

## Cell Phone Addiction and the Link to Depression in Adolescents and Adults

Clairmont G<sup>†</sup> and Bernice LF

Department of Anesthesiology, Howard University Hospital School of Medicine, Washington, USA

\*Corresponding author: Bernice La France, Department of Anesthesiology, Howard University Hospital School of Medicine, Washington, USA, Tel: 202-865-6100; E-mail: bemore1576@gmail.com

Received date: August 31, 2018; Accepted date: September 20, 2018; Published date: September 27, 2018

Copyright: © 2018 Clairmont G, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

### Abstract

The cell phone market is growing on a daily basis as the demand increases globally. However, the availability of the internet has been a major driver for the demand as people use it to access vital information and communicate through social media platforms. The development has enjoyed its proportionate share or destructions as both adolescents and adults are addicted to using the gadgets. It is evident that the number of people using phones is increasing, and this could be disastrous if the right measures are not taken early. As a result, some people have to gamble with their health at the expense of lengthy time on the phone and lack time to interact. It is evident that people addicted to cellphone usage are likely to use most of their time sleeping or sitting. Lack of adequate exercise or poor posture contributes to health issues such as obesity, back pain, or heart diseases. Exposure to the excessive light emitted by phone screens can affect the users' visual ability. There is adequate literature on this topic, and at least six peer-reviewed journals were used to get results and discussions. The results revealed there were high chances of depression for cell phone addicts. Cases of antisocial behaviors have been noted in some people addicted to the phone use, as they prefer utilizing much time on a phone instead of interacting with close friend and family. The incidence of some adolescents being misled by information got from the internet is increasing. A case in point was the infamous 'blue whale challenge' that misled some adolescents to the extent of committing suicide. In other cases, the reasoning ability is affected because some people use a phone for a long time and they do not have time for adequate sleep. Consequently, they are likely to be exposed to stress and depression since their brains fail to concentrate or function properly. In case of students, they will end up failing in school and have psychological issues that can lead to depression. As a result, further studies should be conducted to determine the most appropriate preventive measures.

**Keywords:** Cell phone; Internet, Social media; Depression; Health; Communication

### Introduction

There is an emerging trend among cell phone users globally as the internet availability and affordability become the norm in many households. The presence of the internet has helped with information accessibility for many youths and adults as they seek to gather information to be used. However, there is a thin line between good and bad usage of the Internet. The Internet has numerous benefits to adolescents and adults although there are negative effects too. Cellphones, for example, are used for online or offline games, and social media growth has attracted users from all ages (Figure 1). [1] Adolescents use phones for leisure and socializing among other uses.

Conversely, adults use cellphones for communication, entertainment, and doing business through e-commerce or social media marketing. There is the growth of antisocial behavior and an increase in depression as some people cannot live without using their phones. Some will use much of their time talking with friends through text, voice or video calling [2]. There is an urgent need to comprehend why and how both the adolescents and adults end up being addicted to the use of cell phones. It may lead to depression as users are inseparable from their phones; they feel frustrated when people with whom they socialize online are not responding or when no one acknowledges the genesis of their antisocial habits.

### Research Questions

- What causes cell phones addiction among adolescents and adults?
- What is the correlation between cell phone addiction and depression?
- What are the underlying factors that can be attributed to cell phone addiction and further depression among the targeted population?

### Hypothesis

#### Null hypothesis H0

There is no link between cell phone addiction and depression in adolescents and adults

#### Alternative hypothesis H1

There is a link between cell phone addiction and depression in adolescents and adults

### Methodology

The study was based on a mixed research approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to determine the relationship between cell phone addiction and depression among adolescents and adults. Time and financial constraints led to the use of secondary sources.

There is vast literature used to acquire the required data or information. The presence of most recent and updated information was imperative in accessing up-to-date statistics and forecast on the trends in defining the future of the issue under discussion. The unique limitation of the study was distinguishing possible biased or misleading data in some journals articles used.

## Results and Discussions

Global cell phone usage is significantly high, and the trends in usage could constitute the reason for the witnessed addiction. The number was forecast to reach 2.32 billion or 2.87 billion by 2017 and 2020 respectively [3]. This study revealed an emerging trend of about 54% from the major emerging and developing nations such as Malaysia, Brazil, and China. Huge populations in these countries own smartphones and can access Internet with relative ease. The number was considerable for the developed countries in which a median of 87% is known to use the internet in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, South Korea, and Israel [4]. For example, more than 95.9% of teenagers own and use a smartphone in S. Korea [5]. However, it should be efficiently handled to ensure that each age is subjected to the proper content. The following graph elaborates the usage.

