

Phantom vibration syndrome: A severe threat to modern civilization

Abhisek Bardhan

Student of Psychology, Singhania University
Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India
Email: abhisekbardhan18@gmail.com

Abstract: Phantom vibration syndrome (PVS) refers to the delusion that a smartphone or any other digital gadget has vibrated. It is the wrong perception of a mobile phone or technological device are vibrating when it is not, caused by the brains misinterpreting sensory signal due to excessive use of mobile device. It is a widespread phenomenon that can cause a havoc damage in perceptual identity formation and various kind of mental disorders like anxiety, feeling of burning out - missing out something, leading to the damage of societal relationship. It is most often associated with the smart phones. It is one kind of sensory hallucination caused by the brain of excessive use of smartphones.

Phantom vibration syndrome is a psychological reaction of and excessive smartphone dependency, which is called no mobile phobia or nomo phobia. It has been described as a tactile hallucination as the brain perceives the vibration which is not at all.

Keywords: Phantom Vibration Syndrome, nomophobia, stress, smart phone, psychological disorder.

History: Cartoonist Scot Adam coined the term " Phantom Pager Syndrome" in 1996 in his comic. The term Phantom Vibration Syndrome was termed in 2003 by an American Columnist Robert D Jones. The first study regarding Phantom Vibration Syndrome was conducted in 2007 by a Australian researcher and termed the term " Ringxiety ".

Introduction:

Current decade has seen a significant change in technological advancement which leads to betterment and prosperity of our lifestyle. Among the mostly used gadgets, smart phone is one of it. It is like a personal diary, e-mail, calculator, web browser, video game player, camera etc. It is observed that Indian market has emerged as the second largest market after China for cell phone users.

So, smart phone is used randomly in Indian subcontinent. An American study has shown that most of the under graduate students are accustomed to use mobile phone on a regular basis which leads to developed a syndrome called Phantom Vibration Syndrome. It is assumed that over involvement with one's cell phone as smart phone dependence is associated with occurrence of Phantom phone signal. It is typically begin after carrying a phone for between one month to one year.

With the continuous use of smart phone, one can associate with PVS and no mobile phobia or nomophobia. It is a sensory hallucination which doesn't actually exist. But pseudo vibration is registered in cerebral cortex fo4 which someone using his phone randomly feel of sudden vibration while he is in an action. It is very critical that there is not significant contribution is made in this field. However, in most of the cases, this pseudo-sensation can lead to psycho-social problems.

It is also noted that no specific groups have been identified as having a greater

prevalence of Phantom Vibration Syndrome (PVS). Anyone who has a smart phone of his could technologically develop PVS. This PVS mainly shows sign of itself who owns a smart phone and uses it generally 20 times a day continuously, from one month to one year. It is often named as "ringxiety," i.e., ringing and anxiety.

Cause: The origin of PVS is unknown. It has been hypothesized as a misinterpretation by the cerebral cortex due to large number of sensory stimuli continuously received by the brain." Continuously received" means an over-involvement with the smart phone. Sometimes the frequencies of using of one smartphone makes one prone to other psychological disorders as discussed.

It may be considered a psychological-driven problem concerning human brain signalling. This may be understood as a human signal detection issue with potentially significant influences from psychological attributes. Factors such as experiences, expectations and psychological states influence the threshold of signal detection. Attachment anxiety can also be seen as a predictor for the frequency of Phantom Vibration experiences since it is associated with psychological attributes and interpersonal relationships.

It has been observed from the studies that Mobile phone users experiences PVS with reported rates ranging from 29.6% to 89%, which is very alarming and may be developed " symptoms" instead of syndrome. Once every two weeks is a typical frequency from the sensation, though a question of the mobile user experience them daily.

Clinical feature:

No specific feature of PVS has been identified. However, some psycho-social symptoms such as:

1. Anxiety
2. Over vigilance
3. Psychological stress
4. Emotional disturbance
5. Unnecessary agitation
6. Concentration problem
7. Depression
8. Irritability
9. Social isolation

It is seen that excessive use of smart phone can break societal bonds and worsening mental health condition on a regular basis. It is also troublesome for a person continuing to actively participate in their daily works and gets affected.

