



The Nomophobia in General Public: A Review Study

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ABSTRACT

"The fear of being without or unable to use a mobile phone" is known as nomophobia. It is now regarded as a modern-day ailment. It's considered a kind of compulsive behaviour. An unwarranted sense of communication is created when the user does not have the electronic gadget, either because they left it at home or the battery has run out, or they are not in range of the device. Nomophobia is most often associated with feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Smartphones may be believed to keep us in touch with others, but the problem arises when online interactions take the place of actual human contact. Many people suffer from headaches and stomach pains due to prolonged screen exposure as well as pain in their wrists or necks as a result of poor posture. We came to the conclusion that Nomophobia is endangering our well-being on all fronts: social, mental, and physical.

Keywords: *Nomophobia, General Public, Compulsive behaviour*

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INTRODUCTION

Nomophobia, also called as NO Mobile Phone Phobia, is a mental disease characterised by a fear of being cut off from one's mobile phone. A phobia, on the other hand, seems to be a kind of anxiety disorder.^{1,2} Many psychological concerns may arise when a person overuses a mobile phone, including low self-esteem and an extroverted nature. Social phobia or social anxiety^{3,4} and panic disorder may also cause nomophobic symptoms. Whether a patient becomes nomophobic as a consequence of their mobile phone addiction, it is difficult to tell if the patient already has anxiety difficulties that manifest as nomophobia symptoms.^{5,6} The term "nomophobia" was coined in 2008 by the United Kingdom (UK) Post Office following a poll commissioned by YouGov, a UK-based research agency. The study's purpose was to determine if excessive mobile phone use was associated with an increased risk of anxiety disorders. British mobile phone users pretend to be worried when they "lose their mobile phone, run out of power or credit or have no network connectivity," according to a new survey. " Nearly 58 percent of men and 47 percent of females were found to suffer from mobile phone anxiety, according to the poll, and 9 percent reported feeling anxious when their phones were switched off. More over half of those polled said they were most concerned about losing touch with those they care about.^{7,8} Compared to "wedding day jitters," it was found that the amount of tension was equivalent. Findings from a poll of 547 male undergraduate health services students revealed that a quarter were nomophobic and a full two-thirds were at risk of acquiring the fear. Most students checked their phones more than 35 times a day.⁹

Symptoms and indicators of a problem

Nomophobia is an anxiety disorder that happens when a person is unable to use their mobile phone. An individual's social and family relationships are badly impacted when mobile phone use reduces the number of face-to-face interactions. Techno-stress is another term for those who avoid face-to-face meetings and engage in isolation, including mental health issues like depression.

Mobile phone loss, poor reception, and dead phone batteries may all cause anxiety in certain people.¹⁰ Patients with Nomophobia may exhibit symptoms such as using the gadget as a form of social communication avoidance or as a transitional object. In addition to possessing several internet-connected gadgets, participants reported always having a charger with them and experiencing anxiety when they thought about misplacing their cell phone. When people spend too much time on their phones, it often causes them to have difficulty sleeping. People who are sleep deprived are more likely to be depressed and apathetic, both of which increase their proclivity for using cell phones. Mental health issues are linked to people's habitual usage of mobile phones, according to studies. Their depression will be greater since they sleep less and talk on the phone more than the average person. Mobile phone usage has been related

to a decrease in one's self-esteem and ability to deal with stress.¹¹ Additionally, people who suffer from Nomophobia have fewer opportunities to interact with others in person, preferring instead to communicate with others via technological interfaces such as smartphones and other electronic devices, and frequently check their phones to make sure they haven't missed any messages or calls (also called ringxiety). Additionally, an individual's excessive use of data and other technology might contribute to a growth in debt.¹⁰ Using nomophobia on a regular basis may result in discomfort in the joints and muscles of the elbows, hands, and neck.¹² Public settings where mobile phone use is restricted might lead to unreasonable and extreme reactions from people who are stressed out and tense because of their fear and anxiety. Cell phone overuse, such as making purchases, might put you in a financial bind.¹⁰ Anguish and despair are common reactions when a person is unable to contact loved ones due to a malfunctioning mobile phone. Another sign of a person's addiction to a cell phone is the need to sleep with their phone nearby. When a person has the option of communicating through cell phone, they feel more secure and at ease. It is possible that nomophobia is a sign of a more serious condition.¹⁰ Those with an underlying social condition are more likely to experience anxiety, fear, and shivering when they are unable to use their digital gadgets due to low battery, or other circumstances. As a result, they regularly return to their homes to retrieve missing mobile phones from them.¹¹⁻¹² Nomophobic conduct may lead to social anxiety and a dependency on virtual and digital relationships to alleviate the tension generated by social anxiety and social phobia. Nomophobia is not uncommon in people with panic disorders, but they are more prone to experience feelings of rejection, loneliness, uncertainty, and low self-esteem in regard to their cell phones, especially when there is little or no contact. People with panic disorders are more likely to have increased levels of anxiety and depression as a consequence of their smartphone use. Despite this, panic disorder sufferers were much less likely to make phone calls than the general population. Additionally, it has been shown that those with nomophobia are more likely to engage in problematic mobile phone use, such as dependence, limited use, and dangerous use.¹³

