

HEYHAN –

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Heyhan*. We have some exciting articles for you, including staff developments and a deeper insight into experiences of pursuing a career at MNU. We have also introduced a section for “Picture Gallery”, where you will find all the pictures for events highlighted in this edition.

GRADUATION NEWS



We are proud to share that 42 students graduated in the April 2024 ceremony from the following disciplines:

- Bachelor of Counseling
- Bachelor of Psychology
- Master in Public Health

Congratulations to all our graduates on this significant achievement!

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

We are proud to celebrate the professional achievements and growth of our staff this term.

Ammar Suhail, Physiotherapy Lecturer, successfully completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education from the Faculty of Education, MNU. Congratulations on this important milestone in your academic journey!

- Fathimath Zimna, Fathimath Shirani, Aishath Maharath, and Aishath Majidha Hassan participated in a short-term training program at Manipal College of Health Professionals, enhancing their expertise in Medical Laboratory Sciences.
- Khadija Abdulrahman Hussain, Ruben Singh, and Salna Susan (Lecturers, Pharmacy) - attended a conference on Climate Resilient Agriculture for Food Security in Maldives organized by The Maldives National University (MNU) & The Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) from 3rd to 4th Feb, 2025.
- Zeenath Shakir (Lecturer, Social Work) - participated in a 5-days workshop on ‘Strengths-Based Social Work Practice’ and presented her research paper at International Conference on "Towards Building a Positively Responding Society and Nation" from 7-8 February 2025, at Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India. This conference was organised by Institute of Health Management, Australia, Brisbane Institute of Strength-Based Practice and Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya in Bilaspur, India.
- Aishath Majidha Hassan (Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Sciences) - participated in a short-term training program under the Erasmus Mobility Project at Apollonia University in Romani on 27 February 2025.
- Salna Susan (Lecturer, Pharmacy) - participated at the 8th Global Public Health Conference (GLOBEHEALTH Conference) organised by TIIKM, where she presented her research on "Synthesis, characterization and pharmacological screening of Glycosyl urea derivatives for antimicrobial activity from 20-21st February 2025.



TEAM BEHIND ‘HEYHAN’

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
Dr. Aishath Shanoora

EDITORS:
Aminath Samha
Zeenath Shakir
Fathimath Maeesha

DESIGN:
Aminath Samha

CONTRIBUTORS:
Fathimath Maeesha
Ibrahim Ismail
Aishath Hassan

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WORTHY MENTIONS OF THE YEAR

RESEARCH AT FHS

We are pleased to share that three research grants from the MNU Grants 2024 Call 2 have been awarded to teams from the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). This marks a significant milestone for the faculty and reflects the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and research dedication among our staff. Following are the details of the grants:

- Team 1: Mariyam Neerish (lead), Zeenath Shakir, Aminath Samha and Fathimath Maeesha
 - Title: “Relapse Realities: Unpacking the Factors Behind Substance Use Recurrence in Maldives”
- Team 2: Zeenath Shakir (lead), Mariyam Neerish, Aminath Samha & Fathimath Maeesha.
 - Title: “Am I doing enough?”: Perceptions of Social Workers in Implementing the Child Rights Protection Act (CRPA) (Act no.: 19/2019)”
- Team 3: Ammar Suhail & Agleema Ahmed, Lecturer from School of Nursing
 - Title: “Perception, Attitudes and Barriers to Interprofessional Collaboration among Healthcare Professionals at IGMH and KRH”

In addition to this, we have 10 on-going researches.

ACADEMIC FELLOWSHIP

Fifteen academics from FHS, SN, and SM completed the onshore part of Australia Awards Fellowship, “Development of Health Profession Education Capacity in the Maldives”. hosted by Flinders University. The fellowship covered a week long intensive workshop covering topics from contemporary contexts in educational change to integration of interprofessional learning in Health Professions Education (HPE). As part of the fellowship, each member is subscribed to an year long membership for ANZAHPE (Australian and New Zealand Association for Health Professionals Education) and attending the annual conference of ANZAHPE from 30 June to 3 July, 2025 in Perth, where our team had the opportunity to expand on the best practices and interprofessional collaborative approaches in HPE. Throughout this fellowship, our teams have started developing projects based on the learnings from the training, drive for change in HPE, and establishing a holistic community of practice in MNU.



