



Psychological Alienation Related to Problematic Internet Use In Married Female Students

Dhifaf A. Jasim Al-Maswdy¹ ; Safi Dakhil Nawam²

¹ Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing Department, College of Nursing, University of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq.

² Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing Department, College of Nursing, University of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq.

ABSTRACT

Objectives: This is from the most important study in Iraq that investigates the psychological alienation related to problematic internet use in married female students.

Methodology: The descriptive correlational study design is carried out by questioning individuals of the research population to describe the phenomena simply in terms of its type and degree of existence. Asking study participants about their problematic internet use, level of psychological alienation and emotional divorce, and how the descriptive approach is used. Since the problem of the study is related to the present, and its study will be done through direct asking, as well as this study aims to stop at the limit of description and correlation between study variables (problematic internet use vs. level of psychological alienation and emotional divorce). This study started from 10th November 2022 to 20th December 2023. and was approved by the council of the College of Nursing before the initiation of the study and distribution of the questionnaires to be completed by the sample, the targeted setting (Kerbala University).

Results: the results show that there is a positive correlation between problematic internet use and psychological alienation. This indicates that the greater the use of the Internet, the greater the percentage of psychological alienation among the sample of women who underwent the research.

Conclusion: This study aimed to bridge this gap by providing a more comprehensive overall picture of this issue through a quantitative synthesis. more than half of students who have met to some extent of problematic internet use have an average level of psychological alienation among married female students.

Keywords: problematic internet use; psychological alienation.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, we are witnessing many major changes and transformations in all areas of life, all of which affect an individual's personality. The behavior and activities of individuals are influenced by personality variables. As a result, people are more likely to reach their full potential to achieve their goals and bring meaning and value to their lives. Happiness and success are most likely to be achieved by those

who can give and go above and beyond. (Almomani & Theeb ,2016).

With the rapid digitization of our age, the use of social media is increasing both in our country and around the world (Ersöz & Kahraman, 2020; Singh et al., 2020). According to the Digital 2021: Global Overview report, time spent on social media has increased 1.5 times over the past 5 years. The most

used social networks are: Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Messenger, Instagram, WeChat, and TikTok (DataReportal, 2021)

On the other hand, the problems faced by modern society, whether economic, occupational, or social, can affect the individual's abilities and personal abilities due to psychological problems, leading to feelings of alienation or isolation from others, which in turn create a sense of social identity. Anxiety is due to a withdrawn person experiencing psychological loneliness. It is believed that psychological, social, and personal difficulties arise as social living conditions become more complex. (Almomani & Theeb, 2016).

Problematic Internet use is excessive and/or inappropriate use of the Internet that may lead to psychological, social, academic, and/or occupational problems (Laconi et al., 2019).

psychological alienation is detachment from self or others: detachment, low self-esteem, and lack of belonging are the result of psychological distress and a lack of social-moral standards, it is also related to a feeling of not belonging to a community and an inability to agree, either for oneself or for others (Al-Dreesawy, Al-Salmi & Ajil, 2020). The development of the Internet has revolutionized the spread of information across the globe. Although the physical act of browsing the Internet could be largely solitary, the highly interactive nature of the Internet has created a virtual world-wide community. In this community, people engage in a wide variety of online activities ranging from the exchange of information or ideas, socializing, and gaming, to more controversial activities like erotic interactions, gambling, and so on. The ease of accessibility of the Internet and the vast amount of activities have engaged a huge population, making the Internet a highly reinforcing and potentially addictive medium. The emergence of smartphones and tablet computers has further complicated the scenario. The round-the-clock availability of these mobile devices has blurred the boundary of Internet usage and it can be difficult for

users to define when they are "logged in" to the Internet (Wallace, 2014a).

Mobile devices with Internet connectivity have become part of modern life (Hinić, 2011) and resulted in a large increase in online activities.

Problematic Internet use has a potentially huge impact on individuals' well-being (Young, 1998a).

