

Prevalence and Impact of Binge-watching Television/Mobile Series and Problematic Internet Use Among MBBS Students in a Medical College from Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu

Snekalatha¹, Ardhanaari^{1*}, Samarpita Nayak¹, Ramarao Mannam¹, Nappinnai Seran¹, Devika Gopan¹, Simon Jude²

¹Department of Psychiatry, Meenakshi Medical College Hospital and Research Institute, Kanchipuram, India.

²Department of Community Medicine, Aarupadai Veedu Medical College and Hospital, Puducherry, India

*Corresponding Author
Dr. Ardhanaari

Article History

Received: 10.07.2025

Revised: 14.07.2025

Accepted: 05.08.2025

Published: 08.09.2025

Abstract:

The increasing prevalence of streaming services and digital devices has led to widespread binge-watching and problematic internet use among young adults. Medical students, under significant academic stress, may use these behaviors as coping mechanisms, potentially impacting their academic performance and mental health. This study examines the prevalence and correlation of binge-watching and internet addiction among MBBS students at a medical college in Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu, addressing a gap in localized research. From February to May 2023, a cross-sectional study was conducted with 316 MBBS students aged 18-26 years. Data were collected using the Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire and the Internet Addiction Test. Statistical analyses, including descriptive and inferential tests using SPSS version 20.0, explored the relationships between binge-watching and internet addiction. Findings indicated that 29.11% of participants had "Negative" binge-watching tendencies, while 70.89% were "Positive." Engagement in binge-watching was reported by 68.6%, and 82% expressed a strong desire for it. A significant correlation between internet addiction and binge-watching was observed (Chi-square = 27.00, $p < 0.001$). Gender differences showed mild internet addiction was more common among both males (49.25%) and females (45.05%), with a higher severe addiction rate among males. The study reveals a significant correlation between binge-watching and moderate internet addiction among MBBS students, highlighting the need for targeted interventions such as digital literacy programs and mental health support. Future research should investigate the long-term effects of these behaviors and explore diverse demographic groups for comprehensive strategies to manage digital consumption and enhance well-being.

Keywords: Binge-watching, OTT, Series marathon, Internet addiction, TV series

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the advent of streaming services and the proliferation of digital devices have significantly altered media consumption patterns among young adults. Binge-watching, defined as the consumption of multiple episodes of television or mobile series in one sitting, has emerged as a prevalent behavior [1]. This phenomenon is coupled with increased problematic internet use (PIU), which encompasses excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges, or behaviors regarding internet use that lead to impairment or distress [2-3]. The medical student population, including those pursuing MBBS degrees, is not immune to these trends. The demanding nature of medical education, characterized by extensive study hours and high levels of stress, may predispose these students to seek solace in binge-watching and internet use as a form of escapism or relaxation [4-5]. However, excessive engagement in these activities may have adverse effects on academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being [6]. Several studies have highlighted the growing prevalence of binge-watching and PIU globally, for instance, a study conducted by G. Forte et al. found that binge-watching is becoming increasingly common among young adults, with potential negative impacts on sleep patterns and daily

functioning [7]. Similarly, a meta-analysis has shown that PIU is associated with a range of psychological issues, including anxiety, depression, and decreased academic performance [8].

Despite the global recognition of these issues, there is a paucity of research focusing on the prevalence and impact of binge-watching television / mobile series and problematic internet use and how binge-watching correlates with different levels of Internet addiction specifically among medical students in India. Understanding these patterns is crucial, given the unique stressors faced by this demographic, which may exacerbate the negative consequences of such behaviors.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining the prevalence of binge-watching, internet addiction levels, and analyse their correlation among MBBS students in a medical college in Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu. This study investigates whether higher levels of Internet addiction correlate with increased binge-watching and hypothesizes that binge-watching characteristics vary with addiction severity. The findings will provide insights into how binge-watching and Internet addiction interact, aiding in the development of targeted interventions.

The research covers a diverse participant sample to understand binge-watching behaviors and Internet addiction across various demographics. By providing a localized perspective, this research will contribute to the existing body of literature and inform interventions tailored to the needs of medical students in India.