STUDENT LEARNING EXPOSURES

- April 14 - Bachelor of Social Work had a productive visit to the Home for People with Special Needs - HPSN. During the visit, they engaged with staff and residents and presented thoughtful gift baskets to the patients, fostering compassion and community connection.
- Students in the 2nd Semester of Primary Health Care visited Kulhudhuffushi Regional Hospital. The visit offered valuable hands-on learning experiences in areas such as public health, primary care, and patient services, bridging classroom learning with real-world application.
- Students in the 3rd Semester of the Primary Health Care program visited Lh. Naifaru from 1st to 12th June for their field experience, where they explored community health services and engaged with local health care teams, further enhancing their understanding of health service delivery in island settings.
- Students in the 4th and 5th Semesters of the Primary Health Care program visited various health care facilities for their field experience, allowing them to observe and participate in a range of services including maternal and child health, environmental health, and noncommunicable disease prevention programs. These visits supported their practical learning and application of public health concepts in real-world settings.
- Final-year students of the Bachelor of Health Service Management program completed their industrial placement at the Ministry of Health, where they gained valuable exposure to health system governance, policy implementation, and administrative processes that contribute to effective health service delivery at the national level.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025, TERM 1

FEBRUARY

- Feb 4 - FHS, in collaboration with UNICEF Maldives, organized a Stakeholder Workshop to validate the structure and content of the updated Primary Health Care course curriculum to ensure alignment with the national primary health care system and the requirements of the Ministry of Health. This is one of the stringent measures taken to ascertain that our curriculum development process meets both local and international quality standards.
- Feb 5 - AI is here to stay! Our staff had a productive discussion about the use of AI in Education, which was facilitated by DVC (Academic Affairs) Dr. Fawaz Shareef and Dean of FEST, Adam Khalid.
- Feb 8 - A Clinical Supervision Training session was conducted for supervisors from institutions accommodating MSc in Psychology (Clinical) students beginning placements in Term 1, 2025. The training was facilitated by Licensed Counselor Mariyam Nawaza from the Institute for Mental Well-Being.
- Feb 15 - FHS students and staff actively participated in the launch of 'Fahi Sihhath', a university-wide healthy lifestyle awareness campaign initiated by MNU. The campaign aims to promote well-being and sustainable health practices across the university community.

MAY

- May 8 - In collaboration with Mahidol University, Thailand, we hosted a Workshop on Collaborative Pathways in Health Promotion: Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Directions. This significant workshop brought together key representatives from MNU School of Medicine, MNU School of Nursing, Villa College, Health Protection Agency, the Ministry of Health, Maldives Food and Drug Authority, Dhamanaveshi, and the Ministry of Education.
- May 12 - Department of Public Health conducted its first CME session on the topic "Pressure is Real: Silent but Serious", led by students of the 3rd Semester of the Primary Health Care program. The session focused on raising awareness about hypertension and its public health impact.
- May 16 - Staff and students from primary health care and physiotherapy led a range of activities at the Health Camp organised by Housing Development Corporation with key partners.
- May 18 - Kokkomen Preschoolers visited FHS, where our Public Health staff and students hosted interactive activities around the theme "My Body," helping children explore the concepts of the internal and external human body in a fun and engaging way.
- May 29 - FHS participated in the Mental Health Action Day celebrations, held in collaboration with the MNU School of Nursing and UNICEF Maldives.