Problematic Internet use can create social disturbances as well as clinical issues, leading problematic users to experience academic, relational, financial, and occupational impairment as well as physical health problems in daily life. Despite all these consequences, whether or not problematic Internet use should be classified as a unidimensional psychiatric diagnosis is still being debated, given that Internet use is currently an umbrella term encapsulating a wide range of heterogeneous behaviors. So far, the only related disorder included by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V) is Internet gaming disorder, which has been identified as a potential pathological condition (that is, a condition requiring further study). Other pathological uses of the Internet fall into various diagnostic categories, such as sexual dysfunction and gambling disorder, based on the nature of the resulting behavior. Nonetheless, there seem to be generic factors underlying the diversity of problematic Internet behaviors. Laconi et al. (2014) review 45 assessment tools relating to problematic Internet use or addiction. Despite discrepancies in the definition and factor structures of these tools, two common factors emerged, namely negative outcomes and compulsive use (Wallace, 2014b)

These two factors align closely with recent neurological studies showing that excessive Internet use shares similar neurobiological mechanisms with substance, psychological alienation and behavioral addiction (Yuan et al., 2011), Which might in turn be related to dysfunctional impulse control (Shapira et al., 2000; Cao et al., 2007).

A more generic approach to understanding problematic Internet use across a wide range of online activities is to study the underlying motivations of users. Several researchers suggest that problematic Internet use stems from unmet real-life needs and that it is a way to relieve the problems encountered in daily life (Young, 1998a; Chak and Leung, 2004; Song et al., 2004).

The Internet offers a highly accessible and immediate medium for users to satisfy such unmet needs (Wan and Chiou, 2006a).

Concerning self-determination theory, needs can be grouped into three major types; relatedness, competence, and autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Relatedness refers to a desirable attachment to others involving love and care; competence denotes satisfying a sense of mastery, and autonomy refers to gaining satisfaction from one's own choices and decisions and their enactment in a way that is coherent with one's integrated sense of self. All three types of needs are instrumental in explaining the motivational components of individual behaviors in educational, healthcare, psychotherapeutic, and sporting settings. They are also instrumental in explaining Internet usage (Chen and Jang, 2010; Barnes and Pressey, 2011; Zhao et al., 2011; Wang, 2014).

For instance, engagement in online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter can provide individuals with a sense of relatedness and autonomy by enabling them to connect with other people in a controlled manner (Wan and Chiou, 2006a; Sheldon et al., 2011; Nadkarni and Hofmann, 2012; Seidman, 2012). Participating in online gaming, on the other hand, could satisfy all three types of needs via an intense interaction with other players (relatedness) to completing quests and achieving levels (competence), all through one's own choices and decisions (autonomy; Kandell, 1998; Yee, 2006; Hsu et al., 2009).

In general, the Internet has provided users with an immediate and easily accessible means to seek satisfaction and empowered them to control the way they present themselves regardless of their true identity or physical characteristics. It has thus become a very reinforcing stimulus. The relationship between the satisfaction of needs and problematic Internet use can be further corroborated by the presence of psychological distress. In this context, psychological distress can be defined as general emotional disturbance related to negative mood (lonely), anxiety, and stress that most individuals will experience across their lifespan. Epidemiological studies show high levels of comorbidity between problematic Internet use and mood/anxiety disorders (Shaw and Black, 2006), and a positive correlation between psychological distress and severity of problematic Internet use (Young and Rogers, 1998; Caplan, 2002; Chak and Leung, 2004; Yuen and Lavin, 2004; Ebeling-Witte et al., 2007; Ceyhan and Ceyhan, 2008; Yeh et al., 2008).

Davis's (2001) cognitive-behavioral model proposes that psychological distress, such as depression and anxiety, is an essential and significant catalyst of problematic Internet use. The psychological distress either develops from Internet use or exists long before this behavior is established, and can result from unmet needs (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

For example, psychological distress can be associated with needs that are unmet as a result of shyness-induced social difficulties (Chak and Leung, 2004; Yuen and Lavin, 2004; Ebeling-Witte et al., 2007).

Online communication provides shy individuals with a safety zone that enables them to avoid face-to-face interpersonal communication, freeing them from the negative and undesirable feelings associated with it. Individuals with poor offline social relationships seek compensation from online interactions (Bessière et al., 2008). These individuals therefore may come to depend on the Internet to connect with others to

satisfy their need for relatedness, potentially leading to excessive use (Chak and Leung, 2004; Ebeling-Witte et al., 2007).

