

PP 105

Social media use and academic performance among undergraduates in Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Chandrasena PPCM*, Ilankoon IMPS

Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.

Background: Social media has become an inseparable part of users' lives and undergraduates use social media for different purposes such as communication, entertainment, and learning. Social media may have positive and negative impacts on the academic performance of undergraduates.

Objective: This study aimed to assess the use of social media and its effects on self-reported academic performance among undergraduates.

Method: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among all second, third, and fourth year undergraduates attached to the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. A pre-tested, self-administered questionnaire (a Google form) was used to collect data on socio-demographics, use and perception of social media, and self-reported Grade Point Average (GPA). Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze data using SPSS version 23.0.

Results: The response rate was 79.5%. All undergraduates (n=175) had social media accounts and WhatsApp was the most frequently used site (96.0%), followed by Facebook (70.9%) mainly for communicating (85.1%), entertainment (83.4%), online learning (65.7%) and for updating themselves (65.1%). Most undergraduates spent 2-5 hours daily on social media sites (72.0%) and they followed social media 1-10 times per day (54.9%) with a frequency of more than 10 times a day (41.7%). The majority of the undergraduates wish to use social media for academic purposes (94.9%) and the most preferred site was WhatsApp (65.1%). Most undergraduates' self-reported GPA (46.3%) was less than 2.9. There was a statistically significant association between the mean GPA and frequencies of using social media ($p=0.02$) [not daily (3.3 ± 0.3), 1-10 times a day (2.9 ± 0.4) and more than 10 times a day (3 ± 0.4)].

Conclusion: Undergraduates are willing to use social media for academic purposes but their academic performance had a significant influence by the frequency of using social media. This highlights the importance of guidance to use social media effectively in order to improve undergraduate academic performance.