

Original Research

Assessment of parent's attitude toward use of internet for child's oral health and treatment

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ABSTRACT:

Background: The use of internet has increased magnificently all over the world in the past two decades. The present study was conducted to assess parent's attitude toward use of internet for child's oral health and treatment. **Materials & Methods:** 260 school children of both genders were provided open-ended questions related to participants use of internet to gather oral health-related information, use of the internet as a source of information on oral health-related information, and their attitude regarding information found on internet were recorded. **Results:** 87% had access to internet and 13% had not. 62% were employed and 38% were unemployed. 54% searched information related to health and disease. 32% discussed treatment plan with doctor after searching from internet, 60% not and 8% don't know. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$). 45% felt that treatment or medication from internet source is not appropriate, 37% no and 18% don't know. 24% felt treatment plan from internet made problem worse, 45% no and 31% don't know. 36% had satisfaction with the practice of searching information on internet, 54% had not and 10% don't know. 42% got anxious after searching information on internet, 38% not and 20% don't know. 38% found information on internet useful, 40% no and 22% don't know. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** Most of the subjects were aware regarding the harmful effects of such information and also reported that treatment or medication searched on internet made their problem worse than before.

Key words: Children, Internet, Satisfaction

Received: 04 August, 2022

Accepted: 08 September, 2022

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This article may be cited as: Nisar R, Kumar V, Tiwari P. Assessment of parent's attitude toward use of internet for child's oral health and treatment. *Int J Res Health Allied Sci* 2022; 8(5):4-7.

INTRODUCTION

The use of internet has increased magnificently all over the world in the past two decades. As the accessibility to internet services is increasing, its application in various fields is also emerging. Millions of people all over the world have access to internet facilities and its usage for daily needs.¹ It has been studied that India ranks fourth in the world in terms of internet usage. Many schools have now brought internet use in their curriculum, as it provides access to information across a wide variety of educational subjects or topics, enhancing communication and educational relationship with teachers and classmates.²

Children and adolescents can obtain information and knowledge, and interact conveniently with each other through the Internet.³ Additionally, children and adolescents can gain social support online, and improve their level of psychological well-being. However, excessive or inappropriate Internet

use can lead to Internet addiction, which has been defined as an impulse-control disorder that does not involve an intoxicant.⁴ Internet addiction can cause children and adolescent physical and psychological health problems, such as depression and suicidal ideation, loneliness, interpersonal problems, time management problems, sleeplessness, destructive lifestyles and poor dietary behaviors and the increase of blood lead concentration.⁵ The present study was conducted to assess parent's attitude toward use of internet for child's oral health and treatment.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The present study comprised of 260 school children of both genders. Parental written consent for the participation in the study.

Data such as name, age, gender etc. was recorded. Open-ended questions related to participants use of internet to gather oral health-related information, use of the internet as a source of information on oral

health-related information, and their attitude regarding information found on internet were recorded. Data

thus obtained were subjected to statistical analysis. P value < 0.05 was considered significant.

RESULTS

Table I Distribution regarding internet use

Parameters	Variables	Percentage	P value
Access to internet	Yes	87%	0.01
	No	13%	
Employment status	Employed	62%	0.04
	Unemployed	38%	
Ever searched information related to health and disease	Yes	54%	0.92
	No	46%	
Discussing treatment plan with doctor after searching from internet	Yes	32%	0.05
	No	60%	
	Don't know	8%	

Table I shows that 87% had access to internet and 13% had not. 62% were employed and 38% were unemployed. 54% searched information related to health and disease. 32% discussed treatment plan with doctor after searching from internet, 60% not and 8% don't know. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

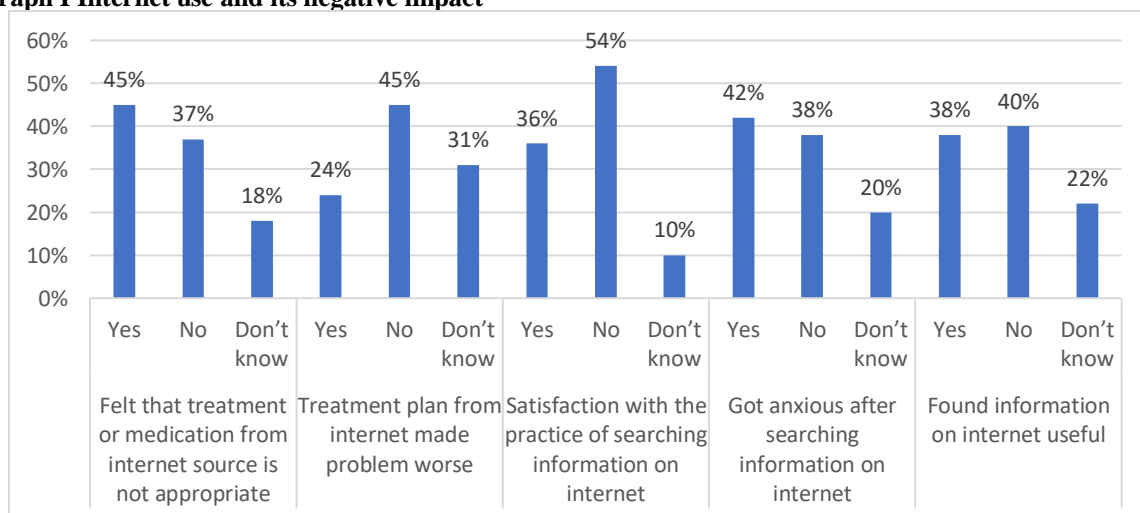
Table II Internet use and its negative impact