Policy and legislation

In India, mobile phone usage is not regulated. A single person may own a slew of cell phones. Nomophobia is exacerbated by this treatment. A "setting-based approach" to mobile phone limits is something that the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) should take a lead role in establishing via policy and legislation. It is possible to create an Act under this legislation. An higher age limit should be imposed on mobile phone use. I believe it will go a long way towards solving the situation.¹³

Reasons

Why Daily Tasks Are Useful

This fear of being without one's phone is exacerbated by the usefulness of mobile phones. People use smartphones for everything from staying in touch to doing business to being organised to communicating personal information and even handling money. People's fear of being without their phones is understandable, given how heavily they've come to depend on them for so many essential tasks. Without a phone, people may feel cut off from important aspects of their life, such as close friends and family and their jobs, money, and knowledge.

Amount of Time Spent Each Day

The Journal of Behavioral Addictions reported in 2014 that college students spend up to nine hours a day on their mobile devices.¹⁴ Mobile phone use is a technical paradox, according to the experts. Smartphones may be both freeing and oppressive, depending on how they are used. Mobile phone use may lead to a dependence, which is both limiting and unpleasant, although people can communicate, get information, and socialise.

Knowledge of Technology

Smartphone separation anxiety may be more common among adolescents and young adults than previously thought, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens (NIDAT). Because they were born and reared in the digital age, most of this generation's young people are known as "digital natives." It is common for them to use computers, the internet, and mobile phones on a daily basis since they were exposed to these technologies as children.¹⁵

Diagnosis

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders does not officially categorise Nomophobia as a mental disorder, despite the fact that many people feel anxiety or panic when they are without their phones (DSM-5). Any fear experienced in a particular scenario might be a sign of situational specific anxiety. Fear reactions that are out of proportion to the genuine risk are hallmarks of certain specific types of phobias. Studies suggest that the Nomophobia Questionnaire (NMP-Q) is a reliable tool for assessing people's fear of being without their mobile phone, and it was developed by researchers to that end.¹⁶ • "If the battery on my smartphone failed, I'd be scared."

- "I'd be scared if I couldn't get in touch with my loved ones or acquaintances."

As measured by the NMP-Q, higher levels of Nomophobia were connected to higher levels of obsessiveness, indicating that Nomophobia may be linked to particular disorders.¹⁷ Those who suffer from anxiety and panic disorders are more likely to develop Nomophobia, according to another research study.¹⁸

Management

Talking to a mental health professional might be helpful if you are having problems with Nomophobia symptoms or think that your mobile phone use is causing problems for you in your daily life. Exposure treatment, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), or both may be used by your therapist to help you overcome your Nomophobia. It's possible that your doctor may also prescribe medication to help with your anxiety or sadness.

Exposition Therapy

As part of your treatment, you'll practise confronting your fears and anxieties via exposure therapy. If you have Nomophobia, you will eventually adapt to being without your phone. It's possible to start small and gradually increase the amount of time you spend without your phone (for example, by placing it in another room for a certain period of time).

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Mental processes that contribute to maladaptive behaviour may be treated with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). In order to help you discover and replace these thought patterns, your therapist will work with you to do just that. Because CBT may help remind you that checking your phone for messages every few minutes is unlikely to lead to missed opportunities, it can help you avoid worrying about missing out on critical messages by not checking your phone often.¹⁹

Phobia Behavioural Therapy

Coping

- Set boundaries. Use your own device in accordance with established rules. For example, you may want to put your phone away when you eat and put it away while you sleep.
- Find a middle ground. Avoiding eye contact with other people is as easy as pulling out your phone and texting instead.. Engage with others on a regular basis.
- In order to avoid burnout, take regular brief breaks. Breaking the mobile phone habit might be challenging, but starting small can make the transition easier. Begin by putting your phone in another room while you eat or do anything else that requires your undivided attention.
- Find other ways to kill time. If you find yourself glued to your phone because you're bored, try finding something else to occupy your time instead. It's possible to get your mind off of things by reading, going out for the day, or taking part in an activity that you like.

CONCLUSION

As a species, we are social beings at their core. In the past, we had a strong social connection. A vacuum-like situation has been created in our society as a result of increasing urbanisation and migration as well as a rise in the number of nuclear households. By connecting us to others all the time through social media and mobile phones, we've effectively filled this hole. Our social media networks have grown to include tens of thousands of people (virtual pals), yet we only interact with a tiny percentage of them on a regular basis. To stay connected on social media, we use our phones constantly, which is causing us a problem known as nomophobia. Our mental, emotional, and physical well-being are being jeopardised as a result of nomophobia.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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