

## A Study on “Selfitis”, Selfie Addiction Among Medical Students

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### **Abstract:**

**Background:** “Selfitis” is genuine mental condition and people who feel compelled to continuously post pictures of themselves on social media.

**Aim of the study:** To study “selfitis”, grade selfie addiction among medical students

### **Materials and methods:**

The study was carried out in Andhra medical college, Visakhapatnam among 127 medical students between September 2018 to August 2018. The subjects were analyzed using selfitis questionnaire and a semi-structured proforma to collect the socio-demographic details of the participants which included, age, gender, marital status.

### **Results:**

Of the subjects, 85% were not in any category, 2% were in borderline, 3% were in acute and 8% were in chronic. Demographic parameters like age, sex, and marital status were not found to be significant factors linked to selfitis.

### **Conclusion:**

Students who were chronic were of more attention seeking, found to have more mood changes, more self-confidence, more environmental enhancement, and were socially competitive.

**Key Word:** Selfitis, Selfitis addiction, selfie.

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## I. Introduction

The selfie phenomenon, which has transformed our social culture, is commonly understood to be a photograph that has been taken by oneself, usually with a smart phone or webcam and shared on social media. Today, people post millions of selfies each day to social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram and twitter. Selfies are a form of self-presentation and expression, an interpersonal communication where a person conveys an image about him or herself to another individual. In addition to this, self-presentation enables a person to influence and manage the perception of themselves, by others. Every day, people present their selves, through their outfit choices, hairstyles and with brands to express themselves in a specific context. Selfitis is genuine mental condition and people who feel compelled to continuously post pictures of themselves on social media.

The term was coined first in 2014 to describe obsessive selfie-taking in a spoof news story which suggested the American Psychiatric Association

There are three of the disorder:

- Borderline are people who take selfies at least three times a day, but do not post them in social media
- Acute phase of the disorder where the pictures are posted
- Chronic stage, people feel an uncontrollable urge to take one’s self round the clock, posting them more than six times a day

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) had established a new mental disorder called “selfitis” and stated that obsessive photo taking, and posting is a way to gain attention, compensate for low self-esteem, and compensate for lack of intimacy.

### **Review of literature:**

The taking of selfies is a self-oriented action which allows users to establish their individuality (Ehlin 2014) and self-importance (Murray 2015).

According to some studies, selfie behavior is also associated with traits such as narcissism (Buffardi and Campbell 2008). Bevan (2017) investigated the role of narcissism, considerateness, and social attraction towards selfie behavior in terms of using selfie-sticks and found that selfie-stick users were perceived as less socially attractive, moderately narcissistic, and moderately inconsiderate. Halpern et al. (2016) argued that taking selfies and narcissism are reflective actions. Although there is a strong argument that narcissism has a

positive effect towards taking selfies (McCain et al. 2016), other researchers have found no relationship between selfie-taking and narcissism (re et al. 2016). McCain et al. (2016) reported that social attractiveness was the primary motivation for posting selfies. Selfie-takers try to provide a greater appeal to others in their social media space (re et al. 2016). Charoensukmongkol (2016) reported that attention-seeking, loneliness, and self-centred behaviour had a significant relationship with selfie-liking. Although initial media reports thought that selfie-taking would be a fad, it appears that the behaviour has become more endemic and is a very popular activity among adolescents and emerging adults (Albury 2015).

## II. Material and Methods

**Aim of the study:** To study selfitis, selfie addiction among medical students

**Study Design:** cross-sectional study

**Study Location:** Sample: medical students from Andhra medical college, Visakhapatnam who gave their consent to the study

**Study Duration:** August 2018 to November 2018.

**Sample size:** 127 subjects

### Procedure:

The data was collected among 127 medical students and responses were then entered into excel spreadsheet to identify any outliers and responses were identified to be genuine and data was analyzed using SPSS statistics version 24.

The 20 statements via the focus group interviews were streamlined into items assessed using a 5-point likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree)

**Study tools:** screening questions- selfitis behavior scale and Subscales of the Selfitis Behavior Scale:

Factors driving selfie taking	Feelings when taking selfies
Environment enhancement	Taking selfies gives me a good feeling to better enjoy my environment I am able to express myself more in my environment through selfies Taking selfies provides better memories about the occasion and the experience I take selfies as trophies for future memories
Social competition	Sharing my selfies creates healthy competition with my friends and colleagues Taking different selfie poses helps increase my social status I post frequent selfies to get more ‘likes’ and comments on social media I use photo editing tools to enhance my selfie to look better than others
Attention seeking	I gain enormous attention by sharing my selfies on social media I feel more popular when i post my selfies on social media by posting selfies, I expect my friends to appraise me
Mood modification	I am able to reduce my stress level by taking selfies Taking more selfies improves my mood and makes me feel happy Taking selfies instantly modifies my mood
Self-confidence	I feel confident when i take a selfie I become more positive about myself when i take selfies I take more selfies and look at them privately to increase my confidence
Subjective conformity	I gain more acceptance among my peer group when i take selfie and share it on social media I become a strong member of my peer group through posting selfies When I don’t take selfies, I feel detached from my peer group

## III. Result

Results found that maximum students do not posted any selfies on the day and that month of questionnaire taken and mean age of the sample was 29.46 with standard deviation of 6.33, 58% of sample are female and 42% of the sample are male.

It is also found that whole sample follow WhatsApp regularly and many follow Facebook rest all social media sites in minimum. Regarding post on social media 66% of sample posting occasionally.