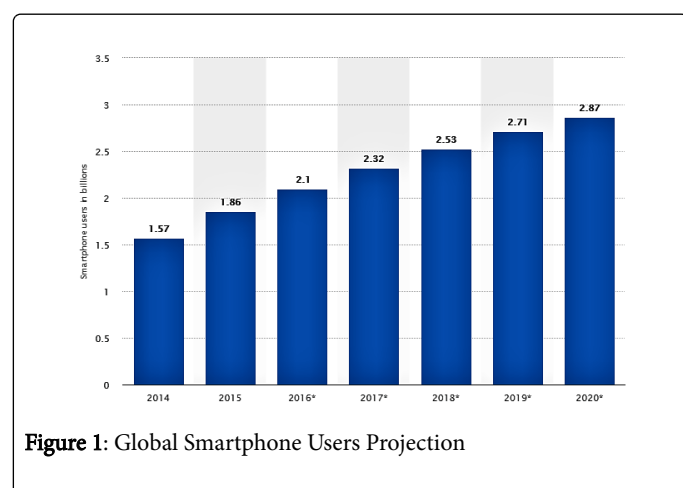


Figure 1: Global Smartphone Users Projection

Addiction occurs when the users are uncontrollable in their modes of using cell phones [2]. As a result, they end up facing social, psychological and health issues as the addiction changes from stage to stage (Figure 2). The availability of these phones is further complicated as the internet becomes accessible and affordable. As a result, these adolescents have learned various gaming, social media, and resources sites.

Adolescents may end up addictive of violent online or offline games whereas some visit pornography sites regularly. This has a negative impact on their psychology, and some tend to feel sick if they are not in a place to access their cell phones. Others tend to use more time on cell phones, and they have less time for other important activities like education, family time, spiritual matters among others.

According to Haug et al. [6], adolescents are known to be at a more substantial risk of cell phone addiction compared to adults. Most of them have regarded phones as their 'second self'. Both adolescents and adults have found it impossible to live without their phones, which lead to antisocial habits. There are developmental implications among the adolescents as they experience changes in the physical and

psychological aspects. It is impossible to distance cell phones from the adolescents. They are eager to learn about new technology, to keep up with trends and operation to enhance their art compared to adults.

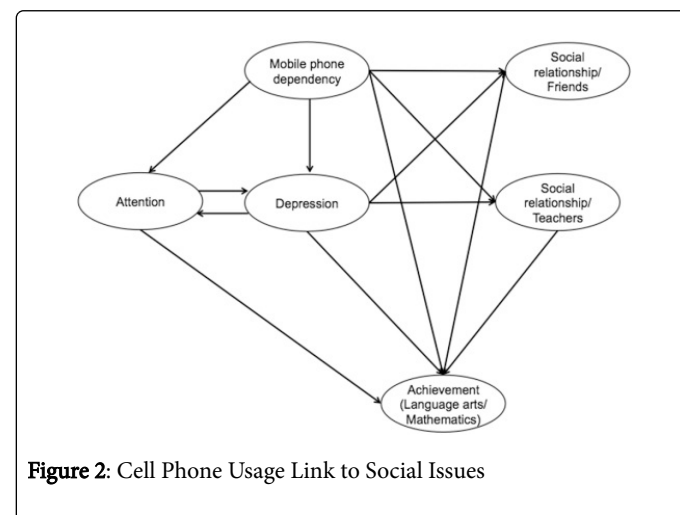


Figure 2: Cell Phone Usage Link to Social Issues

As a result, there is a tendency of high cell phone usage among them compared to adults (Figure 3). A vital area of interest among the adolescents includes online interactions, trending fashion, and owning many trendy applications [2]. However, these youths lack adequate understanding about life as they portray incompetence that attributes higher chances of being addicted. Unfortunately, they are poorly understood sometime and misjudged that could lead to psychological torture. Some feel offended and disrespected when the phone is taken from them, and it is enough to pressure them.

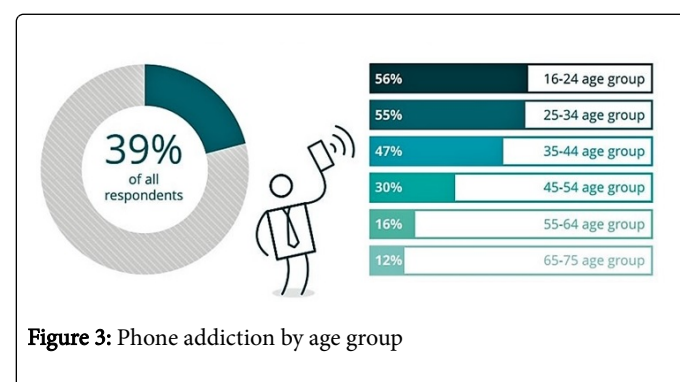
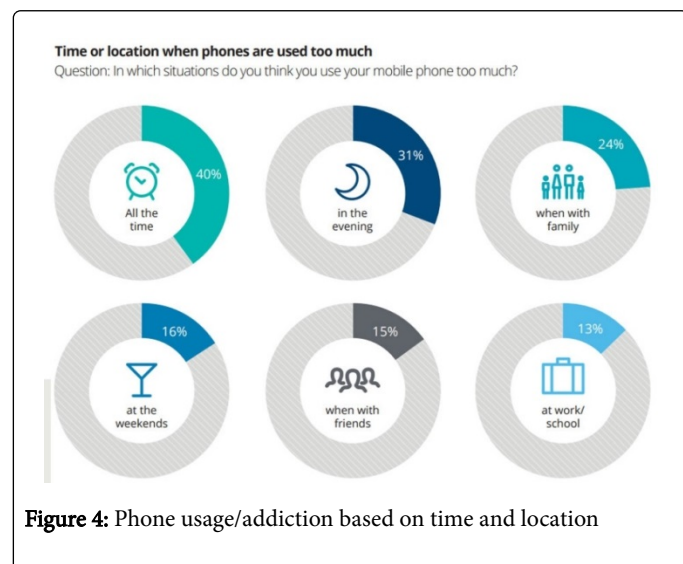