The study uses structured surveys to gather data on binge-watching and Internet addiction, applying statistical analyses to explore their relationship.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to assess the prevalence and impact of binge-watching and internet addiction among MBBS students at a medical college in Kanchipuram. The research was conducted over a period from February 2023 to May 2023. The sample comprised 316 participants, all of whom were enrolled in the MBBS program and aged between 18 to 26 years. Purposive/selective sampling was used to ensure that the study focused specifically on this demographic group. The inclusion criteria required participants to be actively pursuing an MBBS degree and to fall within the specified age range. Participants from other courses, individuals with prior psychiatric conditions, and those who did not provide informed consent were excluded from the study.

Data collection was carried out using two structured instruments: the Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire (BWESQ) and the Internet Addiction Test. The BWESQ was designed to gauge participants' binge-watching behaviours and the associated symptoms they experienced, while the Internet Addiction Test assessed their internet usage patterns and potential signs of addiction. These instruments were administered in a controlled environment to ensure consistency and reliability in responses.

The data collected from the questionnaires were meticulously tabulated and analysed using SPSS

software version 20.0. This analysis involved both descriptive statistics, which provided a summary of the participants' binge-watching and internet usage behaviours, and inferential tests of significance, which helped identify any statistically significant relationships or patterns in the data. Descriptive statistics included measures of central tendency and dispersion, while inferential statistics involved hypothesis testing to determine the significance of observed effects.

Tools and techniques employed in the study included well-validated questionnaires for data collection and advanced statistical software for analysis [9-10]. These methodologies were selected to provide a robust framework for understanding the prevalence and implications of binge-watching and internet addiction among MBBS students.

Participant consent was rigorously obtained to ensure ethical standards were met. Participants received a comprehensive information sheet detailing the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. This document was provided in the participants' preferred language, ensuring that they understood the study's aims and their rights, including the voluntary nature of their participation, the ability to withdraw at any time without affecting their medical care or legal rights, and the consent to use their data exclusively for scientific purposes. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and were assured that their involvement was entirely voluntary.

In conclusion, the study underscores the need for further qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding of binge-watching and internet addiction among medical students. Such research could provide valuable insights into the underlying causes and effects of these behaviours, helping to develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms for this demographic.

RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

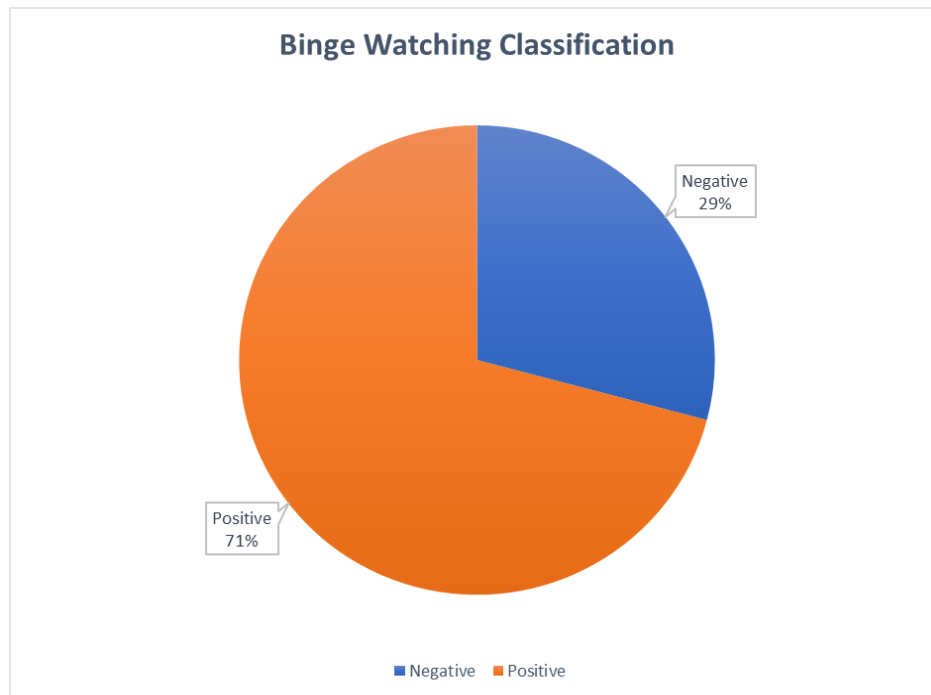
This analysis provides the prevalence of Internet addiction and binge-watching behaviours also a detailed exploration of the relationship between binge-watching behaviors and Internet addiction levels, systematically addressing the research questions through organized data presentation.

