect of excessive use of social networks and mobile phones (Bardi & Brady, 2010; Bernicot et al., 2012).

In our country, this issue is still insufficiently addressed by specialists.

However, neither in the specialized literature, nor in the prior conducted studies, there has been a clear link established between the worrying use of the Internet and an acceptable duration that is not considered harmful to health (Luca et al., 2020; Silistraru et al., 2021). It is regarded as problematic with the occurrence of behavioural changes, deterioration of family relationships and decrease of professional performance (Skierkowski & Wood, 2012; Thomée et al., 2007; Walsh et al, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this paper is the self-perception of addiction.

We did not set out to determine the predictors of these new addictions. Adolescents and young people are considered high risk groups precisely because their personality structure is still during definitive formation (Sandu, 2021a; 2021b). Anxiety, depressive states, feelings of loneliness can be both predictors and effects of the overuse of the Internet. We analysed the vulnerabilities of the subjects, identified personality traits and gender and age differences (Pascu et al., 2019, Vendemmia et al., 2019).

The questions focused on aspects of personal identity - the description of free time activities, specific social elements, the relational network including family, friends, partners (Rebegea et al., 2019).

We wanted to determine if there are mobile phone applications with functions that can become indispensable to the people studied.

We are also interested in what motivates them to use the Internet, what is their favourite social network, their favourite device and how many hours they spend daily in the virtual environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A first study conducted had as a working method a questionnaire on the phenomenon "Selfie". We investigated 180 subjects aged between 18 and 25 years, 49.4% between 15 and 19 years, 50.6% in the age group 20-24, 75% female and 25% male.

The results of this study showed that 99.4% of them are familiar the term "selfie", 71.1% are in the habit of taking their own photos, 4.7% of them take a selfie weekly. 14.4% of them post a selfie daily.

Among the reasons described by the subjects for taking selfies, we mention the following: 85% take selfies for the purpose of posting them on social networks, and 37.5% do this for no particular reason.

When asked the question "What is the reason for posting?" This way, 61.7% mentioned their desire to share their status with their friends and 26.1% wanted to show their location to their friends.

For 69.4% of them, the most frequently used social network where they post selfies is Instagram.

Other results show that 81.7% of subjects post when they think they look attractive.

In the case of the 77.8% of subjects verify who likes or reacts to the photo, 8.9% of them check every 5 minutes, 29.4% check every hour.

In another study we conducted, we used a survey that included questions about the Facebook network. We investigated a number of 115 subjects, 33% between the ages of 15-19 and 67% between 20-24, 81.7% of the subjects were of female gender and 18.3% were of male gender.

Results showed that all the investigated subjects have a user account on Facebook and 99.1% of them have had an account for more than one year.

All the participants in this study have personal information displayed on their profile and have a real profile photo, and 78.5% of them mention the place where they live on their profile.

Although 67, 5% of the subjects do not know personally all the people in their friend list, we found out that 9.6% use the network daily to socialize with friends they don't know or haven't met in real life.

Out of the subjects, only 8.7% check on their friends' accounts daily.

Also, 78.3% of them believe that Facebook facilitates their access to information that otherwise would have been unavailable to them.

The reason that led them to create an account on Facebook was to constantly stay in contact with friends, as 98.3% of them use Facebook for its chat feature.

All subjects surveyed check the account daily, 15.7% of them spend more than 3 hours on this network, 68.7% perceive that Facebook is addictive and 97% of them declare they would be affected by the absence of this network if it were to disappear.

Among the ways they spend their free time, 66.1% of the subjects answered that they are watching movies, 54.8% said they go out with friends, 40% said they go out with friends on a weekly basis and 52.2% use social networks during their leisure time.

Another study we will be referring to examine young people's perception of psychiatry and psychotherapy.

Of a group consisting of 150 subjects, 40% said they had never resorted to psychotherapy, 75% knew people who went to a psychologist, 35% said they would be reluctant to address to mental health specialists if they had an emotional problem, 30 % of them would not like to be known that they had been in psychotherapy, 90% believe that mental health services are beneficial and 77.1% said that if they would be diagnosed with a mental illness, they would not accept psychotropic medication.

Preliminary results of an underway study regarding the use of mobile phones, on a lot of 125 subjects aged between 15 and 24 years, have shown that all those surveyed use the mobile phone more than 5 hours a day, they prefer written messages instead of the classic phone call, they prefer to use mobile data instead of minutes on the network, and the main reason they spend time on the phone comes from the desire to be permanently up to date with what activities those in their friends lists do.

Another relevant aspect is that on the question "Do you have health problems?" many of them answered that in recent months they were experiencing joint pain in the hand they are using the phone with.

Collaboration with an orthopaedic physician confirmed that overuse of the mobile phone could trigger Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, something already mentioned in the literature. The aptitude deficit is part of the global functioning and overall well-being of the individual.

The strength of this study resides in the complexity of the answers given.

The corroborated results of the studies discussed show that the participants have a need to belong to a group, a need to control their context and the people from their social environment as well as their virtual space, along with a need to feel constantly present in their social life.

Recent studies show that adolescents give away their personal data with great ease when interviewed by strangers, a fact confirmed in our research by the large percentage of subjects who communicate with people they do not know in real life, but to whom they make confessions, as they do not consider the virtual space to represent a danger to them.

The results of the surveys show that the subjects do not consider themselves addicted, although over 70% of them spend at least 4-5 hours daily using different applications installed on the mobile phone.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, there is an imposing need for informing on the risks posed by adolescents and young adults, in order to prevent the development of psychopathological symptoms, as well as problems of somatic nature. The role of the family in shaping the personal and social identity of an individual is essential.

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