

Getting Lost in Virtual World: All about Internet Gaming Disorder

Suja Kumari S

Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute of Medical Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India
[sujaharinair\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:sujaharinair[at]gmail.com)

Abstract: *Playing digital games is an increasingly popular form of media entertainment which may be easy to get absorbed in the competition, but what happens when it is addictive? Adolescents are more vulnerable to Internet-related addiction comparing with most areas of society, due to psychological and developmental features, the easy access to the Internet with a movable device, and the positive hope in expectation of mobile gaming. Video game addiction is an impulse control disorder, similar to gambling. Video game addiction leads to poorer mental health and cognitive functioning and increased emotional difficulties, such as enhanced depression and anxiety, as well as more social isolation. There are certain incidents of youngsters killing their family members when they try to stop their addiction to the game. Parents can motivate their children to adopt healthy gaming habits instead of mobile gaming.*

Keywords: Addiction, Aggressive, Cognitive behavioural therapy, Counselling Internet gaming disorder, Motivation, Suicide

1. Introduction

Gaming is a good way to relieve the pressure and stress of the real world. However, when an individual becomes possessed with it and it affects the way they live, then a problem may be present.[1] Different groups have come to different conclusions about whether problem playing should be called an addiction. The World Health Organization (WHO) formally included internet gaming disorder in the 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). [2]

This paper emphasizes the need for an in-depth understanding of the meaning, context, and problems associated with gaming. A holistic understanding will benefit people who seek professional help for problematic online gaming become more targeted and consequently more effective.

Gaming Addiction in Literature

Mobile game addiction is the area of interest of many researchers because of its potential negative effects on mental health.

A relevant study by Lawrence TL et al, (2010) found that the relative risk for depression in students with Internet addiction after months was 1.5 times higher than that of non-Internet addiction. Participants, after controlling for potential variables (gender, study burden, age, rural, or urban school). This illustrated that Internet addiction may also lead to depression and loneliness. [3]

Jin-Liang et al, (2019) assessed the relation between mobile game addiction and social anxiety, depression, and loneliness among adolescents. The study revealed that game addiction was positively associated with social anxiety, depression, and loneliness. A further analysis on gender difference in the paths from mobile game addiction to these mental health outcomes was evaluated, and results depicted that Male adolescents played mobile game, reported higher levels of social anxiety ($\beta = 0.118$, $p < 0.001$), loneliness ($\beta = 0.311$, $p < 0.001$) and depression ($\beta = 0.280$, $p < 0.001$),

compared with female adolescents ($\beta = 0.077$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$; and $\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$, respectively).[4]

Koga et al, (2019) conducted a study that focuses to explore the relationship between gaming and suicide risk among Japanese youngsters. A sample of 310 players aged 20–39 years was recruited through an Internet research company and completed the questionnaire. Analysis revealed that game addiction was associated with suicidality, perceived burdensomeness, dissatisfied belongingness. However the significant correlation between violent game play and suicidality, depression were only seen in males.

2. Need for the Study

In this techno-savvy world, internet and computer use are ingrained in contemporary society and have changed the way we live our lives more than any other technological medium. To cite an example, PUBG is an online multiplayer battle game that causes addiction in teenagers and adolescents and they refuse any kind of interruption while playing. A boy aged 15years apparently ended his life after his parents scolded him for spending a lot of time playing PUBG. Later the Indian Government banned this game on September 2, 2020, under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act of 2000. This mobile Application was involved in activities that are prejudicial to the integrity, sovereignty, defence and security of the country. Other countries where the game is banned include China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Korea, Jordan, Nepal, Israel, and Iraq. The official distributor for PUBG Mobile is a Chinese firm, even though they banned the application software. [6]

However, as a surprise, there are loopholes through which the banned version of PUBG can be played in India. A 12-year-old boy was killed by a teenager, who is aged 17 years, in Karnataka on April 2021 after a fight while playing an online PUBG game. The heated argument between the two boys turned violent and after a fight younger boy lost his life. This incident proves gaming addiction and crime are on the increase. [7]

Definitions

Internet gaming disorder is generally defined as the problematic, compulsive use of video games that results in significant impairment to an individual's ability to function in various life domains over a prolonged period of time. Other names are Video game addiction or gaming disorder. [8]

WHO defined Internet gaming disorder as "a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour which may be either online (over the internet) or offline which is manifested by impaired control over gaming (E.g. onset, frequency, intensity, duration, termination, context). [9]

Risk Factors

- Youngsters and men are more likely to experience a gaming disorder than older people and women.[10]
- Adolescents with attention problems might have difficulties in directing their attention towards other tasks, which leads to an increased risk for developing problematic gaming behaviour.
- This risk is further exacerbated by social vulnerability and dissatisfaction with life.[11]
- High neuroticism, high impulsivity, and high aggressiveness are found to be significant predictors of internet gaming disorder. [12]

Causes of Game Addiction

- Video game designers, trying to make a profit, are always looking for ways to get more people to download or playing their games.
- Making a game just challenging enough to keep everyone coming back.
- Success for a gamer typically feels simply out of reach.
- It is exhausting that the player eventually gives up.

Types of Game Addiction

Mainly there are two types of video games are there and therefore two major types of video game addictions are present.