Table 1 and Figure 1 offer an initial classification of binge-watching tendencies, distinguishing between "Negative" and "Positive" categories among participants represented by frequencies and percentages. The "Negative" classification includes 92 participants (29.11%), while the "Positive" classification comprises 224 participants (70.89%). This classification sets the groundwork for understanding the overall binge-watching trends within the study sample.

Table 1. Binge Watching Classification

BW Classification	Frequency	Percent
Negative	92	29.11
Positive	224	70.89
Total	316	100.00

Figure 1 Binge Watching Classification

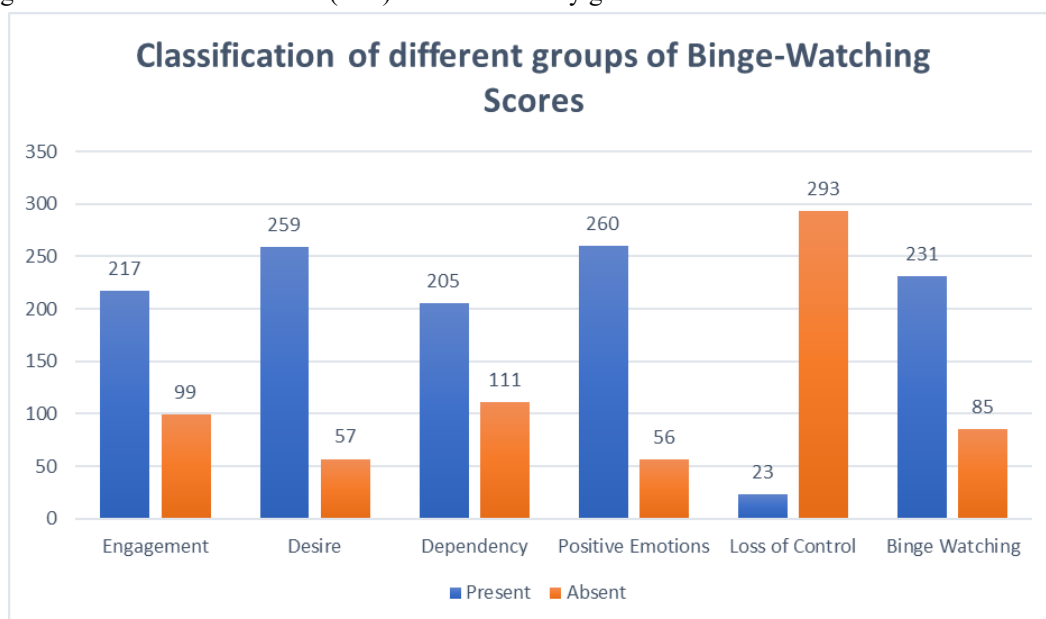


Building on this, Table 2 & Figure 2 provide an in-depth examination of specific binge-watching characteristics. A significant majority, 68.6%, were categorized as having “Engagement” in binge-watching, while 31.4% were not. The “Desire” to binge-watch was even more prevalent, with 82% of participants expressing this trait, compared to 18% who did not. “Dependency”, a key indicator, was present in 64.9% of the sample, leaving 35.1% unaffected. “Positive emotions” related to binge-watching were reported by 82.3% of participants, contrasting with 17.7% who did not experience these feelings. Conversely, “Loss of Control” was markedly rare, found in only 7.3% of the participants, with a substantial 92.7% indicating no loss of control. “Binge-watching” itself was present in 73.0% of the study group, while 27.0% did not engage in this behavior. Additionally, 76.5% of participants experienced “Pleasure Preservation,” with 23.5% lacking this trait. These figures highlight the diverse nature of binge-watching experiences among the participants.

Table 2. Classification of different groups of Binge-Watching Scores

Classification	Present	Absent
Engagement	217	99
Desire	259	57
Dependency	205	111
Positive Emotions	260	56
Loss of Control	23	293
Binge Watching	231	85
Pleasure Preservation	242	74

Figure 2 Classification of different groups of Binge-Watching Score Further insights are provided in Table 3 and Figure 3, which categorize Internet Addiction Test (IAT) classifications by gender.