The examines generic motivation factors leading to problematic Internet use. Generic motivation factors are used since the Internet has become an everyday tool for satisfying a wide range of human needs, and self-determination theory has also been shown to be useful in explaining Internet behaviors. It remains unclear how well self-determination theory explains the motivational components of problematic Internet use, and whether psychological distress acts as an essential catalyst in its development. We hypothesize that psychological distress acts as a mediator in developing behavioral patterns of excessive Internet use. On this basis, we propose a theoretical model in which problematic Internet use is fully mediated by psychological distress and originates from unfulfilled basic psychological needs while the direct path from basic needs to problematic Internet use is expected to be non-significant. We recruited University students to test our model because they are among the heaviest users of the Internet and we expected a relatively high proportion of problematic users. In addition, the identity change that one undergoes in early adulthood poses a significant risk for psychological distress. Students are accordingly a suitable population on which to test our theoretical model (Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, 2000; Widyanto and Griffiths, 2006; Yen et al., 2009).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Study Design

This descriptive correlational design is used to establish the strength and direction of relationships between or among problematic internet use and psychological alienation for married female students at the University of Kerbela, Iraq.

Participants and Sampling

In total, a simple random sampling of 132 married female students participated in the study. The majority of. The participant's mean age is 24.1 ± 3.92 . More than participant study type is morning 61.4%. evening 38.6%. number of children the participants have more of them have 1-2 children are 50 %.

The sample of the study was non-probability, a convenient sample of 143 students at the University of Kerbala. Inclusion Criteria: The female married students in each college of the University of Kerbala Students taken first. Second, third, and fourth stages. The exclusion criteria were Students who refused to participate in the study, a Pilot study sample, and male students

Study Setting

Setting of the study was conducted at Kerbala University which it's a government university located in the Kerbala province, it consisted of: the School of Law Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Administration and Economics, Faculty of Dentistry, College of Applied Medical Sciences, College of Nursing, College of Islamic Sciences, College of Tourism Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy, College of Engineering, College of Nursing, Faculty of Physical Education, Faculty of Agriculture, College of Education for Humanities, College of Education for Pure Sciences, College of Science, finally College of Veterinary Medicine which the researcher take the sample of the study from it.

Study Tool:

The instrument problematic internet use scale (Al-Sarayra, 2001), this scale composed of 18 items, that reflect the nature of the individual's level of problematic internet use. Using a 5-point Likert scale format, all items are answered, ranging from Always to Never. (Always=5, often=4, sometimes=3, rarely=2, never=1) for the positive score items; while the negative items give reverse scores as follows: (Always=1, often=2, sometimes=3, rarely=4,

never=5). overall score (possible range 18-90), Mild at sum of score)18- 41), Moderate at sum of score (42 - 65), Severe at sum of score (66 -90), cut off point=24. Part III This part contains the psychological alienation scale (Abu Raya, 2010) which consists of 35 items. The scale consists of two subscales psychological alienation and academic alienation. Using a 5-point Likert scale format, all items are answered, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. (Strongly agree= 5, agree=4, neutral= 3, disagree= 2, and strongly disagree= 1). The total score for psychological alienation ranges from (35_175). Mild at the sum of the score (35 - 81), Moderate at the sum of the score (82-128), Severe at the sum of the score (129 - 175), cut off point= 46.

Instrument Validity:

the researcher doing the Validity of the instrument to make the instruments more valid using the content and face validity method, it was presented to a panel of (9) experts who had more than ten years' experience in their field. They were (2) faculty members from the College of Nursing/ University of Baghdad, (3) faculty members from the College of Nursing/ University of Karbala, (2) faculty members from college nursing/university of Kufa, (1) faculty member from college nursing/university of Babylon and (1) faculty member from College of Nursing/ University of Kut for validity of scales, translation and back-translation have been applied. The translation validity of the questionnaire was estimated by forward and backward translation and also exposed to experts to validate it. Some additions were made to the questionnaire based on the opinions of experts in the part related to socio-demographics. Experts' suggestions have been made and the instrument and some sentences have been redesigned to be clearer. In part (I) the socio-demographic data, add the level of education for the husband. and other linguistic and grammatical changes were made to each part of the research tool to suit the sample and place of the study.

