

EDITORIAL

NOMOPHOBIA: THE EMERGING PHENOMENON

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“No-MOBile PHone PhoBIA” is an acronym for nomophobia, which is the dread of not being able to use or be reachable through a smartphone¹. Because they are more accustomed to newer technology than older generations and have a greater drive to fit in, younger generations are more likely to develop nomophobia.

The term “nomophobia” was first used in 2009 and is short for “no mobile phone phobia.”²

Since 2005, there has been a significant growth in the use of mobile phones, particularly in European and Asian countries.³ Nomophobia is commonly seen as a behavioral addiction in young generations, with many similarities to substance addiction.⁴

In a 2008 survey conducted by the UK Post Office revealed that almost 53% of British mobile phone users report feeling anxious. The study, which included 2,163 participants, discovered that almost 58% of men and 47% of women experienced the phobia, with an additional 9% feeling disturbed when their mobile phones were turned off. 55% of those polled said that being unable to communicate with friends or family was the biggest reason they felt anxious when they couldn't use their phones.^{5,6} Another study found that the average occurrence of nomophobia caused stress levels comparable to “wedding day jitters” and appointments to the dentist.⁷

One of the causes contributing to nomophobia is the use of mobile phones to access the Internet. A need for comfort brought on by things like elevated anxiety, low self-esteem, insecure attachment, or emotional instability may be the cause of addiction symptoms. To feel more at ease in emotional relationships, some people use their phones excessively.⁷

Excessive cell phone use and a dread of disconnecting are common symptoms of this contemporary anxiety condition. Anxiety, panic attacks, and bodily symptoms like shaking and perspiration when the phone is not close by are some examples of symptoms.² Overuse of smartphones has been linked to problems in cognitive-

emotional management and cognitive performance.⁸

Since nomophobia can serve as a stand-in for underlying illnesses, it can be difficult to distinguish it from other mental disorders. Nomophobia can serve as a stand-in for other conditions.⁹ When separated or unable to use their digital gadgets because of low battery, out-of-service region, no connection, etc., people with an underlying social problem are likely to feel anxious, shivering, sweating, and experiencing anguish. These individuals will frequently insist on always having their gadgets with them, usually going back to their houses to pick up forgotten cell phones.¹⁰

Because of the concept's novelty, there are currently very few academically acknowledged and empirically verified treatments. However, promising therapies include cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy, EMDR, and pharmaceutical approaches. Part of the treatment option could include boosting the availability of mobile phone charging stations to address components of nomophobia connected to battery anxiety, hence improving consumers' sense of security about their device's power state.¹¹ Tranylcypromine and clonazepam were found to be effective treatments for nomophobia.¹²

Overuse of smartphones is becoming a bigger risk to one's physical, emotional, and social well-being. The younger generations who use smartphones have a serious problem with nomophobia, a behavioral disorder that is always changing and requires a variety of approaches to address. The varying severity levels are really concerning. It is essential to raise awareness of the negative consequences of smartphone addiction.⁹

Compared to the virtual world, we need to spend more time in the real one. Human-to-human interactions and face-to-face relationships need to be restored. We should limit, not outright forbid, our use of mobile phones because we cannot escape the power of technological growth.

Keywords: nomophobia, smartphone, emerging phenomenon

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