Questionnaire	Response	Percentage	P value
Felt that treatment or medication from internet source is not appropriate	Yes	45%	0.06
	No	37%	
	Don't know	18%	
Treatment plan from internet made problem worse	Yes	24%	0.09
	No	45%	
	Don't know	31%	
Satisfaction with the practice of searching information on internet	Yes	36%	0.04
	No	54%	
	Don't know	10%	
Got anxious after searching information on internet	Yes	42%	0.12
	No	38%	
	Don't know	20%	
Found information on internet useful	Yes	38%	0.05
	No	40%	
	Don't know	22%	

Table II, graph I shows that 45% felt that treatment or medication from internet source is not appropriate, 37% no and 18% don't know. 24% felt treatment plan from internet made problem worse, 45% no and 31% don't know. 36% had satisfaction with the practice of searching information on internet, 54% had not and

10% don't know. 42% got anxious after searching information on internet, 38% not and 20% don't know. 38% found information on internet useful, 40% no and 22% don't know. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

Graph I Internet use and its negative impact



DISCUSSION

The usage of internet is very common in the modern era for various reasons, such as for social networking, entertainment, business, seeking information, and money transactions.⁶ Furthermore, its use is widely applied in medical sector for creating awareness regarding newer diseases, trends in newer medicine, and health education.⁷ It serves to be highly beneficial for doctors to update their knowledge regarding newer guidelines in medical sector for diagnosis and treatment plan of various diseases and awareness, regarding epidemics and pandemics occurring worldwide.⁸ It is a very essential platform for people searching information regarding nearby medical facility and diagnostic centers in case of emergency or generally.⁹ The present study was conducted to assess parent's attitude toward use of internet for child's oral health and treatment.

We found that 87% had access to internet and 13% had not. 62% were employed and 38% were unemployed. 54% searched information related to health and disease. 32% discussed treatment plan with doctor after searching from internet, 60% not and 8% don't know. Aydin et al¹⁰ investigated the prevalence of Internet access and use among dental school outpatients to evaluate the type of information they seek and their views regarding health-related information. A total of 33.0% of the participants were Internet users. Those in the 15- to 24-year age group were male, unmarried, and at school and were much more likely to use the Internet than their counterparts. Twelve percent of the users were seeking online health information. Dental information was sought by 16.7% (n = 8) of online health seekers. Those in the 25- to 34-year age group were married, employed, and who have a university degree and were much more likely to seek health information on the Internet than their counterparts.

We found that 45% felt that treatment or medication from internet source is not appropriate, 37% no and 18% don't know. 24% felt treatment plan from internet made problem worse, 45% no and 31% don't know. 36% had satisfaction with the practice of searching information on internet, 54% had not and 10% don't know. 42% got anxious after searching information on internet, 38% not and 20% don't know. 38% found information on internet useful, 40% no and 22% don't know. Kumar et al¹¹ evaluated the parental attitude toward the use of internet related to child's oral health and treatment. 86% reported to have high school education, 7% to have middle school education, 3% to be diploma holders, 2% to be graduates and postgraduates, and only 2% as professionals. 56.1% of the participants use internet to gather information on oral health, whereas only 41.9% reported that they have access to internet but do not use to search information related to oral health and disease. 26.1% of the participants often search information on internet before consulting a doctor,

and 29.3% discuss treatment plan after searching from internet with their doctor.

Li et al¹² in their study 24,013 fourth- to ninth-grade students were recruited. Only 54.2% of the students had accessed the Internet. According to the criteria of Young's Diagnostic Questionnaire (YDQ), an eight-item instrument, the prevalence of Internet addiction in the total sample was 6.3%, and among Internet users was 11.7%. Among the Internet users, males (14.8%) and rural students (12.1%) reported Internet addiction more than females (7.0%) and urban students (10.6%). The percentage of Internet addicts in elementary school students (11.5%) was not significantly lower than the percentage of middle school students (11.9%). There was no statistically significant difference between the four geographical regions (9.6%, 11.5%, 12.3%, 11.1%) characterized by different levels of economy, health, education, and social environment. As the frequency of Internet use and time spent online per week increased, the percentage of Internet addicts increased. When considering the location and purpose of Internet use, the percentage of Internet addicts was highest in adolescents typically surfing in Internet cafes (18.1%) and playing Internet games (22.5%).

The limitation the study is small sample size.

CONCLUSION

Authors found that most of the subjects were aware regarding the harmful effects of such information and also reported that treatment or medication searched on internet made their problem worse than before.

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