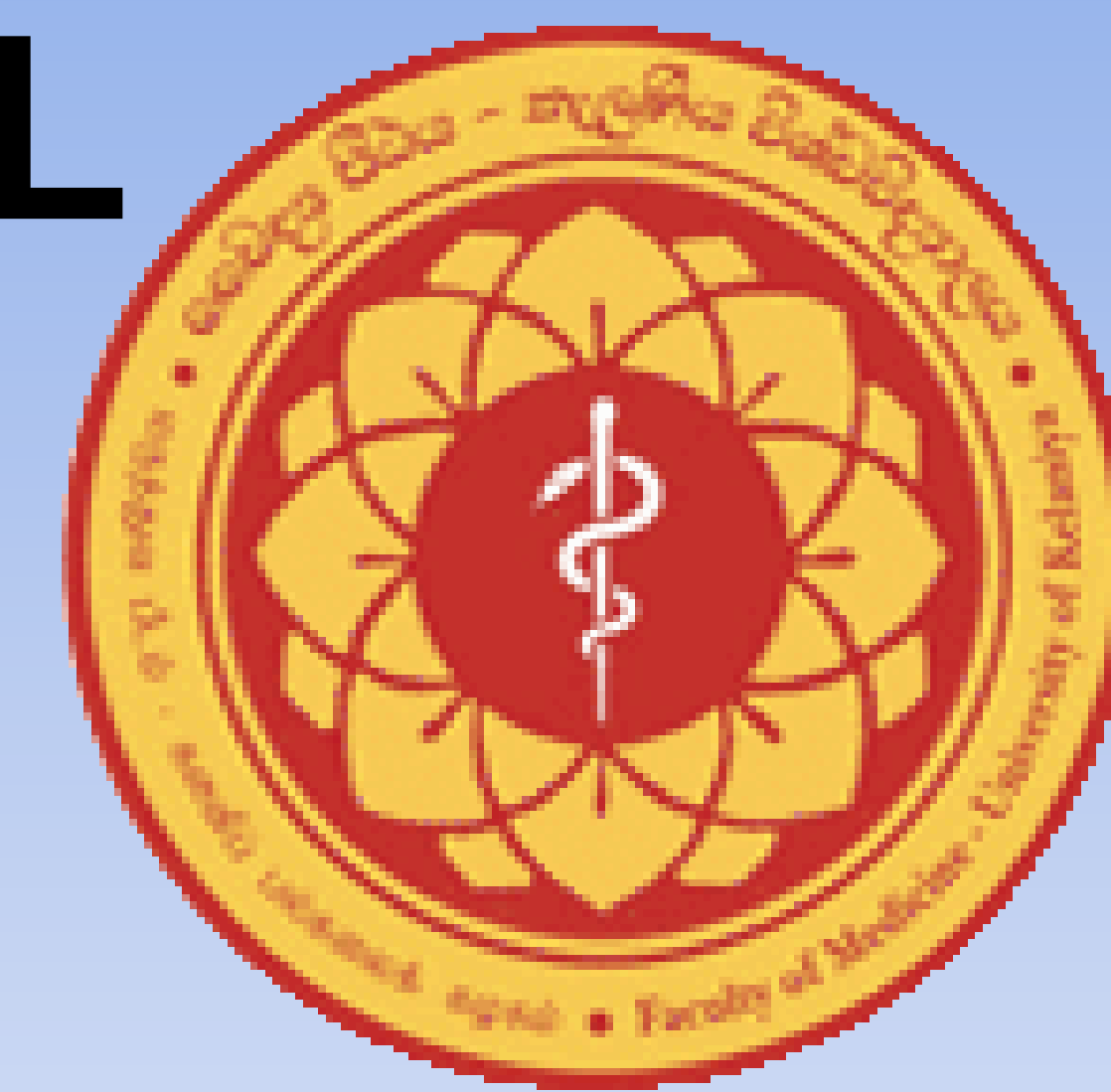# INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG MEDICAL UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKA

Group B 1.3

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Introduction

Internet is a global network providing variety of information and communication facilities. Though there are a lot of beneficial effects, excessive usage of internet has led to internet addiction. Internet addiction is a broad term and covers a wide range of behavioural and impulse control problems related to the use of Internet. There are many unfavourable mental, physical and social side effects of internet addiction. Due to availability of unlimited internet access, students are more prone to get addicted.

Objectives

To determine the prevalence and pattern of internet addiction among medical students in state universities in Sri Lanka.