Figure 3: Phone addiction by age group

Addiction emanating from phone usage represents a product of a failure to possess self-control. Both adolescents and adults have been victims of this addiction based on the pleasure and reduced pain moments. There is a danger of indulging in financial, psychological, and social crisis [7]. The adolescents are more affected by this dependent of cell phones as they fail to have good management of various ordinary activities. Overreliance in internet usage is detrimental to social life as it deters people away from family and friend hence leading to loneliness. Adolescents may develop nervousness, temperament, mental distraction, especially if children are introduced to cell phone use in tender ages.

According to Kim and David [8], there are various psychological and physical health problems emanating from phone addiction. Conversely, the youths and adults fall into depression or anxiety as they continue relying on technology derive

d from smartphones when coping with emotions. Continued use of social media and mobile phone are agents of accumulated stress and depression, whereas some users find it hard to sleep disturbances.



More so, some end up using a cell phone until late nights (Figure 4), which impair their sleep and cause stress and depression [2]. The tendencies to overuse these cell phones lead to addiction that cause the users to feel distressed if they lose or lack their phone for some time. Notably, adolescents tend to become anxious, depressed and angered. This could be less influential to adults, but they feel something is lacking, especially for people using the cell phones to transact deals.

The null hypothesis was rejected based on the availability of the data that revealed the problem occurs in most cases. There have been cases of depression after phone addiction. Most of the users addicted to cell phone usage tend to feel to use it for long including time meant to do other activities like parenting, learning and working. With time, much time is lost, and they become worried about losing their job, bad grades, or even poor parenting [9,10]. Consequently, their thinking capabilities tend to be interfered hence increasing chances of being depressed. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected to pave the way for testing the alternative hypothesis. It is evident there are cases of depression after phone addiction as indicated in the alternative hypothesis.

## Conclusion

It was evident that cases of depression are unavoidable among the adolescents and adults as the market floods with smartphones. Cell

phones trigger psychological pressure through communication, socializing, and gaming. However, the affordability and availability of the internet have spiced the use of cell phones hence increasing possibilities of addiction. There is growth in antisocial behaviors as users lack time to relate with family and friends.

Adolescents and adults feel offended when denied a chance to use phones, and it can be stressing if these cell phones are used for a long time. Addiction leads to less time for sleep and interacting with friends and family members. The effects of inadequate sleeping and relaxing time cause negative effects on the brain as cases of burnout, exhaustiveness, and lack of concentration result in reduced functions. People who overuse cellphones fail to perform their duties as required, which can be disappointing and triggers stress yet they are unwilling to stop. It may reach a point that the addicted ones may need rehabilitation as the level of depression increases.

## References

1. Cha S, Seo B (2018) Smartphone use and smartphone addiction among middle school students in Korea: Prevalence, social networking service, and game use, *Health Psychol Open* 10: 1-15.
2. Kwon Y, Paek K (2016) The influence of smartphone addiction on depression and communication competence among college students, *Indian J Sci Technol* 9.
3. Statista (2017) Number of smartphone users worldwide from 2014 to 2020.
4. Pew Research Center (2016) Smartphone ownership and internet usage continue to climb in emerging economies.
5. Korea Internet and Security Agency. 2016 survey on internet usage. Seoul: Korea Internet and Security Agency.
6. Haug, S, Castro RP, Kwon M, Filler A, Kowatsch T, et al. (2015) Smartphone use and smartphone addiction among young people in Switzerland, *J Behav Addict* 4: 299-307.
7. Van Deursen AJ, Bolle CL, Hegner SM, Kommers PAM (2015) Modelling habitual and addictive smartphone behavior: The role of smartphone usage types, emotional intelligence, social stress, self-regulation, age, and gender. *Comput Human Behav* 45: 411-420.
8. Kim JH, Mihye S, Prabu D (2015) Alleviating depression only to become problematic mobile phone users: Can face-to-face communication be the antidote? *Comput Human Behav* 51: 440-447.
9. Aljohara AA, Ethar MA, Nada WT, Raneem AA, Mahmoud SA, et al. (2018) The relationship between addiction to smartphone usage and depression among adults: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Psychiatry* 18: 148.
10. Boumosleh JM, Jaalouk D (2017) Depression, anxiety, and smartphone addiction in university students- A cross sectional study. *PLoS One* 4: 12.