

Effects of social media consumption and addiction on sexual relationships among a sample of Egyptian married women

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Abstract

Background: social media has become an integral part of individuals' daily lives, so there is a growing need to research the impact of the use of these technologies on sexual relations. This study aimed to investigate the effect of social media use and addiction on sexual relationships in a sample of married Egyptian women. Methods: The study included 530 married women who attended the outpatient clinics at Al-Minshawy General Hospital, maternal and child care units, and through a questionnaire that was published on social media. An Arabic translated questionnaire, which the woman answered by herself, was used. Results and conclusion: Although most of the women participating in the study (77.5%) believed that the use of social media does not affect their sexual performance as well as 79.6% of the participants believed that the use of social media does not affect their sexual satisfaction, our study reported that there is a statistically significant relationship between the amount of time the participants spend on social media and their feelings of depression during the two months preceding the study. There is a highly statistically significant relationship between the amount of time the participants spend on social media and their satisfaction with their sexual life.

Keywords: Social media, Sexual, Relationships, Married women.

1. Introduction

In recent years, social media have become an integral part of individuals' daily lives, so there is an increasing need for research examining the impact of the use of such technologies on sexual relationships sexual function and satisfaction. Over the last decade, research into "addictive technological behaviors" has substantially increased. Research has also demonstrated strong associations between addictive use of technology and co-morbid psychiatric disorders [1].

It is also known that online sexual activities can be either beneficial or destructive for individuals as well as for relationships [2].

The internet can offer possibilities for improved communication within the family, but it creates inter-generational conflicts at the same time [3].

Excessive use of the internet and/or smartphones may cause musculoskeletal discomfort, poor sleep quality, daytime sleepiness, and depressed mood states. Many of these problematic behaviors in their most extreme form have been described as behavioral addictions featuring similar components and consequences irrespective of the behavioral focus [4].

Indeed, positive text messages to a partner have been associated with increased relationship satisfaction. Similarly, sexting may also play a role in establishing and maintaining romantic and sexual relationships [5].

The institution of marriage (and romantic relationships in general) is under attack. Approximately 40-50 percent of all marriages will end in divorce, while many of the intact unions are poorly functioning and are characterized by low levels of relationship satisfaction on the part of one or both partners. It appears that life has become a major

distraction from our cell phones. It is ironic that cell phones, originally designed as a communication tool, may actually hinder rather than foster satisfying relationships among romantic partners [6].

Indeed, sexual satisfaction is typically highest during the first year of a committed relationship and subsequently declines [7].

Excessive and unhealthy internet use would increase feelings of loneliness over time. Although depression had a moderate and positive bivariate relationship with internet addiction at each time point, such a relationship was not significant in the cross analysis. Online social contacts with friends and family were not an effective alternative for offline social interactions in reducing feelings of loneliness [8].

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of social media consumption and addiction on sexual relationships (sexual function and satisfaction) among a sample of Egyptian married women.

2. Subjects and methods

2.1. Administrative Design:

The work was started after obtaining approval from the Department of Dermatology and Andrology and the research ethics committee in Benha Faculty of Medicine.

2.2. Technical Design:

Place of the study:

The participants were questioned in the Dermatology and Andrology outpatient clinics at Al-Minshawy General Hospital, maternal and child care units, and through a questionnaire that was distributed on social media.

Study sample (participants):

This study was conducted on 530 married women. The participants were questioned in the Dermatology and Andrology outpatient clinics at Al-Minshawy General Hospital, maternal and child care units, and through a questionnaire that was distributed on social media.

The aim of the study and the details of the questionnaire were explained to the women before taking their informed consent.

To ensure that all gathered information was kept confidential and the subject was anonymous, each questionnaire was handed in an open envelope and after filling it, the subject sealed the envelope and put it in a basket containing other sealed envelopes.

Study Design:

The current study was conducted as a convenience study. The tool of the study was a self-report questionnaire which was designed according to Younis et al [9]. Questions included Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) to assess social media addiction. The psychometric properties of the BSMAS have previously been validated in English [1]. Questions also included PROMIS Sexual Function and Satisfaction Measure (PROMIS SEXFS) to assess participant's Sexual Function and Satisfaction [10], in addition to some questions to determine the amount of time spent on social media and the nature of the content that is followed or displayed to the women participating in the study and their reaction to this content. A copy of the questionnaire is given in appendix I.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analysed by computer using Statistical Package of Social Services version 22 (SPSS), Data were represented in tables and graphs, categorical qualitative variables were expressed as absolute frequencies (number) & relative frequencies (percentage). Suitable statistical tests of significance were used after being checked for normality. Chi-square test was used for comparing qualitative variables and when it was inappropriate, it was replaced by Monte Carlo Exact test. The results were considered statistically significant when the significant probability was less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). P value < 0.001 was considered highly significant (HS), and P value ≥ 0.05 was considered statistically insignificant (NS).

