

## Effect of Social Media Usage on Behavioural Changes in Adolescents admitted to and attended the clinics of the District General Hospital Hambantota

RI Priyanjali<sup>1#</sup>, HAR Ahinsa<sup>1</sup>, SGC Madushani<sup>1</sup>, KN Pushpakanthi<sup>1</sup>, HRD Lakshani<sup>1</sup>, HMCRC Thilakarathna<sup>1</sup>, and KTG Kanchana<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Nursing KIU, Sri Lanka

#ridmathilakarathna95@gmail.com

Social media, an internet-based form of communication, has become an integral part of adolescents' lives, strongly influencing their behavior. Excessive usage exposes adolescents to risks such as internet addiction, cyberbullying, body image concerns, and reduced engagement in healthy activities. This study aimed to evaluate the effect of social media usage on the behavioral changes among adolescents who were admitted to or attended the clinics of the District General Hospital (DGH) DGH Hambantota. A descriptive quantitative study was conducted among 181 parents of adolescents (age 10-17) who attended to the wards and pediatric clinic at DGH Hambantota. A self-administered questionnaire including perceived social media usage and behavioral changes, developed by the investigators were used to collect data. Data analysis was performed using SPSS v25. Among 181 participants, the majority were early adolescents (68.5%, n=124), females (55.2%, n=100), monthly income >Rs.45,000/= (59.1%, n=107), and had only one sibling (48.1%, n=87). Further, 87.8% of parents/guardians perceived that their child exhibited behavioral changes due to social media usage. Overall, "Drifting away behavior" had the highest mean (26.55±2.27), indicating it as the most prevalent and varied behavioral change observed. "Wasting time behavior" and "Addiction behavior" showed moderate mean values (14.20±1.92 and 10.88±1.56 respectively) while "Ownership behavior" (Mean 8.5±1.20) was the least prevalent behavioral change observed. Chi square test showed that these behavioral changes were significantly associated with adolescents age (p = 0.017). In conclusion, the study underscores the significant impact of social media usage on the behavioral changes of adolescents, highlighting concerns that are increasingly relevant in today's digital age. The association between these behavioral changes and the age of adolescents points to a crucial period during early adolescence when intervention could be most effective. Further research is needed to develop effective intervention strategies.

**Keywords:** *social media usage, adolescents, behavioral changes*