

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION, IMPULSIVITY, EMOTION REGULATION AND CYBERBULLYING AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: Social media use is widespread among young adults, and excessive use may lead to social media addiction, negatively affecting academic performance, well-being and social functioning. Individual factors such as impulsivity and difficulties in emotion regulation may contribute to problematic use by reducing behavioral control and increasing reliance on online platforms for coping. Increased exposure to online interactions may also be associated with higher levels of cyberbullying and cyber-victimization. This study aimed to examine the relationship between social media addiction, impulsivity, emotion regulation difficulties and cyberbullying among medical students.

METHODS: (Ethics Committee Approval must be obtained and the number should be specified). This descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted among Selçuk University Faculty of Medicine students. Participants completed a sociodemographic form, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), Social Media Addiction Scale, Cyberbullying and Cyber-victimization Scales for University Students, Barratt Impulsiveness Scale, and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale–Short Form (DERS-16). Ethical approval was obtained from the Selçuk University Local Ethics Committee. (Decision no: 2025/542)

Data were analyzed using SPSS; descriptive statistics, group comparisons, correlation and regression analyses were performed.

RESULTS: Students with emotion regulation difficulties had significantly higher impulsivity scores ($p=0.03$, $r=0.192$). Age was positively correlated with cyber-victimization scores ($p=0.048$, $r=0.127$). Cyberbullying scores were positively correlated with cyber-victimization scores ($p<0.001$, $r=0.341$). Depression scores were also positively correlated with cyberbullying scores.

CONCLUSIONS: Findings suggest that emotion regulation difficulties are related to higher impulsivity, which may increase vulnerability to problematic online behaviors. The strong association between cyberbullying and cyber-victimization indicates that these roles may overlap in online environments. In addition, the relationship between depressive symptoms and cyberbullying highlights the potential contribution of emotional distress to maladaptive digital interactions. These results emphasize the importance of preventive interventions targeting emotion regulation skills, self-control and digital awareness among university students.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, emotion regulation, impulsivity, social media addiction