Method

Study design –
Descriptive cross-sectional study
Study Setting - all state medical faculties in the country.
Study period -
From May 2019 to March 2020.
Study population –
All medical students in State Universities in Sri Lanka in 2019
Sample size –
Minimum of 384 undergraduates
Sampling technique –
A link to the online questionnaire was sent to the participants through batch representatives. Official communication was also sent to all Dean's of state medical faculties requesting them to inform the students in their faculties.
Email address of the participant was requested in the questionnaire to ensure that each student can fill only one form.
Study instruments –
An online questionnaire (in English) was developed using Google forms.
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdF46Qx2LbT5el7RGIGjB2kWtVTkChMvnjzYSkCgZ7_gXT77g/viewform?usp=sf_link
Email address, age, gender, university, academic year of the participant and 18 questions assessing internet addiction were included in the questionnaire.
Data collection - Using the online questionnaire.
Data analysis –
The internet addiction assessment has 18 questions. The response to each question has 5 alternatives: Never "0", Rarely "1", Sometimes "2", Often "3", Always "4". The scores of responses to each question were summed to obtain the total score. The level of internet addiction of a person was categorized as "=<39, Not Addicted" & "=>40, Addicted".
Internet addiction prevalence was compared by gender & academic year of study using the Chi square test.

Results

Table 1. Distribution of sample by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	275	52.4	52.4
Male	250	47.6	100
Total	525	100	
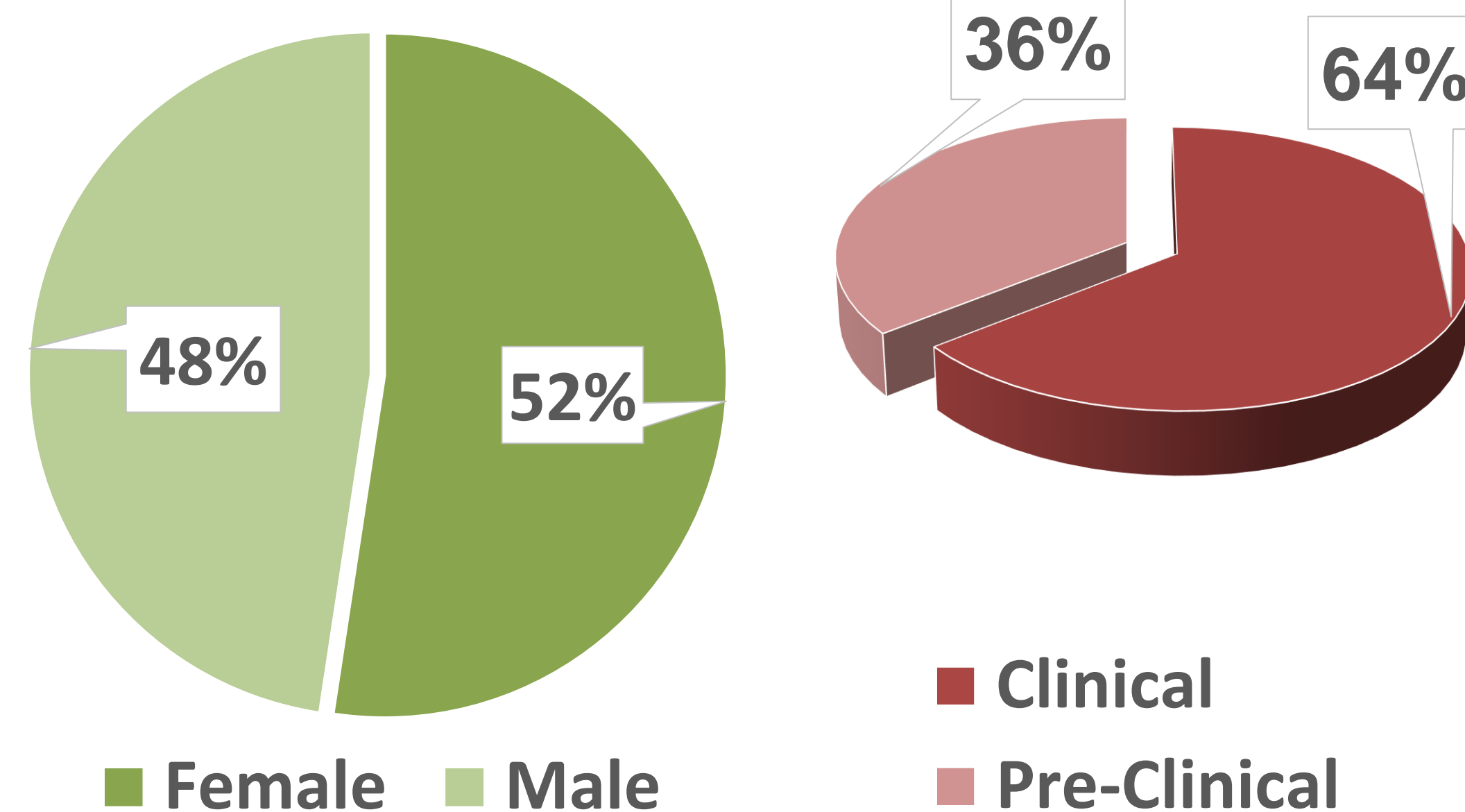
Figure 1
Participation by Gender