The distribution of Internet addiction levels reveals distinct patterns between females and males. Among females, 45.05% exhibit mild internet addiction, 32.42% show moderate levels, and 2.75% are categorized as severe. In contrast, males have 49.25% with mild addiction, 34.33% with moderate addiction, and 2.99% classified as severe. Both genders demonstrate a higher prevalence of mild addiction compared to moderate and severe categories, but males have a slightly higher percentage in the mild category and a marginally higher percentage in the severe category.

Table 3. IAT Classification based on gender

IAT Classification	Female	Percentage	Male	Percentage
Normal	36	19.78	18	13.43
Mild	82	45.05	66	49.25
Moderate	59	32.42	46	34.33
Severe	5	2.75	4	2.99

Figure 3 IAT Classification based on gender

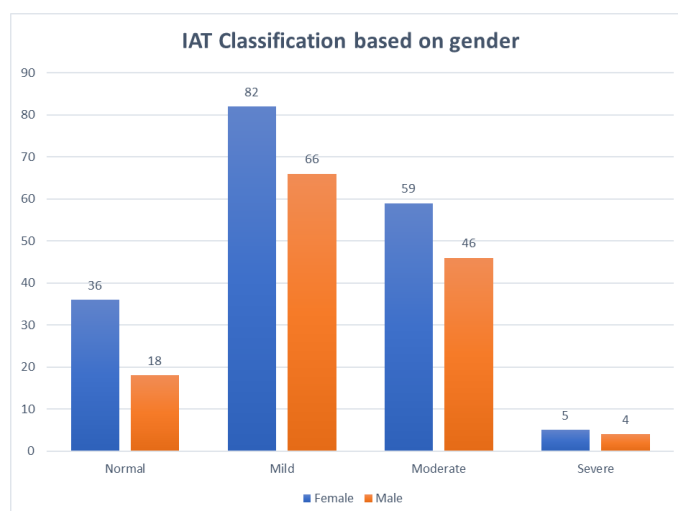


Table 4 and Figure 4 then explore the association between IAT classifications and binge-watching behaviors, showing the percentage of participants who exhibit binge-watching across different IAT categories. This table demonstrates a significant correlation with a Chi Square value of 27.00 and a p-value < 0.001, indicating a strong link between higher levels of Internet addiction and increased binge-watching tendencies. This table presents the association between Internet Addiction Test (IAT) classifications and the presence or absence of binge watching behaviors. It includes the number and

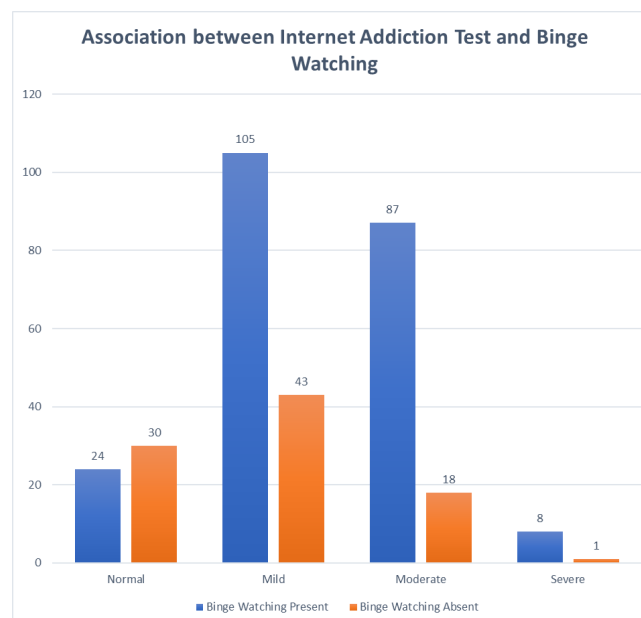
percentage of participants within each IAT classification group who either exhibit binge watching (Binge Watching Present) or do not (Binge Watching Absent). For the Normal IAT classification, 24 participants (10.71%) exhibit binge watching, while 30 participants (32.61%) do not. Among those classified as Mild, 105 participants (46.88%) exhibit binge watching, compared to 43 participants (46.74%) who do not. In the Moderate group, 87 participants (38.84%) exhibit binge watching, while 18 participants (19.57%) do not. Lastly, in the Severe group, 8 participants (3.57%) exhibit binge watching, and 1 participant (1.09%) does not. The Chi Square value is 27.00 with a p-value < 0.001, indicating a statistically significant association between IAT classification and binge-watching behaviors within the study cohort.