3. Results

This study was conducted on 530 married women to evaluate the effects of social media consumption and addiction on sexual relationships. Table (1) show that 60.8% of the studied group belonged to the age group 20 to 29 years. Only 2.1% of them were under 20 years and 0.9% were above 50 years. Most of them (84.2%) married at 20-29 years of age and 65.5% of them are residents of urban areas and 88.1% of participants had a university degree.

Only 7% of the participating women spend less than an hour per day on social media, while 93% of them spend more than an hour per day, divided into 39.4%, 25.7% and 27.9% spending 11-3 hours, 3-5 hours and more than 5 hours per day, respectively figure (2).

Table (1) Distribution of sociodemographic characteristics among the studied women.

Item	($n = 530$ Studied women (n=))	%
Age groups		
20 Less than	11	2.1
20 - 29	322	60.8
30 - 39	173	32.7
40 - 49	24	4.5
≥ 50	0	0.9
marriage Age of		
20 Less than	63	11.9
20 - 29	446	84.2
30 - 39	20	3.8
≥ 50	1	0.2
Residence		
In a city	347	65.5
In a town	46	8.7
In a village	137	25.8
Educational level		
Can read & write	1	0.2
Finished secondary school	72	13.6
University education	457	86.2

Entertainment ranked first in the order of the participating women for their first interest on social media by 30.2%, significantly higher than other interests that received rates of 14.3%, 14%, 13.4%, 13.2% and 13.2% for news, food & kitchen, religion, fashion, arts & culture and other interests respectively, while sports and politics are at the lowest rates in the order of first interest for the participating women, with rates of 0.9% and 0.8%, respectively figure (2).

During the month preceding the study, 38.1% of the women participating in the study sometimes felt a

desire to engage in sexual activity, 34.9% of the women often felt this desire, and 8.9% of the women always felt a desire to engage in sexual activity, while 11.1% of the participants rarely felt a desire to engage in sexual activity, and 7% of the participants did not feel the desire to engage in sexual activity at all figure (3).

During the month preceding the study, 82.8% of the women participating in the study performed sexual activity, and 17.2% of them did not engage in any sexual activity table (2).

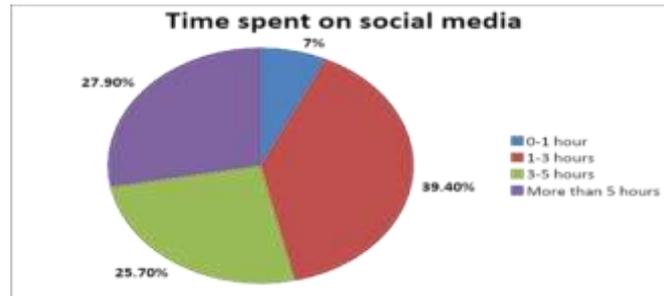


Fig. (2) Time spent on social media among the studied women.

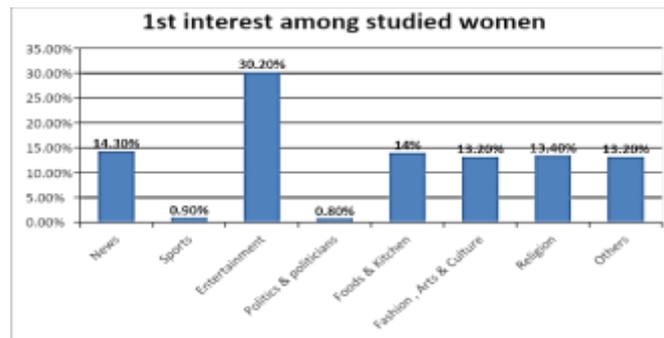


Fig. (2) 1st interest among the studied women.