APRIL

- April 23 - We proudly celebrated the achievements of 62 outstanding students at the Dean's Award Ceremony. A special congratulations to the five students who achieved a perfect GPA of 4.0 — an exceptional accomplishment reflecting their hard work and dedication.
- April 20-26 - To mark the Medical Laboratory Professionals Week 2025, the celebration was both educational and creative! One of the highlights was "The Living Canvas - Bacteria Agar Art" competition, where science met art in the most unexpected way. The week was filled with fun and innovative activities to honor the contributions of our medical laboratory professionals.
- April 25 - FHS participated in the official launch of the Fahi Sihhath Fair 2025, organized by MNU in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO. The event, inaugurated by First Lady Madam Sajidha Mohamed, celebrated World Health Day under the theme "New Beginnings, Hopeful Futures."
- April 30 - In celebration of Medical Laboratory Professionals Week 2025, our Medical Laboratory Sciences team, in collaboration with the Maldivian Blood Services, organized a blood donation drive
- April 30 - FHS hosted a meeting with delegates from Moldova State University to explore potential collaborative initiatives and cross-cultural research opportunities.

JUNE

- On 28th June, we conducted a first aid training session for M7 staff to acknowledge and appreciate their continued support as a sponsor of our activities. This session also aimed to build basic emergency response capacity among their team.

PICTURE GALLERY



Visit to HSPN



Stakeholder Workshop to validate the structure and content of the updated Primary Health Care course curriculum



Launching of Fahi Sihhath campaign



Fahi Sihhath Fair 2025



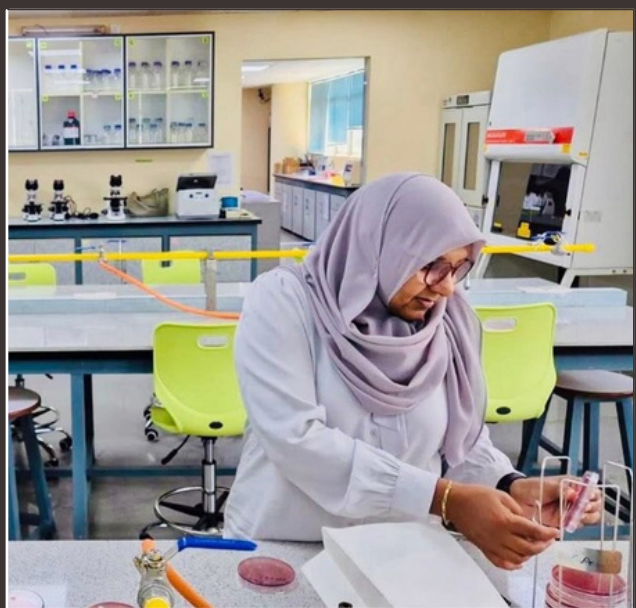
First aid training session for M7 staff



First CME session on the topic "Pressure is Real: Silent but Serious"



GLOBEHEALTH Conference participation by Salna Susan



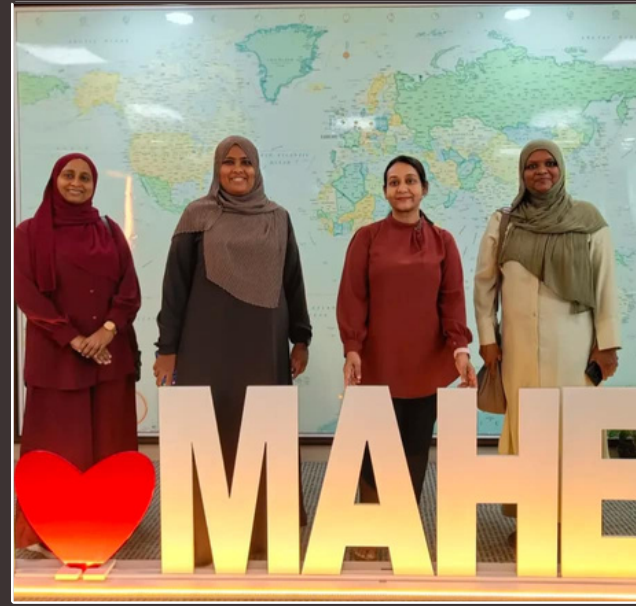
"The Living Canvas - Bacteria Agar Art" competition