Pilot Study:

A Pilot study was performed using a convenient sample of (30) students who are studying at Kerbala University. A pilot study was conducted from;28 February 2023 to 7 March 2023. The pilot sample is excluded from the original study sample.

The pilot study was conducted for:

- To evaluate the questionnaire content clarity, relevancy, and adequacy throughout the subject understanding and to determine the required modifications.
- To examine the cooperation of the study sample.
- To identify barriers that may be encountered through the study process.
- To consider the estimated time for data collection and show how much time is required to fill out the questionnaire.
- To determine the reliability and validity of the study instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

It refers to the extent to which a questionnaire reports the same results on repeated time measures. Briefly, it refers to consistent scores over time or raters. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the computation of Alpha Cronbach's test (Alpha Correlation Coefficient); the internal consistency method was used for determining the reliability. The Alpha Correlation Coefficient was applied to determine the reliability of the present study instrument by application of Statistical Package for Social Science Program (IBM SPSS) version 26.0. The result of the reliability of the questionnaire (Table: 3-1) was statistically very good, meaning that the questionnaires had an adequate level of internal consistency and equivalence measurability.

Results of the pilot study:

1. The questionnaire is reliable (Table 3-1).
2. The time required for answering the questionnaire ranged from (15- 20) minutes.
3. The instrument items clarified and understood the phenomenon underlying the study.

Table (3-1): Reliability Analysis of the Instruments (N= 30)

Scale	No. of items	Standard lower bound	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Assessment
Problematic internet use	18	0.70	0.784	Good
Psychological alienation	35	0.70	0.838	V. Good

RESULTS

Table (1): Distribution of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Married Female Students (n=132)

Demographic data	Rating and Intervals	Frequency	Percentage
Student age (Years)	18 - 22	59	44.7
	23 - 27	52	39.4
	28 - 32	15	11.4
	33 - 37	4	3.0
	38 and more	2	1.5
	Total	132	100.0
	Mean ± SD	24.1±3.92	
Study Type	Morning	81	61.4
	Evening	51	38.6
	Total	132	100.0
How many children do you have?	0	53	40.2
	1- 2	66	50.0
	3 and more	13	9.8
	Total	132	100.0
Husband age (Years)	18 - 22	6	4.5
	23- 27	52	39.4
	28 - 32	45	34.1
	33- 37	18	13.6
	38 - 42	6	4.5
	43 and more	5	3.8
	Total	132	100.0
	Mean ± SD	29.25±5.59	
Demographic data	Rating and Intervals	Frequency	Percentage
Marriage Duration	<= 1	38	28.8
	2 - 6	71	53.8
	7 - 11	15	11.4
	12 - 16	7	5.3
	22+	1	.8
	Total	132	100.0
Husband's level of education	unable to read and write	4	3.0
	elementary	15	11.4
	Middle	20	15.2
	high school	18	13.6
	bachelors	69	52.3
	high education	6	4.5

	Total	132	100.0
Family type	Couple and children	69	52.3
	Couple and husband's family	63	47.7
	Total	132	100.0
Monthly Income	Enough	90	68.2
	Not Enough	10	7.6
	Somewhat enough	32	24.2
	Total	132	100.0
Residency	rural	37	28.0
	urban	95	72.0
	Total	132	100.0
Residency Type	Own	109	82.6
	rent	20	15.2
	Random	3	2.3
	Total	132	100.0
Demographic data	Rating and Intervals	Frequency	Percentage
Time of uses	Day	21	15.9
	Night	49	37.1
	day and night	62	47.0
	Total	132	100.0
Number of hours use	<= 3.00	64	48.5
	4.00 - 6.00	48	36.4
	7.00 - 9.00	5	3.8
	10.00 - 12.00	8	6.1
	13.00+	7	5.3
	Total	132	100.0
Most Application Using	Instagram	55	41.7
	WhatsApp	30	22.7
	Facebook	29	22.0
	TikTok	3	2.3
	Telegram	12	9.1
	YouTube	3	2.3
	Total	132	100.0