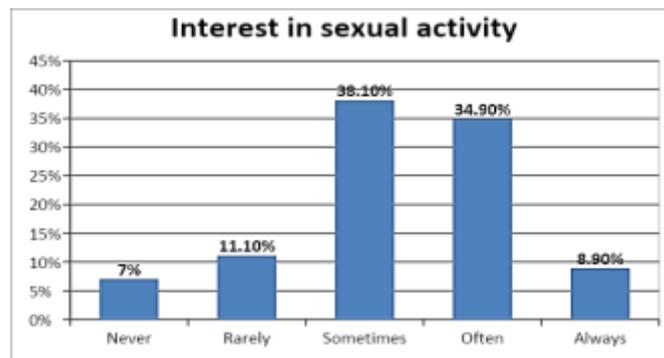


Fig. (3) Interest in sexual activity domain among the studied women.

Table (2) Sexual activity screener domain among the studied women.

SexFS domains	(*3 · Studied women (n=)	
	n	%
Have sexual activity	239	82.8
No sexual activity	91	17.2

During the month preceding the study, in more than a third of the participants (35.8%), the vagina was lubricated (wet) well during intercourse always or in most sexual encounters, while in 8.9% of the participants, the vagina was not lubricated (wet) well during intercourse always or in most sexual encounters figure (4).

During the month preceding the study, 64.9% of the women participating in the study did not experience pain in the vagina during intercourse at all, or felt it a little bit, while 6.6% of the participants had a feeling of pain in the vagina during sexual intercourse a lot figure (5).

During the month preceding the study, 22.3% of the study participants were able to reach an orgasm (climax) when they wanted it often, and 8.2% were

always able to do so, while 13.9% of participants were rarely able to reach an orgasm when they wanted to, 8.7% were unable to reach to orgasm not once during the past month, and 8.2% did not try to reach an orgasm figure (6).

During the month preceding the study, 10.7% of the study participants were dissatisfied with their sexual orgasms (climax) at all, 18.5% were satisfied a little bit with their orgasms, while 17.1% of the participants were very satisfied with their orgasm figure (7).

During the month preceding the study, 16.2% of the study participants were not satisfied with their sexual life at all, 16.9% were satisfied a little bit with their sexual life, while 24.8% of the participants were very satisfied with their sexual life figure (8).

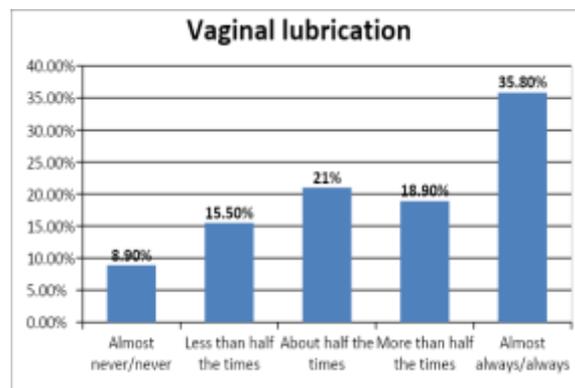


Fig. (4) Vaginal lubrication domain among the studied women.

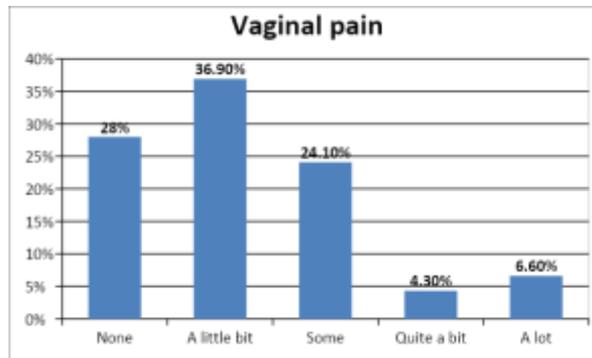


Fig. (5) Vaginal pain domain among the studied women.

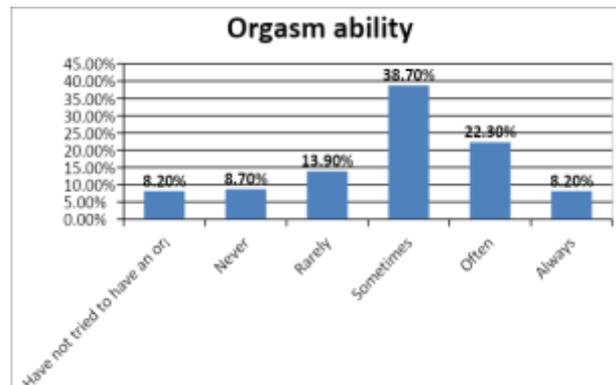


Fig. (6) Orgasm ability domain among the studied women.

