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Problematic mobile use in Hungarian university students

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Background and aim: Problematic mobile use may negatively impact their user's social lives and health. This study aimed to explore the relation of problematic mobile use to sleep quality, depression, as well as to demographic factors and living circumstances of university students.

Methods: In this cross-sectional study, 650 full-time students (20.41 SD=1.66 y/o) (72.4% females) were invited to complete questionnaires (Insomnia Severity Index, Beck Depression Inventory-13) at the University of Miskolc. Frequency of awakenings at night by mobile phone, demands on being available by mobile phone, perceived stressfulness of accessibility, and the anxiety caused by non-availability of mobile phone for a day (nomophobia) were measured with a 4-point Likert scale and comments of closed ones regarding too much time of mobile phone use (Yes/No) were also collected. The students of the first quartile of score ($\geq 7/13$) were compared with others.

Results: All students have mobile, 82.5% of them have a smartphone. An average, they use their phone to call for 1.17 (SD=1.15) hours and have internet access for 3.66 (SD=4.53) hours a day. Females chat significantly longer than males ($p=.002$), but use internet in a similar way. A total of 26.9% of students are considered problematic mobile users, with some tendency for females. Demographic and living circumstances as gender, age, marital status, children, accommodation, job, financial difficulties do not affect the habit. Excessive smartphone users are more likely to have sleep problems ($F=13,751$; $p<.001$) and depression ($F=6.910$; $p=.009$), but it was not the case in mobile users without internet access.

Conclusion: This study assumes that excessive use of smartphone exists in both genders and has negative effect on health that should be taken into account.

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