Cell Phone Addiction at UB? A Preliminary Survey

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Introduction
Merriam Webster on line dictionary defines addiction as “a strong and harmful need to regularly have something or do something”. Humans have a need to communicate. When Antonio Meucci invented the telephone in 1849, he expanded our ability to communicate but probably did not suspect that his device would evolve to invade our consciousness and dominate our time and lives. This survey was designed to explore cell phone addiction on the UB campus.

Cell Phone Addiction Survey Results
The survey consisted of fifteen questions listed in Figure 1 with responses depicted in the graph below. 50 individuals participated in the survey by responding, yes or no, to each question. “Yes” responses suggested addiction, while “no” responses suggested non-addiction. Responses to questions 1, 2 and 10 strongly suggest addiction, whereas responses to questions 5, 6, 9, 11 and 14 strongly suggest non-addiction. Responses to the other questions were inconclusive.

Sociological and Psychological Issues
• A decrease in direct face to face conversation and an increase in indirect conversation (over the phone or online)
• Technostress: Stress cause by technology
• Cyberbullying or online bullying: mostly affecting teenagers
• Loneliness and isolation due to replacing direct person to person interaction with remote phone-based interaction.

Suspected Biological Effects of Cell Phone Addiction
Some health effects that can occur from excessive use of cell phones include:
• Light from cell phones at night can adversely affect the body’s biological clock.
• Long conversations, and continuous loud music on the phone can damage the ear, and possibly cause hearing loss, pain and/or ringing of the ear.
• Non-ionizing radiation emitted from cell phones may lead to long term health effects including, cataracts, headaches, and possibly brain tumors.
• Improper body posture while texting can cause pain, especially in the neck.

Conclusion
The rapid growth of cell phone and related technologies has created a contradictory and stressful state where near-constant connectedness has resulted in feelings of loneliness and isolation. Addiction to these technological marvels may well be eroding an essential component of our human nature – our need for interpersonal face to face communication.

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