Workshop on Collaborative Pathways in Health Promotion: Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Directions - in collaboration with Mahidol University



Erasmus Mobility Project short-term training attended by Aishath Majidha Hassan



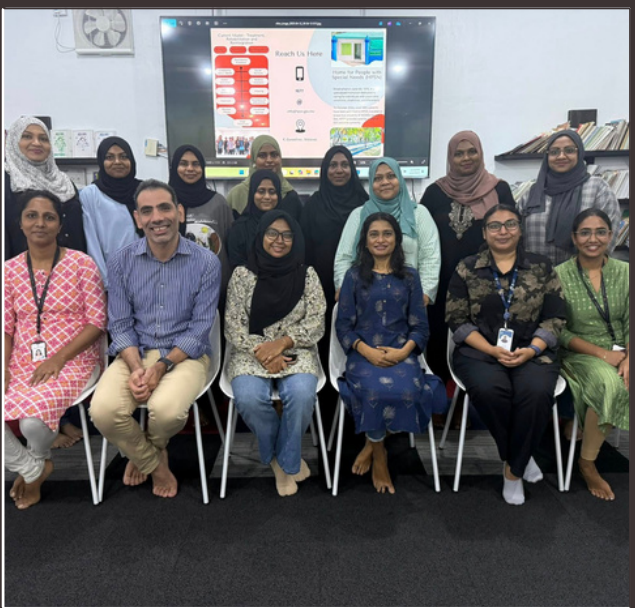
Short-term training program at Manipal College of Health Professionals - DMS



