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Can group motivational interviewing help medical students reduce their social media addiction?

Submission date
24/03/2026

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
30/03/2026

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
30/03/2026

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[X] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Social media use is used globally and is also commonly used among medical students. However, excessive overusage of social media may affect their physical and mental wellbeing and disrupt their work and relationships. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of group motivational interviewing, a group counselling approach that facilitates behavioural change, to reduce social media addiction among medical students.

Who can participate?
Year 3 medical students at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) who are currently enrolled in clinical rotation postings are invited to join this study.

What does the study involve?
Participants will be allocated by their respective clinical rotation groups. Some groups will receive group motivational interviewing and the others will receive the mini tutorial sessions on social media addiction.
Both groups received three sessions, each lasting 30 minutes to 1 hour. All sessions will be conducted in seminar rooms and are face-to-face sessions.
Participants will also be required to provide information via questionnaires about their social media usage and habits at three time points: before sessions, after sessions and two months later.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Participants may work alongside their peers to improve their awareness of their social media use and learn ways to manage it. There are minimal risks to participating. Participants are allowed to withdraw at any time and may skip any questions they do not wish to answer.

Where is the study run from?
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) (Malaysia)

When is the study starting and how is it expected to run for?
October 2024 to July 2025

Who is funding the study?
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) (Malaysia)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Leonard Lei Yik Chuan, 22010302@siswa.unimas.my

Contact information

Type(s)
Principal investigator, Scientific, Public

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Study information

Scientific Title
Efficacy of group motivational interviewing among medical students with social media addiction: a quasi-experimental open-label study

Study objectives

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 14/12/2023, Medical Research Ethics Commitee (University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Kuching, 94300, Malaysia; +60 (0)82581222; medicalethics@unimas.my), ref: FME/23/69

Primary study design
Interventional

Allocation
Non-randomized controlled trial

Masking
Open (masking not used)

Control
Active

Assignment
Parallel

Purpose
Prevention

Study type(s)

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Social media addiction among medical students

Interventions
This is a quasi-experimental, open-label study conducted among Year 3 medical students at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Participants are recruited from four sequential clinical medicine rotation groups. Allocation is performed at the group level based on rotation postings to reduce cross-contamination between groups. Two cohorts are assigned to the intervention groups and two cohorts to the control groups.

The intervention groups receive group motivational interviewing (GMI), delivered in three sessions. Each session lasts between 30 minutes and 1 hour and is conducted face-to-face in seminar rooms by a researcher trained in motivational interviewing. The intervention is based on motivational interviewing principles and the transtheoretical model of behavioural change.

The control groups receive three 1-hour mini tutorial sessions on social media addiction, delivered face-to-face by the same researcher in the same setting.

Participants are aware of their group allocation, as blinding is not feasible due to the nature of the behavioural intervention.

Outcome measures are assessed at baseline (pre-intervention), immediately post-intervention, and at 2-month follow-up.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

1. Social media addiction level measured using total score on the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) total score at baseline (pre-intervention), immediately post-intervention, and 2 month follow-up

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Motivation to improve internet addiction measured using total score on the Internet Addiction Improvement Motivation Scale (IAIMS) at baseline (pre-intervention), immediately post-intervention, and 2 month follow-up

2. Social media screen time measured using average weekly social media screen time recorded in minutes using smarpthone applications (iOS Screen Time or Android Digital Wellbeing) at baseline (pre-intervention), immediately post-intervention, and 2 month follow-up

3. Adapted Stages of Change for social media addiction measured using categorisation based on the Stages of Change Questionnaire (SCQ) into precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance at baseline (pre-intervention), immediately post-intervention, and 2 month follow-up

Completion date
10/07/2025

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Medical students with a smartphone or tablet

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
0 Days

Upper age limit
100 Days

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
126

Key exclusion criteria
1. Prior motivational interviewing training
2. Substance abuse for the past 6 months and active psychiatric or psychological treatment for any mental health conditions (e.g., social media addiction, psychotic or neurotic disorders)

Date of first enrolment

28/10/2024

Date of final enrolment
03/07/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Malaysia

Sponsor information

Organisation
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

ROR
https://ror.org/05b307002

Funder(s)

Funder type

Funder Name
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Alternative Name(s)
University of Malaysia, Sarawak

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Universities (academic only)

Location
Malaysia

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Not expected to be made available