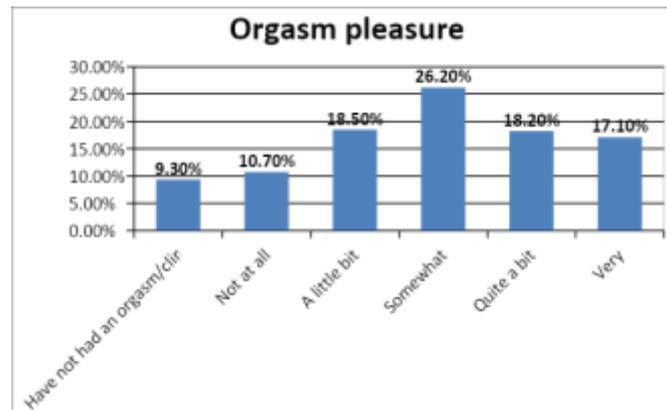


Fig. (7) Orgasm satisfaction domain among the studied women.

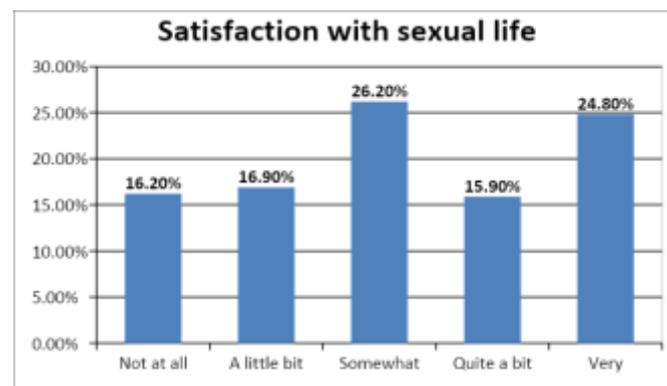


Fig. (8) Satisfaction with sexual life domain among the studied women.

4. Discussion

Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, have become a part of almost everyone's social life, especially for the new generations. Children and teens have grown up alongside these internet-based services, which have become an integral part of their social and personal lives. However, several studies have reported that psychiatric and psychological problems are sometimes associated with problematic use of social media [11].

Combinations of actions such as browsing other users' photos, scrolling through news feeds or comments have been categorized as negative social media use. Recent research indicates that this type of behavior and depression are linked in both directions. Passive social media use can directly exacerbate symptoms of depression, such as loss of interest or blue mood, and thwarted personal well-being [12]. These are in agreement with our result, there is a statistically significant relationship between many of the practices and reactions of the participants towards the content presented to them on social media and their feelings of depression during the two months preceding the study.

In social media, where a strong relational component is present, anxiety can arise from the perception that communication is taking place

inappropriately, from reduced emotion regulation abilities, or from negative online peer comparison, where online interaction can be used as an alternative to offline physical interaction [13]. Facebook features, such as seeking support and approval online through the number of "likes," or just keeping visibility of posts and photos that have received a lot of positive comments on an individual's profile, can reinforce or elicit non-adaptive behaviors (for example, excessive social comparison and rumination) and increased anxiety-related traits, such as socially prescribed perfectionism, and worsening of pre-existing symptoms in young adults diagnosed with an anxiety disorder [14]. The type and frequency of the set of behaviors that Facebook users can engage in (for example, posting a photo / comment / status update, using an instant message, or "liking" behavior) can be linked to levels of general anxiety. It may be explained by the need to keep worries related to that leading a person to repeatedly check past posting behavior [15]. With regard to Instagram, which focuses more on visual content, a study reported a direct association between Instagram use and general anxiety in boys, while in girls this link was mediated by dissatisfaction with body image, which led to various adverse outcomes in two groups. This gender difference indicates that females may be more likely to engage in social comparison,

especially when it involves physical appearance. This may be because their perception of their ideal body image as being skinny is influenced by their overexposure to attractive photos of celebrities and peers on Instagram. Moreover, it emphasizes once again the importance of considering potential concurrent mechanisms that contribute to the development of psychological issues [16]. All these results are in agreement with our study which found that there is a statistically significant relationship between many of the practices and reactions of the participants towards the content presented to them on social media and their feelings of anxiety during the two months preceding the study.

5. Conclusion

Although most of the women participating in the study (77.5%) believed that the use of social media does not affect their sexual performance as well as 79.6% of the participants believed that the use of social media does not affect their sexual satisfaction, our study reported that there is a statistically significant relationship between the amount of time the participants spend on social media and their feelings of depression during the two months preceding the study. There is a highly statistically significant relationship between the amount of time the participants spend on social media and their satisfaction with their sexual life.

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