Table 4 Association between Internet Addiction Test and Binge Watching

IAT Classification	Binge Watching Present	Percentage	Binge Watching Absent	Percentage
Normal	24	10.71	30	32.61
Mild	105	46.88	43	46.74
Moderate	87	38.84	18	19.57
Severe	8	3.57	1	1.09
Total	224	100	92	100

Chi Square value = 27.00; p-value <0.001

Figure 4 Association between Internet Addiction Test and Binge Watching



In presenting these findings, the primary research question regarding the relationship between binge-watching and Internet addiction is addressed first, followed by detailed answers to secondary questions related to specific binge-watching characteristics. This structured approach ensures a clear separation between results and discussion, maintaining the objectivity of the data presentation and paving the way for a thorough interpretative analysis in the discussion section.

DISCUSSION

As binge-watching and Internet addiction become increasingly common among young adults, particularly those in high-stress academic environments, our research aimed to understand how these behaviors manifest in medical students. The present study investigated the prevalence and impact of binge-watching television or mobile series and problematic Internet use among MBBS students in a medical college in Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu.

The first key finding is that 70.89% of the participants are classified as Positive for Binge Watching aligning with the study by Srinivasan et al. which showed binge watching of 63.3 % among OTT users [11].

Medical students show a higher prevalence of mild internet addiction compared to moderate and severe categories, with males more affected consistent with the results of our study [12-13].

Our findings reveal a significant association between higher levels of Internet addiction and increased binge-watching tendencies, suggests that these behaviors may reinforce each other, creating a cycle where one contributes to the persistence or worsening of the other. It is a concerning trend among medical students who are already subjected to intense academic pressure and stress. This is consistent with global trends showing an increase in binge-watching, particularly among young adults who have access to on-demand streaming services [14]. The prevalence of problematic Internet use observed in this study aligns with other research findings that highlight the susceptibility of college

students to Internet addiction due to the easy accessibility of digital devices and the Internet for both academic and leisure purposes [15-16]. Students who reported higher levels of Internet addiction also tended to binge-watch more frequently, which could potentially result in poor sleep hygiene, fatigue, and decreased concentration levels — all of which can adversely affect academic performance [17-18].

Additionally, the impact of these behaviors extends beyond academics. Increased screen time and Internet addiction have been linked to a range of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and stress, which are particularly relevant for medical students, who are at a higher risk for these conditions [19-20].

Our study in a medical college in Tamil Nadu uniquely contributes to the literature by examining the association between binge-watching and Internet addiction which needs to be better documented within a specific population of MBBS students.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to explore the prevalence and relationship between binge-watching and Internet addiction among MBBS students and achieve a comprehensive understanding of this dynamic. The study finds a significant correlation between binge-watching and moderate levels of Internet addiction, with varying binge-watching characteristics answering the research question and hypotheses presented in the introduction.

The significant correlation found between binge-watching and Internet addiction among medical students suggests a need for targeted interventions. Medical colleges should consider incorporating digital literacy and mental health education into their curricula, emphasizing the importance of balanced digital habits and self-care strategies. Additionally, counseling services and peer support groups could help students manage stress and develop healthier coping mechanisms. Interventions such as mindfulness training, time management workshops, and awareness campaigns about the risks associated with excessive screen time may help reduce the prevalence of these behaviors. Furthermore, encouraging positive recreational activities and providing opportunities for social engagement can serve as healthy alternatives to binge-watching and Internet use.

Future research should investigate different demographic groups and the long-term effects of binge-watching on mental health and daily functioning.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study provides valuable insights, it also has limitations. The use of self-reported measures may introduce biases related to over- or under-reporting of binge-watching and Internet use. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to infer causal relationships between the variables. Future

research could benefit from longitudinal designs to better understand how these behaviors develop over time and their long-term impacts on academic performance and well-being.

Conflict of Interest

None.