This table shows that (44.7%) of participants aged (18 - 22 years old). According to study type (61.4%) of them from morning study. Regarding the number of children, (50%) of them had (1 to 2) children. About the age of the husband, 39.4% of their husbands were recorded in this age group) 23- 27(. Regarding the duration of marriage (53.8%) of them were married for (2-6) years. According to the husband's education level, (52.3%) of them had a bachelor's degree. Concerning the Family type, Couples and children record at (52.3%). Related to Monthly Income, (68.2%) of them said is enough. Regarding Residency, the majority of the sample lived in urban areas (72%). Regarding residency type, the most of study sample have Own (82.6%). Regarding time of use, the record (47%) of them uses the Internet Day and night. Less than half of the sample (48.5%) uses the Internet for 3 hours or less. Instagram was the most used application program by students) 41.7 %).

Table (2): Overall Assessment of Problematic Internet Use

Problematic Internet Use Levels	Frequency	Percentage	The overall sum of the score	Overall assessment
Mild	32	24.2	49.0	Moderate
Moderate	93	70.5		
Severe	7	5.3		
Total	132	100.0		

Mild at the sum of scores (18- 41), Moderate at the sum of the score (42 - 65), Severe at the sum of the score (66 -90), cut-off point=24.

This table shows that the overall assessment of problematic internet use is moderate at the sum of score = 49.0.

Table (3): Overall Assessment of Psychological Alienation

Psychological Alienation Levels	Frequency	Percentage	The overall sum of the score	Overall assessment
Mild	4	3.0	113.78	Moderate
Moderate	97	73.5		
Severe	31	23.5		
Total	132	100.0		

Mild at the sum of score (35 - 81), Moderate at the sum of the score (82-128), Severe at the sum of the score (129 - 175), cut off point=46.

This table shows that the overall assessment of psychological alienation is Moderate at the sum of score = 113.78.

Table (4): The Correlation between problematic Internet use and psychological alienation.

Correlation		Problematic Internet Use	Psychological Alienation	Emotional Divorce
Problematic Internet Use	Pearson Correlation	1	.225**	-.022
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.010	.805
	N	132	132	132
Psychological Alienation	Pearson Correlation	.225**	1	-.004
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.010		.960
	N	132	132	132

****.** Correlation Is Significant At The 0.01 Level (2-tailed).

This table shows that there is a positive correlation between problematic internet use and psychological alienation at a p-value less than (0.05).

DISCUSSION:

- Discussion of Students' Scio_ Demographic Characteristics

The study results show the demographic characteristics of 132 students who participated in the study. It shows that (44.7%) of them are within the age group (18 - 22)(years old. According to study type (61.4%) of them from morning study. Regarding the number of children, (50%) had (1 to 2) children. About the age of the husband, 39.4% of their husbands were recorded in this age group) 23- 27(. Regarding the duration of marriage (53.8%) of them were

married for (2-6) years. According to the husband's education level, (52.3%) of them had a bachelor's degree. Concerning the Family type, Couples and children record at (52.3%). Related to Monthly Income, (68.2%) of them said is enough. Regarding Residency, the majority of the sample lived in urban areas (72%). Most of the study sample have Own (82.6%) regarding residency type. Regarding the time of use, a record (47%) of them use the Internet Day and night. Less than half of the sample (48.5%) uses the Internet for 3 hours or less Instagram was the most used application program by students (41.7 %).

- Discussion of Students' Problematic Internet Use.