Diagnosis: PVS can be diagnosed by thorough clinical history. The process begins with the interview conducted by a medical expert in order to collect data about the individual's one encounters. It is also noted that there is not sufficient amount of researcher who can go ahead and make an extensive research in this field. In fact some of the medical professionals could not treat PVS as any kind of syndrome.

PVS is not a medically diagnosed condition but as recognised as a common phenomenon so it does not have a formal diagnosis, instead it's presence is confirmed by self reporting symptoms like feeling a phone vibrate when it is not, a behaviour that is often linked to excessive phone use, stress and anxiety. You can confirm your own experience by noting how often you check for false alerts, as this is the primary symptoms and a good indicator of its presence.

Symptoms to Look For—

1. False alerts — The most direct symptom is the sensation of your phone is vibrating or ringing when it is not.
2. Checking Behaviour — Constantly checking your phone for this false alert is a key indicator.
3. Anxiety and Stress — The syndrome is often associated with psychological factors like anxiety, stress and over vigilance.
4. Irritation — Some people experience irritation or frustration due to the disruption of their focus.

How to Confirm the Phenomenon—

1. Since it is not a medical condition, there are medical tests for diagnosis.
2. Self observation is the only method. Pay attention to how often you feel your phone vibrating when it is actually not.
3. Compare your experience to the common symptoms of Phantom Vibration Syndrome. If you frequently check your phone only to find it inert, you are experiencing the phenomenon.

Little research has been done on diagnosis on Phantom Vibration Syndrome. Though some measures can reduce this continuous sensation as perceived by the smart phone user.

Treatment of PVS: As of now, no such specific treatment is available for PVS. But the following may be given a better result for PVS –

- 1.Reducing time spent on mobile phone
- 2.Carrying the device in a different pocket
3. Turning off the vibration
4. Changing the ringtone
5. Using a different device all together
6. Counselling Process

Conclusion: PVS is a growing nuisance in our technology-driven society, which brings bad effects, especially as mobile phone dependence might lead to psychological dependence on mobile that develops PVS. It is a growing nuisance which can fatally or potentially a threat of damaging our younger generation, learners. It has been observed the indirect impact of phantom vibration syndrome. So an extensive and rigorous campaign may be propagated basically in school, college. PVS is a explicit to show its results. So we should very cautious to use the frequent use of smartphones.

It is observed from the study of the following —

1. Link to Mobile Phone Use— Studies consistently show a strong connection between PVS and high Mobile phone usage especially when vibration mod eis enabled.
2. Indicator of Potential Issue— PVS can be a sign of greater smart phone dependency and may be associated with emotional and psychological issue such as anxiety and stress.
3. Neuroplasticity— The phenomenon is explained by the brains' neuroplasticity, it becomes weird to expect the sensation of vibration due to frequent phone use, creating a false sensory perception
4. Common Factors— Carrying the phone in a pocket or direct contact is a common factor as is frequent use particularly at night.

5. Need for more Research — More studies are needed to fully understand the underlying mechanism and to develop effective and Evidence based treatment are severe.

References

- Yu-Hsuan Lin, Phantom hallucination, published 19/01/2013.
- Cholz M. Mobile phone addiction in adolescence – test of mobile phone dependence, Progress in Health Science, 01/06/2012.
- Dixit S., Shukla H. et al. A study to evaluate mobile phone dependence among students of a medical college, Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine, 2010 April.
- Young K.S. Internet addiction, American Behavioural Scientist, 2004 December.
- Kang C. et al. Mobile communication for human needs, Computers in Human Behaviour, 2014 February.
- Arora A., Herman J. and et al. PVS among medical staff, 2016 December.
- King A.L., Valenca A.M. et al. Nomophobia, Cognitive Neurology, 01/03/2010.
- Wu YY get al. Digit Health ,2023
- Liu N et al. From public health,2024
- Moon JH.et al. Clinical Experiment Pediatr,2020
- Kwon Met al. PLoS One ,2013
- Awasthi S et al. Family Med Prim Care.2020