Source of Funding

None.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Snekalatha: experimentation and Writing-original draft, Samarpita Nayak: Review and editing, Ramarao Mannam: supervision, Nappinnai Seran: Review and editing, Devika Gopan: Data Analysis, Simon Jude: Validation, Ardhanaari: Conceptualization and supervision

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank Meenakshi Medical College Hospital and Research Institute, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research (Deemed to be University), for providing a research facility to carry out our research work.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Flayelle, M., Maurage, P. and Billieux, J., 2017. Toward a qualitative understanding of binge-watching behaviors: A focus group approach. *Journal of behavioral addictions*, 6(4), pp.457-471.
- [2]. Young, K.S., 1998. Internet addiction: The emergence of a new clinical disorder. *Cyberpsychology & behavior*, 1(3), pp.237-244.
- [3]. Spada, M.M., 2014. An overview of problematic Internet use. *Addictive behaviors*, 39(1), pp.3-6.
- [4]. Boudali, M., Hamza, M., Bourgou, S., Jouini, L., Charfi, F. and Belhadj, A., 2017. Depression and anxiety among Tunisian medical students “binge viewers”. *European Psychiatry*, 41(S1), pp.S675-S676.
- [5]. Hamza, M., Halayem, S., Jraidi, I., Boudali, M., Bouden, A. and Belhadj, A., 2023. Is binge watching among medical students associated with depression and anxiety?. *Anxiety*, 7, pp.004-010.
- [6]. Raza, S.H., Yousaf, M., Sohail, F., Munawar, R., Ogadimma, E.C. and Siang, J.M.L.D., 2021. Investigating binge-watching adverse mental health outcomes during Covid-19 pandemic: moderating role of screen time for web series using online streaming. *Psychology research and behavior management*, pp.1615-1629.
- [7]. Forte, G., Favieri, F., Tambelli, R. and Casagrande, M., 2023. To Binge Watch TV series: how a leisure activity may affect sleep, mood and quality of life. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, pp.2395-2405.
- [8]. Carli, V., Durkee, T., Wasserman, D., Hadlaczky, G., Despalins, R., Kramarz, E., Wasserman, C., Sarchiapone, M., Hoven, C.W.,

- Brunner, R. and Kaess, M., 2012. The association between pathological internet use and comorbid psychopathology: a systematic review. *Psychopathology*, 46(1), pp.1-13.
- [9]. Flayelle, M., Canale, N., Vögele, C., Karila, L., Maurage, P. and Billieux, J., 2019. Assessing binge-watching behaviors: Development and validation of the “Watching TV Series Motives” and “Binge-watching Engagement and Symptoms” questionnaires. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 90, pp.26-36.
- [10]. Widyanto, L. and McMurrin, M., 2004. The psychometric properties of the internet addiction test. *Cyberpsychology & behavior*, 7(4), pp.443-450.
- [11]. Abirami Srinivasan, S.E. and Eashwar, A., 2021. A study on binge watching and its association with sleep pattern-a cross sectional study among Medical College Students in Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu.
- [12]. Chaudhari, B., Menon, P., Saldanha, D., Tewari, A. and Bhattacharya, L., 2015. Internet addiction and its determinants among medical students. *Industrial psychiatry journal*, 24(2), pp.158-162.
- [13]. Subhaprada, C.S. and Kalyani, P., 2017. A cross-sectional study on internet addiction among medical students. *Int J Community Med Public Health*, 4(3), pp.670-674.
- [14]. Matrix, S., 2014. The Netflix effect: Teens, binge watching, and on-demand digital media trends. *Jeunesse: young people, texts, cultures*, 6(1), pp.119-138.
- [15]. Krishnamurthy, S. and Chetlapalli, S.K., 2015. Internet addiction: Prevalence and risk factors: A cross-sectional study among college students in Bengaluru, the Silicon Valley of India. *Indian journal of public health*, 59(2), pp.115-121.
- [16]. Kandell, J.J., 1998. Internet addiction on campus: The vulnerability of college students. *Cyberpsychology & behavior*, 1(1), pp.11-17.
- [17]. Nagori, N., Vasava, K., Vala, A.U.V.U. and Ratnani, I.J., 2019. Association of sleep quality and internet addiction among the medical students.
- [18]. Asokan, A.G., Varghese, V.A. and Rajeev, A., 2019. Internet addiction among medical students and its impact on academic performance: an Indian study. *J Med Sci Clin Res*, 7(3), pp.670-6.
- [19]. Radeef, A.S. and Faisal, G.G., 2018. Prevalence of Internet Addiction and its association with depression, anxiety and stress among Medical Students in Malaysia. *Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 6(3).
- [20]. Javaeed, A., Bint Zafar, M., Iqbal, M. and Ghauri, S.K., 2019. Correlation between Internet addiction, depression, anxiety and stress among undergraduate medical students in Azad Kashmir. *Pakistan journal of medical sciences*, 35(2), p.506.