Figure 2
Participation by Academic year of study
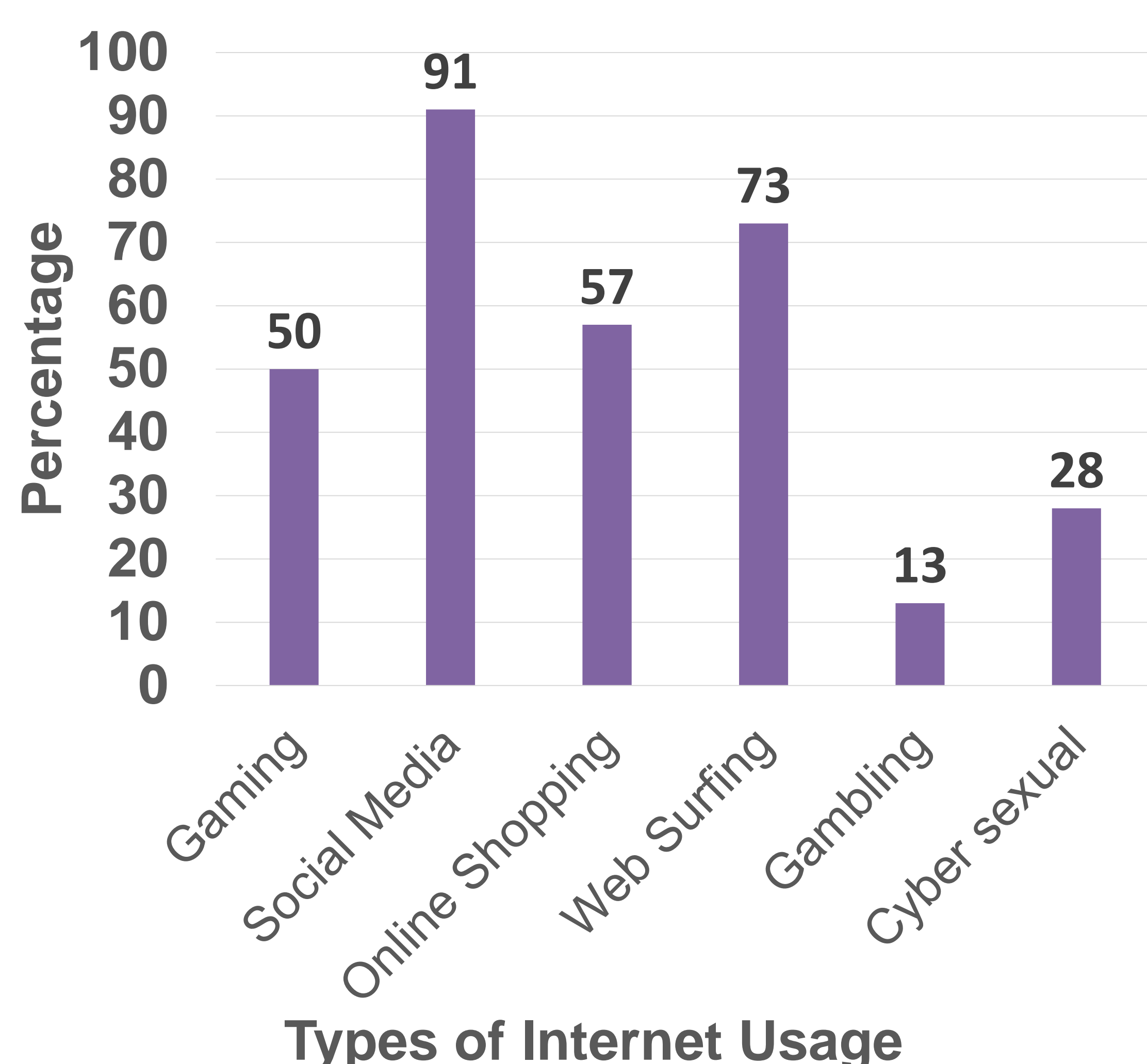
Clinical
Pre-Clinical