Visit to Kulhudhuffushi Regional Hospital by PHC students



Meeting with delegates from Moldova State University



Visit to the Home for People with Special Needs by Social Work students

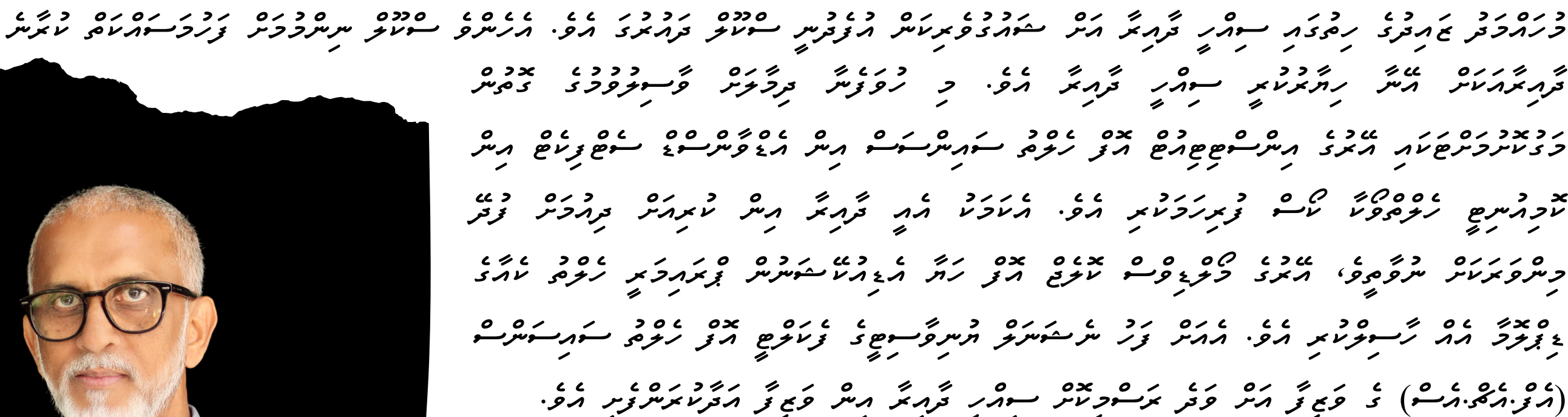


Visit from Kokkomen Preschoolers



Clinical Supervision Training by Mariyam Nawaza

وَأَمَّا الْفُلُ فَأَنزَلْنَاهُ ذِكْرًا لِّعِبَادِنَا إِنَّهُ لَكَادِمٌ

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اِسْمُكَ خَيْرٌ مِنْ سَمْعِي وَرَأْيِي خَيْرٌ مِنْ بَصَرِي، "اِنْ جِئْتُكَ بِمِثْلِ سَمْعِي، اَوْ بِمِثْلِ بَصَرِي، اَوْ بِمِثْلِ رَأْيِي، اَوْ بِمِثْلِ اِسْمِكَ، لَاحِقٌ بِكَ"

Written by: Aishath Hassan, Lecturer, Public Health

A wooden tray with several compartments holds various spices and ingredients. On the left, there are green cardamom pods, two cinnamon sticks, and dark brown cloves. In the center, a pile of sliced, dried, and patterned pieces, possibly nutmeg or mace, sits next to a large, dark, curved wooden pestle. To the right, a small glass jar contains white powder, another small glass jar contains dark brown powder, and a red and yellow cylindrical container with a logo is visible. A large, vibrant green leaf rests on the top left of the tray.

An estimated 600 million people worldwide consume areca nuts, with the highest prevalence in South-Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Melanesia (Gupta & Warnakulasuriya, 2002). In 2022, approximately 120,200 cases of oral cancer (30.8% of all cases) were linked to smokeless tobacco or areca nut use (World Health Organization, 2022). The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have classified areca nuts as a Group 1 carcinogen, confirming their role in oral cancer development (IARC, 2024). In the Maldives, areca nut chewing is widespread, with the STEP survey revealing a high prevalence, especially among young users unaware of the health risks (Health Protection Agency, 2020).

- Areca nuts cause staining of teeth, gums, and mucosa, turning them from red to black.
- Chronic use leads to reddish-brown mucosal discoloration (Gupta & Ray, 2004).
- It causes severe tooth wear, including attrition, root fractures, and tooth structure loss (Nair et al., 2004).
- It disrupts gum health, causing periodontal disease and excessive plaque buildup (Agustina et al., 2024).

- Areca nut chewing typically starts between 13-18 years, though some begin after 40(WHO South-East Asia Regional Office, 2012).
- Trends are more common among men in India, Taiwan, and the Solomon Islands, and among women in Malaysia and Cambodia (Asian Betel-Quid Consortium, 2021).
- Smokers are 10 times more likely to chew areca nuts, often alongside alcohol and cigarettes (Chou et al., 2012).
- Deeply rooted in tradition, areca nut use is passed down through families and supported by cultural norms (Rozi & Akhtar, 2007; Murphy et al., 2019).

- Oral Submucous Fibrosis
 - A chronic condition that stiffens the oral mucosa, causing difficulty in opening the mouth and swallowing. If untreated, it can lead to oral cancer (Sharma et al., 2024).
- Oral Cancer:
 - Regular areca nut use significantly increases the risk of oral cancer, as carcinogenic compounds cause mutations in oral cells, leading to cancer development (Guha et al., 2014).
- Systemic Effects
 - Beyond the oral cavity, areca nut consumption has been associated with metabolic disorders, cardiovascular diseases, and adverse pregnancy outcomes, including low birth weight and preterm births (Chou et al., 2011).

- Advocate for more research into the health risks of areca nut consumption.

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אֲנִי מֵתָהּ וְהֵלַךְ (אִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם, אֲשֶׁר הָיָה) אִשְׁרֵי אֲשֶׁר הָיָה שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם. אֲנִי
 נֶאֱמַרְתִּי דְּשִׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה (אִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם, אֲשֶׁר הָיָה) אִשְׁרֵי אֲשֶׁר הָיָה שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם.
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 זֶה הָיָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם.
 אֲנִי דְּשִׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם שֶׁהָיָה לָאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׁמְעוּקָם.