The outcomes of the current study indicate that the distribution of student according to the assessment of the level of their problematic internet use showed that is moderate. (Table 4-2). The result of the present study agrees with a study that is wide agreement that the Internet can serve as a tool that enhances well-being. It is more difficult, however, to find consensus around the issue of problematic Internet use. That may be in part because scientific investigation has lagged far behind technological advances and media attention. The diagnostic schemas that have been proposed since 1996, and the screening tools that have been developed, stress similarities with substance use, impulse control disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Prevalence figures vary as a function of the diagnostic definition used, the age group studied, and whether the surveys were conducted online. Studies suggest high comorbidity rates with mood disorders and, among younger individuals, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. For a medium that has so radically changed how we conduct our lives, the Internet's effects on our psychology remain understudied. More research is needed into the pathophysiology, epidemiology, natural course, and treatment of problematic Internet use. In addition, the more subtle psychological changes, such as disinhibition, that seem to characterize people's online behavior also deserve attention, even if they cannot be seen as necessarily pathological.) Aboujaoude E,2010). The study was conducted in China by Hui Wang, 2011. A cross-sectional study was conducted. A total of 14,296 high school students were surveyed in four cities in Guangdong province. Problematic Internet Use was assessed by the 20-item Young Internet Addiction Test (YIAT). Information was also collected on demographics, family and school-related factors, and Internet usage patterns. Of the 14,296 students, 12,446 were Internet users. Of those, 12.2% (1,515) were identified as problematic Internet users (PIUs). Generalized mixed-model regression revealed that

there was no gender difference between PIUs and non-PIUs. High study-related stress, having social friends, poor relations with teachers and students, and conflictive family relationships were risk factors for PIU. Students who spent more time online were more likely to develop PIU. The habits of and purposes for Internet usage were diverse, influencing the susceptibility to PIU.

- Discussion of Students' Psychological Alienation DISCUSSION:

The outcomes of the current study indicate that the distribution of a student according to the assessment of the level of their psychological alienation showed that is moderate. (Table 4-3). And also agree with a study done by Noor, 2022. Result overall evaluation of psychological alienation among nursing students was moderate, where this study showed that the students of the study sample have a high level of psychological alienation. A study done by Rababa and Smadi (2020), showed that the overall assessment of psychological alienation was moderate, and that agrees with our result. A study was done in Iraq by Alwan (2014) about psychological alienation among university students this study sample consisted of 100 students and showed that only (9%) of students suffer from psychological alienation. A Random sample study done by Rayce (2009) showed that (75%) of students who participated in the study did not suffer from psychological alienation. The study interprets the finding that the percentage of psychological alienation among students is expected because of society's ideas, methods, and values.

- Discussion of Student Problematic Internet Use and Psychological Alienation

The outcomes of the current study indicate that there is a positive correlation between problematic internet use and psychological alienation. (Table 4-5). The result of the present study agrees with a study done in Greek problematic internet use was moderately and positively associated with depressive

symptoms, anxiety, loneliness, and other mental health outcomes and psychological alienation, and negatively related to subjective well-being. Moderator analyses revealed that several study features (i.e., school grade, region, a measure of problematic internet use, publication year, and gender) could explain the variations in the findings across individual studies. These research results provide solid evidence for the link between problematic internet use and different mental health outcomes and have implications for future research and interventions on students' problematic internet use. (Jan 2011).

CONCLUSIONS:

This study aimed to bridge this gap by providing a more comprehensive overall picture of this issue through a quantitative synthesis. more than half of students who have met to some extent problematic internet use have an average level of psychological alienation. The researcher found a positive correlation between problematic internet use and the psychological alienation of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations of the researcher have been suggested based on the conclusions of the current study: Increasing awareness programs at the university about the importance of safe internet use, Psychological problems should be paid more attention to, and problematic Internet use may be a predictor when screening high-risk students for psychological problems. Our results will aid in timely psychological screening, which is meaningful in the prevention and intervention of psychological problems, and provide appropriate guidance for students who have more levels of psychological and academic alienation and need help by activating the role of an academic advisor in the faculty and periodic meetings with the nursing students. Improve student's self-control of internet addiction through different learning, and teaching methods and applying of skills mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and

social persuasions in education. During skills training, students who have problems with psychological alienation and problematic internet use should be supported and encouraged to decrease their use of their phone and complete tasks, Generalization of research through all students at academic years and more faculties. Further research can be conducted on the same topic with wide-range sample size and another variable, and Additional research must be conducted about factors contributing to problematic internet use, psychological alienation, and emotional divorce

The authors state that they have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Compliance with ethical guidelines This study was completed following obtaining consent from the University of Karbala.

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Data Availability Data will be made available on request.

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