Figure 3
Percentage of internet usage by type

Table 2. Distribution of students by gender & internet addiction

		Internet Addiction No	Internet Addiction Yes	Total
Gender	Female	200 72.7%	75 27.3%	275 100%
	Male	139 55.6%	111 44.4%	250 100%
Total		339	186	525

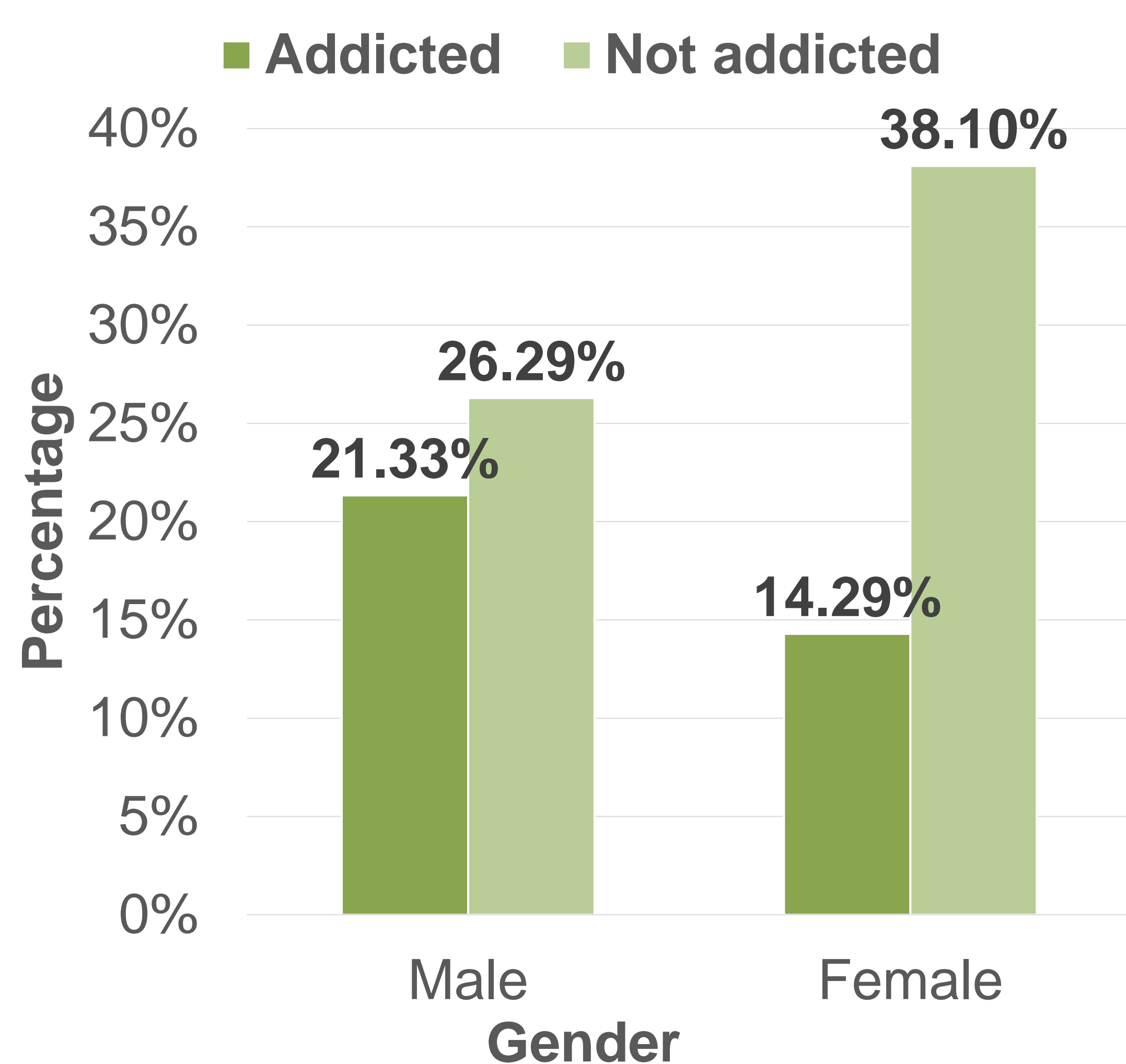|	Value	df	P- Value
Pearson Chi-Square	16.792	1	0.00004

Addicted Not addicted

Figure 4
Internet Addiction by Gender

Table 3. Distribution of students by academic year of study & internet addiction

		Internet Addiction No	Internet Addiction Yes	Total
Year of Study	Pre-Clinical	118 63.1%	69 36.9%	187 100%
	Para-Clinical	221 65.4%	117 34.6%	338 100%
Total		339	186	525