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UNDERSTANDING THE COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL ROOTS OF DOOM SCROLLING

Written by: Fathimath Maeesha, Lecturer, Counseling



In the era of hyperconnectivity, compulsive behaviours such as doom scrolling, an obsessive routine of continuously feeding negative news, have become a contemporary psychological concern. Although this conduct appears passive at first glance, it is highly based on emotional vulnerabilities and behavioral patterns that current technologies intensify and exploit. From a psychological perspective, doom scrolling fulfills the fundamental negativity bias: the brain's preference for threats over positive stimuli. What was once an evolutionary survival mechanism now turns out to be maladaptive when algorithmically generated social media feeds provide a constant feed of polarizing headlines, catastrophes, and crises.

The end product is a cycle through which anxiety brings about the need to search for more information, and the information found increases anxiety.

Based on a behavioral perspective, doom scrolling is usually supported by social media platforms. Automated recommendation engines are designed with the primary goal of keeping users as active as possible by feeding them content that stirs the emergence of strong emotions. Some studies, such as Li and Qiu (2023), suggest that these systems can confine users within the chambers of distress and create a cycle of despair on the digital platform. Shabahang et al. (2024) associate doom scrolling with increased levels of existential anxiety and a negative outlook toward humanity, especially among groups regularly encountering such content.

Satici et al. (2023) also shows that those people with a high level of neuroticism and a low level of conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness are the most likely to develop this habit. According to these scholars, FOMO (fear of missing out) also contributes by inspiring users to constantly refresh their feeds to be updated at the expense of their mental health.

Unfortunately, the mental health impacts are profound. In this case, doom scrolling has been linked with adverse consequences such as a rise in sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety, and stress. Haidt's (2024) "The Anxious Generation" reported that the increasing rates of mental health conditions among adolescents are due to the escalation of phone-based social lives and a decrease in play-based childhoods, where one can easily indulge in behaviors like doom scrolling.

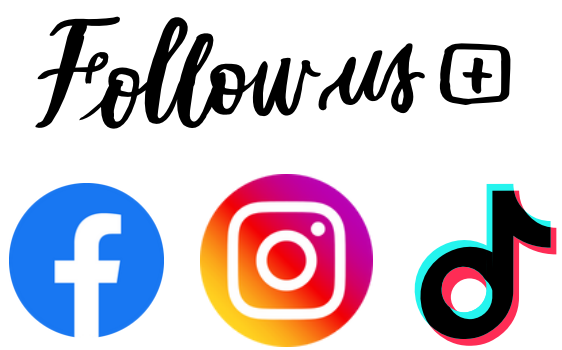
Identifying doom scrolling both as a cause and a symptom of digital distress is important. Approaches like creating real-world connections, preventing early exposure of children to smartphones, and implementing screen-free time can play a key role in breaking the cycle. Hence, being aware of its source in psychology and behavior is the initial phase of regaining people's attention and their well-being from the grasp of the scroll.



SCAN HERE FOR
REFERENCES IN ALL
THE ARTICLES

STAY TUNED

We are launching our own podcast, ‘Health Professionals Unplugged’. Tune in for inspiring conversations, expert insights, and real stories from those working at the heart of healthcare.



EXCITING POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS UNDERWAY

We’re thrilled to announce that the Faculty of Health Sciences is currently developing new programs in the following areas:



COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

ADDICTION STUDIES

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

SOCIAL WORK

SOCIAL SERVICES LEADERSHIP

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

SPEECH THERAPY

MEDICAL IMAGING

PARAMEDICINE

FOOD SCIENCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

PHD IN PUBLIC HEALTH

These programs aim to address emerging needs in the health sector and provide advanced learning opportunities for professionals across the country.