

Smartphone Addiction

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We are blessed to enjoy numerous scientific marvels that have revolutionized the way we live. Among all other, Smartphone has become an indispensable part of our daily life. This tiny hand-held machine has changed forever our communication, social interaction and entertainment. But overindulgence in using these devices can disrupt the balance between productivity and abuse. Too much reliance on Smartphone for checking mail, social interaction, gaming etc has long term consequence on user. The unchecked use soon turns into dependency that leads to loss of control, compulsiveness and ultimately addictive behavior.

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable group to fall into the Smartphone addiction¹. This new world problem has both physical and psychological negative impact. Researchers have shown that, Excessive use of Smartphone and internet is associated with sleep deficit, anxiety, stress, and depression². Smartphone addiction cover a variety of impulse-control problems like virtual social networking, internet pornography addiction, information overload, online compulsions. Addiction to social networking, texting, messaging, dating apps creates numerous numbers of online friends and make them more important than real-life relationships. Internet pornography impact negatively on real life relationship and mental health. Continuous web surfing, watching videos, playing games or checking news feeds cause below standard productivity at work or class performance. Online gambling, stock marketing, shopping, auction bidding often lead to financial and job-related problem. Study shows, one in three teens are hooked by their cell phone³.

Smartphone addiction is considered to be a substance free psychological addiction that has a physiological and neuronal basis. American

researcher Henry Lai has discovered that, micro-waves increase the activity of brain endorphins or endogenous opioids in a way similar to morphine. Cell phones emit high electromagnetic radiation also known as radio-frequencies which interfere brain waves, the blood-brain barrier, the pineal gland, and DNA⁴. This can be held partly responsible of the pleasurable 'craving' and of the positive reinforcement observed in cell phone addicts. On the other hand, some alternative behavioral model tried to explain the health consequences from a different perspective. They have proposed that, there is an indirect relation between cell phone usage and psychological health. Adolescents use cell phones at night, which leads to insomnia which ultimately results in depression, anxiety, and depression.

Spending lot of hours using smartphones creates a problem when it absorbs so much time and causes to neglect face to face relationship, work, study, hobbies and other important issues of the life. Warning signs of smartphone overuse includes, problem in completing tasks at home and office, social isolation, concealing of smartphone use, having a fear of missing out, feeling anxious or panic of leaving device in home. Along with those there are several withdrawal symptoms from smartphone addiction like irritability, restless, lack of concentration, sleep disturbances and craving access for the device.

There are several steps that can be taken to control smartphone use like: recognition the trigger to reach the phone, feeling the difference between virtual and real relationships, recognition of underlying problem the support the compulsion, strengthening of support network and increase interaction with the real world. Besides these, modifications of smartphone use can control the development of addiction like setting

goals for use of phone, turning off phone before bedtime, replacing devices by healthier activities, removing social media apps, limit news feed checks and developing real friendship instead of virtual. Cognitive behavioral therapy, counseling, group supports and needful medication are the specialist treatment for the smartphone addiction.

Smartphone is an object of easy addiction. So, special attention is utmost necessary for ensuring it's proper use. Family and social bonding must be ensured to lead a healthier and peaceful productive life.

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