- Standard video games are generally designed for a single player and involve a definite goal or mission, such as rescuing a princess or finding a treasure. The addiction in these games is often connected to complete that mission or getting a high score or preset standard. Few games in this category are Manor Matters, Angry birds and so on.
- The second type of video game addiction is associated with online multiplayer games. These games are played online with other people and are especially addictive because these games generally have no end. In this type of addiction, gamers enjoy creating and temporarily become an online character. They usually made relationships with other players online as an escape from reality. Examples are PUBG and Free fire games. [13]

Stages of Gaming Addiction

Each case is unique and may involve an entirely different game or games from another. Such a list should only be considered as a rough guide to know the manifestation of the condition some key stages are as follows:

Initial exposure: An individual's early experiences with video gaming, during which enjoyment and perhaps a fascination with such games may emerge very quickly.

Deeper interest: Gaming begins to take up a position of greater significance in a person's life, perhaps requiring growing investment in hardware, software and time. Other activities begin to take on a lack of significance in consequence.

Growing obsession: Gaming begins to take up a central role in the person's life, with their thoughts becoming increasingly directed towards gaming and other activities. Thus relationships become neglected as the great majority of the person's free time is spent on gaming.

Full-blown addiction: Gaming becomes the individual's dominant or even primary interest. Free time is taken up with gaming, and all their energies are focus on it, possibly at the work cost or academic progress. Dietary and sleeping patterns are likely to be heavily affected by constant gaming, and the gamer may entirely be dislocated from friends, family and real life. [9]

Symptoms of Internet Gaming Disorder

According to criteria that were proposed in the DSM-5 symptoms are:

- Thinking most of the time about gaming
- Feeling bad when can't play
- Need to spend more and more time playing to feel good
- Not able to quit the game or even play less
- Not wanted to do other things that used to like
- Have problems at work, school, or home because of gaming. Continue playing despite these problems
- Lying to people who are closer about how much time spent playing
- Depend on gaming to ease bad moods and feelings[14]

Victims who lost their lives

A 13-year-old boy, Zhang Xiao Yi committed suicide by jumping from the top of a 24-story tower block in his home province Tianjin in 2005. After previously having spent two full days playing online role-playing games in an Internet cafe, Zhang had told his parents that he had "been poisoned by games and could not control himself for longer".[15]

There is a report of a youth who committed suicide in India after his addiction to an online game left him with huge debts. The victim was aged 28, who was a contract worker in the ISRO, was found hanging on December 31, 2020. He was addicted to an online rummy game. He had borrowed over ₹20 lakh from his friends to play it. [16]

Another suspected case of suicide due to the 'Blue Whale Challenge game has emerged in Kerala in 2018. A 22-year student hanged himself. He was taken for counselling many times, but his behaviour continued to be abnormal and end by losing his life. Immediate steps to ban the online Blue Whale game in the country were taken on January 09, 2018. [17]

3. Treatment

The best way to treat an addiction to gaming is to abstain from playing or being involved in things other than gaming.

- A gamer suffering from migraines may take medication for headaches and an addict suffering from sleep disturbances may take sleeping pills.[13]
- Seek help from a doctor or therapist or a paediatrician. In the case of children as soon as a parent thinks that gaming time is getting out of hand. Making parents' part of a child's treatment found to be better.
- CBT or cognitive behavioural therapy can be given. This is mental health counselling that teaches the person how to replace thoughts about gaming to help change behaviour.
- Other models such as motivational therapy (MT), motivational interviewing, art therapy, fitness therapy are available, often in combination with each other. [9]

Prevention

These tips are good for adults and kids to keep away from gaming addiction:

- 1) Set time limits for play and fix them. (For example, be steady about not playing for more than two hours at a time).
- 2) Keep the mobile phone and other gaming gadgets out of the bedroom especially at night.
- 3) Do other activities every day, including exercise which will lower the health risks of sitting and playing for long stretches of time.
- 4) Be approachable to any concerns asked by anyone about the amount of time spent on gaming and always prioritise important relationships over gaming.
- 5) Try not to take a mobile phone or gaming device while spending a holiday. If takes never start gaming.
- 6) Do not play after a given time every night (time depends on individual circumstances, but try to leave gaming 1 hour before going to bed).
- 7) If signs and symptoms are present, or tried to stop gaming or reduce the time spend but failed, seek help from an addiction specialist as soon as possible. [9]

4. Discussion

The interrelation between mobile game addiction and mental health may be due to the social isolation results from spending more time for gaming, which subsequently leads to destabilized psychological well-being. [18] Video game addiction can be just dangerous as any other addiction and should be treated carefully. This study may provide support for the current perspective of understanding Internet gaming addiction from a disease framework. Further exploration of these issues will enhance understanding of this potential mental health concern.

5. Conclusion

In this present scenario, new various games are evolving and still online games and gambling games takes human lives. Parents should give more attention to children whenever they use gadgets like mobile phones or laptops and assessing the internet must be supervised. Mental health educators and practitioners should be aware of the negative effects caused by addictive mobile gaming, as this is such a common

phenomenon nowadays. Specific attentiveness should be provided to male adolescents who are addicted to mobile gaming, as they may suffer more social anxiety.

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7. Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

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Author Profile



Suja kumari S, MSc (Nursing), MSc (Applied Psychology), 10 year experience in clinical, teaching and research areas. Working as a Research Fellow at Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and

Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India.