**Table no 1:** Table showing Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Characteristics		Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	73	54
	Female	54	37
<b>Level of selfitis</b>	Nil	108	85
	Borderline	5	3
	Acute	3	2
	Chronic	11	9
<b>Age</b>	21-25	24	18

	26-30	61	48
	31-35	25	20
	36-40	6	4
<b>Number of selfies taken per day</b>	0 selfies	108	85
	1 to 4 selfies	3	2
	5 to 8 selfies	5	4
	More than 8 selfies	11	9
<b>Number of postings per day</b>	None	91	71
	At least one time to three times	8	6
	More than three times	24	18

**Table no 2:**Showing mean and standard deviation of sample of each item in questionnaire

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Deviation</b>
<b>Item 1</b>	2.6299	1.06012
<b>Item 2</b>	1.9921	1.0507
<b>Item 3</b>	2.3386	1.17663
<b>Item 4</b>	2.1339	1.13643
<b>Item 5</b>	2.5513	1.29534
<b>Item 6</b>	2.2047	1.14322
<b>Item 7</b>	2.3937	1.24185
<b>Item 8</b>	1.9606	1.00318
<b>Item 9</b>	2.2126	1.17939
<b>Item 10</b>	2.3543	1.25057
<b>Item 11</b>	2.2677	1.11589
<b>Item 12</b>	1.9528	1.03784
<b>Item 13</b>	3.4094	1.262111
<b>Item 14</b>	1.9685	.99950
<b>Item 15</b>	2.4961	1.25909
<b>Item 16</b>	2.3937	1.16944
<b>Item 17</b>	2.4646	1.16015
<b>Item 18</b>	1.7874	.91400
<b>Item 19</b>	2.7008	1.28678
<b>Item 20</b>	2.4488	1.23897

**Table no 3:** Showing reliability scores of each of the six subscales based on their Cronbach’s alpha scores:

<b>FACTORS:</b>	<b>Cronbach’s alpha scores</b>
Factor 1: Environmental enhancement 1.1 Taking selfies gives me a good feeling to better enjoy my environment 1.2 I am able to express myself more in my environment through selfies 1.3 taking selfies provides better memories about the occasion and the experience 1.4 I take selfies as trophies for future memories	0.783
Factor 2: Social competition 2.1 sharing my selfies creates healthy competition with my friends and colleagues 2.2 Taking different selfie poses helps increase my social status 2.3 I post frequent selfies to get more ‘likes’ and comments on social media 2.4 I use photo editing tools to enhance my selfie to look better than others	0.797
Factor 3: Attention seeking 3.1 I gain enormous attention by sharing my selfies on social media 3.2 I feel more popular when i post my selfies on social media 3.3 by posting selfies, I expect my friends to appraise me	0.830
Factor 4: Mood modification 4.1 I am able to reduce my stress level by taking selfies 4.2 Taking more selfies improves my mood and makes me feel happy 4.3 Taking selfies instantly modifies my mood	0.906
Factor 5: Self-confidence 5.1 I feel confident when I take a selfie 5.2 I become more positive about myself when I take selfies 5.3 IU take more selfies and look at them privately to increase my confidence	0.752
Factor 6: Subjective conformity 6.1 I gain more acceptance among my peer group when I take selfie and share it on social media 6.2 I become a strong member of my peer group through posting selfies 6.3 when I don’t take selfies, I feel detached from my peer group.	0.716

### III. Discussion

The present study explored the factors that underlie selfitis and developed a new psychometric scale—the Selfitis Behavior Scale (SBS). Using focus group interviews to generate scale components followed by statistical testing (using the dimension reduction technique), six components of selfitis were identified: environmental enhancement, social competition, attention seeking, mood modification, self-confidence, and social conformity.

Selfitis – or the obsessive taking of selfies – appears to be a genuine mental condition. According to the APA, while there is currently no cure for the disorder, temporary treatment is available through cognitive behavioral therapy. Minister of state for health and family welfare Anupriya Patel said the world health organization, under its international classification of diseases, has not recognized selfitis as a disorder so far. According to a study conducted by researchers associated with the all India institute of medical sciences, over 250 people worldwide have died between October 2011 and November 2017 while taking selfies. In 2015, India reported the highest number of “selfie deaths” in the world, recording 15 of 27 such incidents. A study published in November in the International Journal Of Mental Health And Addiction studied the selfie habits of hundreds of young people at a university in India. That country was chosen because it has the most Facebook users on the planet. A recent study posted in the journal *Jama facial plastic surgery* stated that plastic surgeons reported an uptick in the number of people asking for facial reconstruction solely because they are not happy with the way they look in selfies.

#### Limitations:

All the data were self-report and are subject to many well-known biases (including social desirability and memory recall). The sample was a self-selecting convenience sample. Selfie-taking has become a major leisure activity with the help of enhanced social media functions. Improving technology along with universal connectivity via mobile devices has facilitated users to post, upload, and share their selfies via social media. Further psychological research is needed into other factors that are likely to play a role in the acquisition, development and maintenance of selfitis including personality traits, motivations, cognition, and attitudes. Overall, the findings in the present paper demonstrate that the SBS appears to a reliable and valid instrument for assessing selfitis but that confirmatory studies are needed to validate the concept more rigorously.

### IV. Conclusion

The study conducted on focus group interviews to better understand the subcomponents of selfitis. Using these data, was validated and the selfie-taking behavior was examined in relation to three intensity types (i.e., borderline, acute, and chronic conditions). The concept of selfie-taking might evolve over time as technology advances, but the six identified factors that appear to underlie selfitis. Further psychological research is needed into other factors that are likely to play a role in the acquisition, development and maintenance of selfitis including personality traits, motivations, cognition, and attitudes.

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