

Clinical Trial Protocol

Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

12 Sep 2026

The effectiveness of media literacy training in reducing dependence on media and virtual networks and improving mental health among girls and boys in first-year high schools

Protocol summary

Study aim

The effectiveness of media literacy training in reducing dependence on media and virtual networks and promoting mental health among junior high school girls and boys

Design

A randomized, parallel-group, open-label, controlled clinical trial, conducted on 60 patients. Randomization will be performed using the 'RAND' function in Microsoft Excel software.

Settings and conduct

Junior high schools in District 2, Ahvaz. After randomization, pretest is done. Experimental group gets six 90-minute media literacy sessions. Post-test immediately, follow-up after 2 months. Ethical principles and consent observed.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria: First-year students, scoring above a certain threshold on a standard media addiction questionnaire indicating suboptimal media use or addiction, having access to a smartphone, tablet, or computer. Exclusion criteria: unwillingness to participate in the study, participation in other psychotherapy sessions in the 3 months prior to the study.

Intervention groups

Intervention Group: Participants assigned to this group will receive the media literacy educational intervention. The media literacy educational package will be delivered to the experimental group over 8 sessions, each lasting 60 minutes, twice a week, for a total duration of one month. Control Group: Participants in this group will receive no intervention.

Main outcome variables

Media and Social Media Addiction, Mental Health

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20260329069017N1**

Registration date: **2026-07-16, 1405/04/25**

Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2026-07-16, 1405/04/25**

Update count: **0**

Registration date

2026-07-16, 1405/04/25

Registrant information

Name

Shirin Valipour chahardah cherik

Name of organization / entity

Country

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Phone

+98 61 3443 9610

Email address

shyrynwlypwr@gmail.com

Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2026-08-01, 1405/05/10

Expected recruitment end date

2026-08-16, 1405/05/25

Actual recruitment start date

empty

Actual recruitment end date

empty

Trial completion date

empty

Scientific title

The effectiveness of media literacy training in reducing dependence on media and virtual networks and improving mental health among girls and boys in first-year high schools

Public title

The effectiveness of media literacy training on mental health and media consumption patterns in students

Purpose

Education/Guidance

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:

Junior high school students Students between the ages of 12 and 15 Having access to a smartphone, tablet, or computer Scoring above a certain threshold on a standardized media addiction questionnaire indicating suboptimal media use or addiction

Exclusion criteria:

Unwillingness to participate in research Participation in other psychotherapy sessions within 3 months prior to the study

Age

From **12 years** old to **15 years** old

Gender

Both

Phase

N/A

Groups that have been masked

No information

Sample size

Target sample size: **60**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)

Randomized

Randomization description

The statistical population of the study will include all male and female students in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades of public day schools during the specified time period for the study. Initially, a multi-stage cluster sampling method will be used to select schools, so that one or two districts are randomly selected from among the education districts. Several schools (to cover both sexes) are randomly selected from the junior high schools in those districts. Then, one or two classes will be randomly selected from each selected school. In the sample selection stage, a convenience sampling method will be used. After selecting samples of 60 people based on the study's entry and exit criteria, participants will be randomly assigned to two groups: "media literacy education" (intervention group) and "waiting list" (control group). Randomization will be performed using random blocks with variable sizes (4 and 6 people) by an independent statistician who is not involved in the implementation process. The random assignment list is generated using the RAND function in Excel and then placed in opaque, sealed, numbered envelopes so that the researcher and participants are not aware of the sequence of allocation (allocation concealment). The envelope will be opened and the allocation group will be informed only at the time of each participant's entry into the study. To ensure equality of baseline variables (e.g., dependency level, age), their distribution in the two

groups will be examined during the statistical analysis phase.

Blinding (investigator's opinion)

Not blinded

Blinding description

Placebo

Not used

Assignment

Parallel

Other design features

Secondary Ids

empty

Ethics committees

1

Ethics committee

Name of ethics committee

Ethics Committee of Islamic Azad University of Yasooj
Branch

Street address

4th km of Si Sakht Road

City

Yasooj

Province

Khouzestan

Postal code

7591493686

Approval date

2026-04-19, 1405/01/30

Ethics committee reference number

IR.IAU.YASOOJ.REC.1405.001

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied

Media and Social Media Dependency

ICD-10 code

Z55

ICD-10 code description

Problems related to education and literacy

Primary outcomes

1

Description

Dependence on media and virtual networks

Timepoint

1. Pre-test (before the start of the intervention) 2. Post-test (immediately after the end of the intervention period) 3. One-month follow-up after the intervention

Method of measurement

The measurement method will be Young's (1998) Internet Addiction Scale.

2

Description

Health promotion

Timepoint

1. Pre-test (before the start of the intervention) 2. Post-test (immediately after the end of the intervention period) 3. One-month follow-up after the intervention

Method of measurement

The measurement method will be by Goldberg's (1972) General Health Questionnaire.

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention group: Intervention group: Duration of each session: 90 minutes; Total number of sessions: 8 sessions; Sequence of sessions: twice a week; Educational tools used: This intervention relies heavily on improving cognitive abilities and self-regulation skills in the digital space. The main educational tools include: guided group discussions; content analysis exercises; critical thinking exercises; time management exercises and digital self-monitoring. The content of the different sessions is based on the following: Session 1: Administering a pre-test, explaining the basic concepts of media literacy, and understanding the relationship between media consumption and mental health; Session 2: Participants are asked to try to identify behavioral patterns and their level of dependence on social networks; Session 3: Using the skill of analyzing media messages and using techniques to detect fake news and the credibility of sources; Session 4: Using critical thinking techniques to analyze ideal images in the media and how to deal with harmful social comparisons; Fifth session: This session will cover time management techniques and the use of self-monitoring tools to reduce the hours spent using cyberspace; Sixth session: This session will examine the pathology of factors that cause dependence, anxiety, and addictive behaviors in cyberspace; Seventh session: Teaching methods for dealing with digital stressors (such as cyberbullying) and using relaxation and self-care techniques; Eighth session: Summarizing the sessions, providing final suggestions for maintaining healthy behaviors in the media space, and finally administering the post-test and setting a specific time for administering the follow-up test.

Category

Treatment - Other

2

Description

Control group: The control group will not receive any intervention during the research, but will receive the intervention after data collection to prevent factors that threaten the internal validity of the research, such as

compensatory competition from the control group or demoralization.

Category

Treatment - Other

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center

Ahvaz Education Department Consulting Center

Full name of responsible person

Shirin Valipour Chahardah Cherik

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next to Shohada High School, Fatemi Boulevard, Saat Square

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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity

Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person

Sirus Salehnasab

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Grant name

Grant code / Reference number

Is the source of funding the same sponsor organization/entity?

Yes

Title of funding source

Islamic Azad University

Proportion provided by this source

100

Public or private sector

Public

Domestic or foreign origin

Domestic

Category of foreign source of funding

empty

Country of origin**Type of organization providing the funding**

Academic

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Person responsible for general inquiries**Contact****Name of organization / entity**

Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person

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Position

Master's student

Latest degree

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Latest degree

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Other areas of specialty/work

Psychology

Street address

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City

Ahvaz

Province

Khouzestan

Sharing plan**Deidentified Individual Participant Data Set (IPD)**

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Study Protocol

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Statistical Analysis Plan

Not applicable

Informed Consent Form

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Analytic Code

Not applicable

Data Dictionary

Not applicable