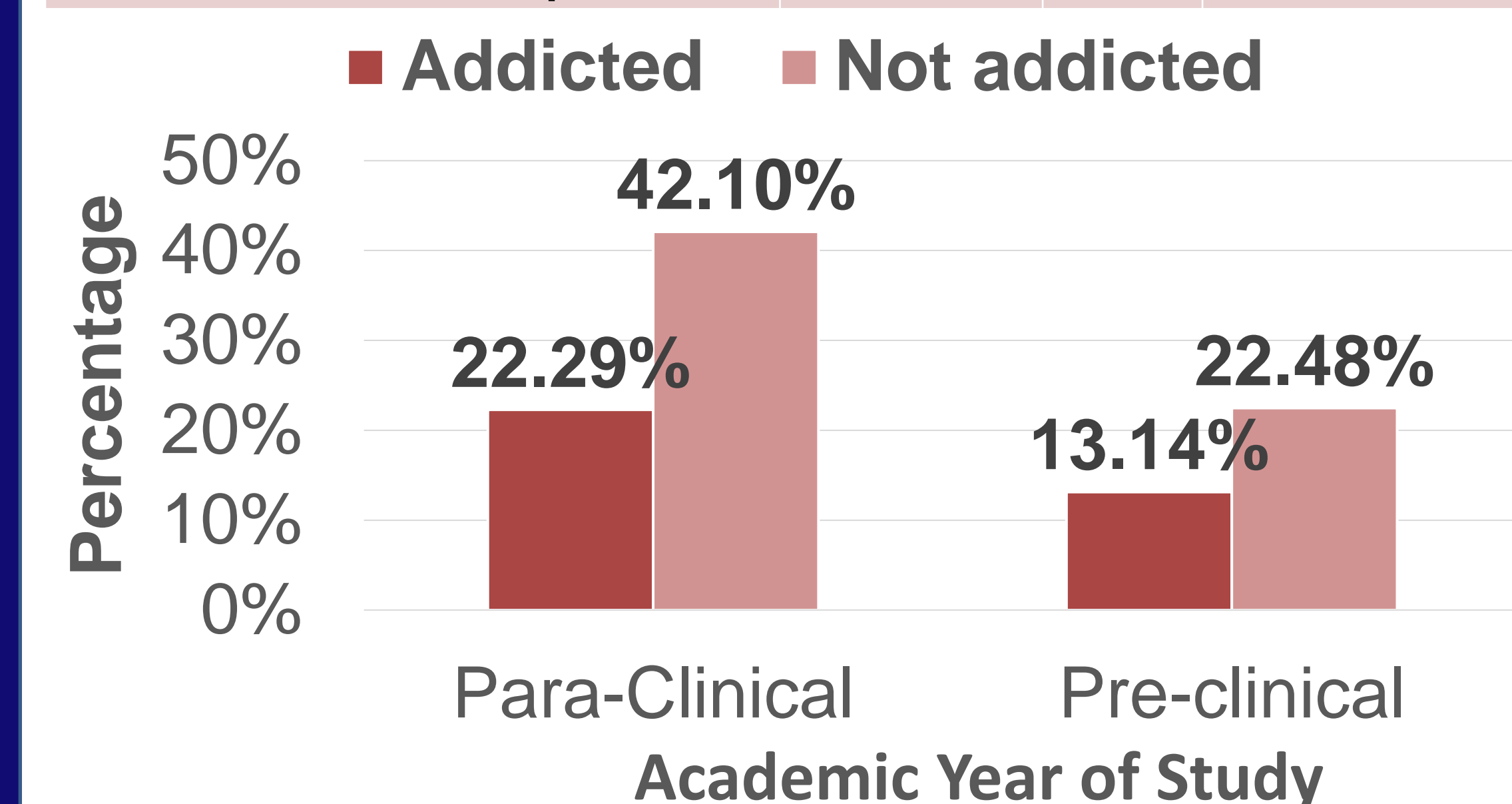|	Value	df	P- Value
Pearson Chi-Square	0.274	1	0.60066

Addicted Not addicted

Figure 5
Internet Addiction by Academic Year of Study

Conclusions

- From the sample ,the prevalence of medical undergraduates who are not addicted to internet is 64.6%
- Social media commonest channel of internet usage by medical students.
- There is an association between gender and internet addiction among medical undergraduates. 44.4% out of male participants and 27.3%of out of female participants are internet addicted.
- There is no association between academic year of study and internet addiction among medical undergraduates.

Recommendations

- Priority of the interventions should be given for male students.
- Restrictions should be made for using social media, gaming & online shopping through faculty WIFI along with introduction of filters for web surfing.

Acknowledgement

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- All the lecturers, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya

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