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A Descriptive Correlational Study To Assess Cyberchondria And Symptom Interpretation Behavior Among B.Sc. Nursing Students In A Selected Nursing College Raipur Chhattisgarh “

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Abstract

Cyberchondria is a condition in which a person repeatedly searches for health-related information on the internet and becomes excessively worried or anxious about their health. Individuals with Cyberchondria often misinterpret normal body sensations or minor symptoms as signs of serious illnesses after reading online medical information. This behavior can increase health anxiety, cause emotional distress, and lead to unnecessary medical consultations. With the widespread availability of health information on the internet, Cyberchondria has become an emerging mental health concern, especially among students and young adults. Understanding Cyberchondria is important for promoting healthy online health-information seeking behavior and reducing unnecessary anxiety.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the Cyberchondria among nursing students.
2. To assess the symptom interpretation behavior among nursing students.
3. To determine the correlation between Cyberchondria and symptom interpretation behavior among nursing students.
4. To find the association between Cyberchondria and selected demographic variable.
5. To find the association between symptom interpretation behavior and selected demographic variables.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

- ❖ **H₀₁** - There is no significant relationship between cyberchondria and symptom interpretation behavior among B.Sc. nursing students in a selected nursing college.
- ❖ **H₁**- There is significant relationship between cyberchondria and symptom interpretation behavior among B.Sc. nursing students in a selected nursing College.
- ❖ **H₀₂**- There is no association between cyberchondria and sociodemographic variables.
- ❖ **H₂**- There is association between symptom interpretation behavior and sociodemographic variable.
- ❖ **H₀₃**-There is No association between cyberchondria and selected demographic variables.
- ❖ **H₃**- There is association between symptom interpretation behavior and selected demographic variables

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology of investigation is the core of every research work. The success of all research studies depends on the methodology adopted and the tools and techniques employed.

Polit and Beck 2019 “Methodology means the steps, procedure and strategies for gathering and analyzing data a research investigation.

A Descriptive study was adopted; purposive sampling technique was used to select 60 subjects based on certain pre determined criteria. After obtaining the administrative approval, self-structured questionnaire & rating scale was administered to B. Sc Nursing students at selected Nursing college of Raipur, Chhattisgarh. This was done to check the items of their clarity, relevance and the nature of responses from the patients. On the whole the instrument was found to be clear, unambiguous and appropriate. The average time spend with each student to complete the interview schedule was about 15-20 minutes. The reliability of the tool was determined by using Split Half method and reliability was found to be 0.97, highly significant . Pilot study was conducted on 6 nursing students with constructed tool.

The scores were categorized into mild, moderate and severe levels-

S.NO.	CYBERCHONDRIA	SCORE
1	MILD	0-24
2	MODERATE	25-48
3	SEVERE	49-72

S.NO.	SYMPTOM INTERPRETATION BEHAVIOR	SCORE
1	MILD	0-24
2	MODERATE	25-48
3	SEVERE	49-72

SAMPLING CRITERIA

Inclusive criteria for sampling

- B.sc Nursing students studying selected in Nursing college.
- Student who are willing to participate in the study.
- Student who are able to understand and respond to the questionnaires.
- Student who are living in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

Exclusive criteria for sampling

- Student who are not willing to participate in the study.
- Student who had known about cyberchondria.

RESULTS

The data collected from the study subjects were analyzed and interpreted in terms of the objectives and hypothesis of the study. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis; the level of significance was at $p=0.05$. Depicts that in relation to level of cyberchondria, maximum subjects 24 (60%) belonged to moderate level (17–24), 15 (37.5%) belonged to mild level (9–16) and 1 (2.5%) belonged to severe level (0–8).

In relation to cyberchondria: Depicts that is relation to mean (24.083), mean percentage (48.638%), and standard deviation (SD) (3.14).

In relation to symptom interpretation behavior: Depict that the majority of the subjects, 35 (58.3%), had moderate symptom interpretation behavior (25–48), followed by 21 (35%) with mild symptom interpretation behavior (0–24), and 3 (5%) with severe symptom interpretation.

In relation to symptom interpretation behavior: Depicts that is relation to mean (24.083), mean percentage (50%), and standard deviation (3.14).

Depicts that is relation to cyberchondria mean (24.083), mean % (40.138%) and standard deviation (3.14), symptom interpretation behavior, mean (29.183), mean % (48.64%) and standard deviation (3.80), there was calculated correlation r - value was 0.273 is less than the table value with the DF (58) 0.372 at 0.05 level of significant, show mild positive correlation $r = 0.273$ mean mild positive correlation. It means if cyberchondria is increasing then symptom interpretation behavior will also be increasing. There is a mild positive correlation between cyberchondria and symptom interpretation behavior also increasing., thus research hypotheses (H_1) is accepted and null hypotheses (H_{01}) is rejected. **Only age in years and area of residence was significance**

CONCLUSION

After the detailed analysis, the study concluded that the level of cyberchondria and symptoms interpretation behavior exists among nursing students. The study also found a significant relationship between cyberchondria and symptoms interpretation behavior. The findings highlight the need for awareness and appropriate health information-seeking behavior among nursing students.

IMPLICATION

- The findings of the study are important for nursing practice, nursing education, nursing administration, and nursing research.
- The study emphasizes the need to educate nursing students about responsible use of online health information and accurate interpretation of health symptoms.

GENERAL IMPLICATION

The findings reveal that awareness regarding cyberchondria and appropriate symptoms interpretation behavior can reduce unnecessary anxiety and promote healthy health-seeking behavior among nursing students.

NURSING PRACTICE

- Nurses should educate students regarding the appropriate use of online health information.
- Nursing professionals should encourage evidence-based health information rather than self-diagnosis through the internet.
- Health education programs should be conducted to improve symptoms interpretation behavior.
- Nurses should identify students with high cyberchondria and provide proper counseling and guidance.

NURSING ADMINISTRATION

- Nursing administrators should organize seminars, workshops, and awareness programs on cyberchondria and responsible internet use.
- Nursing administrators should formulate guidelines for the appropriate use of online health resources.
- Nursing administrators should encourage continuing education programs on digital health literacy.

- Adequate resources should be provided to improve students' awareness regarding cyberchondria and symptom interpretation.

NURSING EDUCATION

- Nursing curriculum should include topics related to cyberchondria, digital health literacy, and evidence-based health information.
- Nurse educators should encourage students to verify online health information through reliable sources.
- Educational programs should improve students' critical thinking and symptoms interpretation behavior.
- Nursing students should be encouraged to seek professional medical advice rather than relying solely on internet searches.

NURSING RESEARCH

- Similar studies can be conducted on larger samples in different nursing colleges.
- Comparative studies can be conducted among nursing, medical, and allied health students.
- Interventional studies can be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs in reducing cyberchondria.
- Further research can identify factors influencing cyberchondria and symptoms interpretation behavior among students.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Awareness programs should be conducted to educate nursing students about cyberchondria and its adverse effects.
- Students should be encouraged to use authentic and evidence-based health websites for health-related information.
- Public education should focus on avoiding self-diagnosis through internet searches.
- Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials such as pamphlets, posters, and digital media should be used to promote digital health literacy.
- Students should be motivated to consult healthcare professionals for proper diagnosis and treatment instead of depending only on online information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Similar studies may be conducted with a larger sample size.
- Comparative studies can be carried out among nursing, medical, and allied health students.
- An interventional study can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs on reducing cyberchondria.
- Similar studies can be replicated in different geographical areas and educational settings.
- Longitudinal studies may be conducted to assess changes in cyberchondria and symptoms interpretation behavior over time.

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