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SELFITIS OR SELFIE SYNDROME



A study published in the ResearchGate titled Selfie Syndrome – A mental disorder by Mr. Vijayaraddi Vandali and Mrs. Rekha Biradar claims that the American Psychiatric Association (APA), in its annual meeting in Chicago, confirmed selfitis as a new mental disorder. APA had defined selfitis as the obsessive-compulsive desire to take photos of oneself and post them on social media to make up for the lack of self-esteem and fill an intimacy gap. It further claims that APA said there are three levels of the disorder: 1) borderline, 2) acute and 3) chronic (please see below what APA says about selfitis).

A study was done by MGM medical college, Indore, India, on Selfie Syndrome among 100 Professional Students of a Cosmopolitan City of Central India revealed that around 11% of people accepted that they take selfies daily, 3% said they take selfies for attention, 31% said they had other reasons for taking selfies, self-objectification and narcissism. Overall, 29% of people have done something crazy to look nice for a selfie, 16% of people had a negative experience posting selfies on social media. It further says:

- Psychological studies conducted in 2015 suggest a relationship between selfie-posting behavior and narcissism; this link was stronger among men than women.
- Narcissists more frequently update their status and selfies, which was motivated by their need for attention and validation from the Facebook community.
- People with low self-esteem more frequently posted selfies with their romantic partners.

The Washington Post report alleges that India is the selfie death capital of the world, accounting for about 50% of the 27 selfie-related deaths worldwide in 2015. Researchers from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in 2019 found that about half of the 259 reported selfie deaths and accidents between 2011 and 2017 occurred in India. A Sion Hospital study among school students on selfie obsession showed that most selfie addicts are girls.

What APA says about Selfitis:

The selfie is a mainstay of social media. Many people spend time every day taking, perfecting and posting selfies. Given the rise in popularity of the selfie, a mental health condition of selfitis - an obsession with taking selfies - sounds like it could be real. But selfitis is not a recognized mental disorder.

- No, selfitis is not in the DSM-5, but there are plenty of real mental disorders that need and deserve treatment. (copied from APA website)

CAN SELF HANDLE IT?

Yes, you can handle it well if you take a close look at your selfie behaviour. If you think that you are obsessed or addicted to posting selfies on social media, stop posting any photos without a purpose. Stop taking selfies and even if taking them, avoid posting them on social media. Ensure that your other duties are not affected negatively by your selfie obsession.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP?

Selfie syndrome is a new term. You can seek help if you are obsessed or addicted to selfies and your selfie obsession leads to stress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety happen if you could not post your selfie or did not get enough likes and comments. Also, if you develop relationship issues e.g., You cut your connection with someone in your relationship if they criticise or didn't like or comment on your posts.

Always choose licenced and experienced practitioners.

WHAT IS THE DANGER?

The study further talks about the danger you should be aware of being on social media, as its wrong usage or attitude can cause different psychiatric problems such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, hypochondriasis, schizoaffective and schizotypal disorder, body dysmorphia, voyeurism, and addiction. Be wise enough to use social media sensibly.

Your life your choice!

It is you who decide how to live your life. The information given here can be accepted or rejected as you deem fit. OPA is meant to those who want to lead a healthy, productive and useful life.