

ABSTRACT

Background: Internet addiction appears as a potential problem in adolescents. A healthy or unhealthy behavior which acquire during the adolescent period will last across the lifespan.

Objectives: To assess internet addiction and its association with parenting approaches, family and peer relationships among grade 10 students in the government schools of Borella Educational Division in Colombo District

Methods: A school based descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 640 grade 10 students in the government schools of Borella Educational Division in Colombo District using cluster sampling method. A pre-tested self-administered questionnaire consisting of globally used Young's Internet Addiction Test, and a questionnaire on associated factors including Family Adaptability, Partnership, Growth, Affection, and Resolve questionnaire were used. Analysis was conducted using SPSS21. Scoring systems were developed for each components of the questionnaire. Cut-off scores for internet addiction which was 50%, identified using experts' opinions. Internet addiction was presented as a percentage. Its associations with the levels parental approach, family and peer relationships were identified using chi-square test at the level of significance < 0.05 .

Results: The majority of the study sample was male ($n=379$, 59.2%), Sinhalese ($n=595$, 93%), and Buddhist ($n=588$, 91.9%). A majority ($n=613$, 95.8%) had the internet access at home while 55.9% ($n=356$) accessed the internet daily. Main mode of accessing internet was by percipient's own mobile phone/tab ($n=340$, 54%). Over 80% participants used internet for entertainment ($n=532$, 83.1%) and for academic purpose ($n=518$, 80.9%). Social media usage was 94.4% ($n=604$). Median percentage score for internet addiction was 24.44 (IQR:13.33-39.72). There were no significant differences by sex, ethnicity or participants living arrangements for internet addiction at $p<.05$. Parental approach and family relationships were found to have a significant association with internet addiction ($p<.05$). Anyhow, there was no significant association between peer relationships and internet addiction ($p=.356$).

Conclusions & Recommendation: Prevalence of internet addiction was 13.9%. It was associated with poor parental approach and family relationships. Study recommends focusing on interventions targeting good parental approaches, good family relationships and counselling facilities at schools in order to prevent internet addiction among adolescents.

Key words: Internet addiction, Adolescents, Parenting approaches, family relationships, peers