

Excessive Technology Use and Its Impact on Physical and Mental Health



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Big Bang Theory



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1

Digital natives



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Our culture



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E-sports and other ways to ‘make money’

- ESports has surged in popularity to become one of the most widely-practiced forms of competitive sport today.
- Competitive gaming
- Youtube videos (views, sponsorships)
- Values in a changing culture



Objectives

1. Identify prevalence rates of excessive technology use
2. Describe the risk factors for developing excessive technology use
3. Understand the impact of excessive technology use on physical and mental health
4. Identify support and treatment options available to address excessive technology use



Prevalence rates

USA

- 8-14% (Gentile, 2009)

Ontario

- 10% students spend at least 5 or more hours/day
- 25% students play video games daily
- 13% (1 in 8) have gaming problems
- Boys are 4x more likely
- (CAMH OSDUHS, 2015)



Defining problem video gaming

“PVG harms an individual’s social, occupational, family, school, and psychological functioning, with addictive symptoms of preoccupation, tolerance, loss of control, withdrawal, and escape” (Choo et al., 2015, p.1430)

No use

Normal use

At risk/serious use

Harmful/problem use



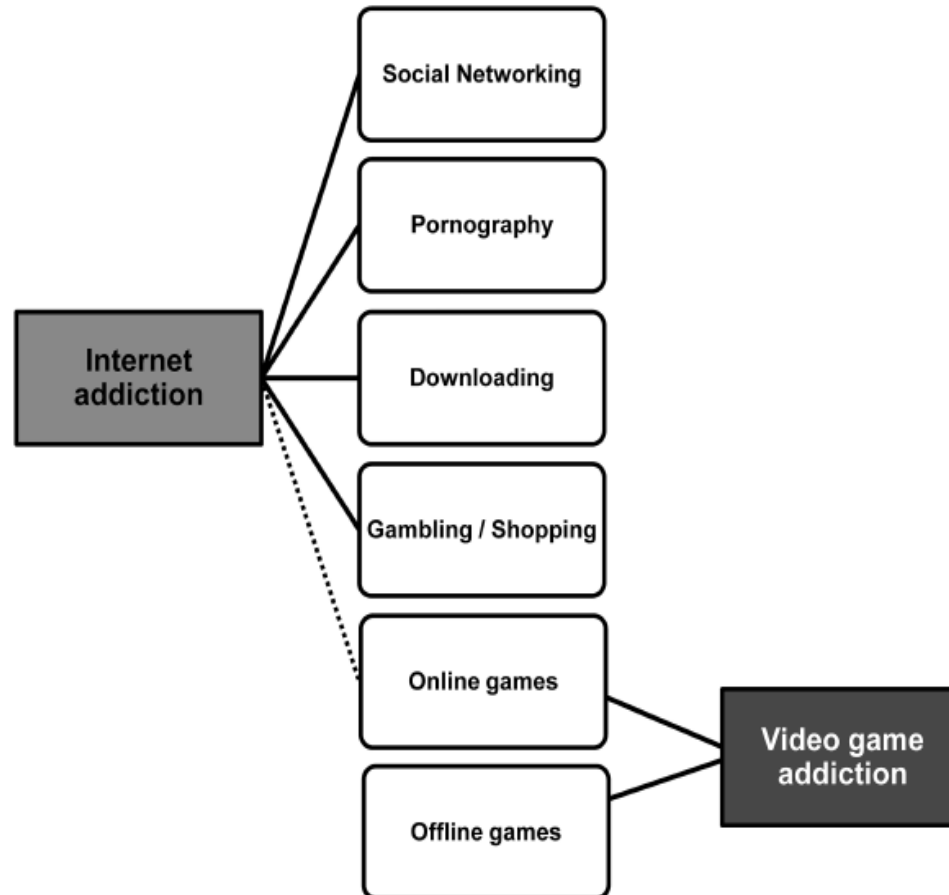
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Problem video gaming or Internet addiction?



Rehbein & Mößle (2013)

Screen time: how much is too much?

- The Canadian Paediatric Society discourages screen-based activities for children under 2
- Limit screen time to less than 1 to 2 hours per day for older children. Avoid making television watching part of your regular daily routine
- Recent guidelines take into account other factors



Ripple effect of too much screen time

- Screen time impact on sleep
- Sleep impacts mood, weight, concentration
- More prone to metabolic syndrome (diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure), cancer and cardiovascular disease linked to very sedentary lifestyle
- Physical activity does not undo hours of being sedentary



Keeps rippling...

- Time spent looking at food images can induce cravings
- Correlation between well being as an adolescent and as an adult
- Active in adolescence, more likely to be active as an adult
- Preliminary findings about impact on communication and emotional processing (misreading non-verbal cues)



Impact on mood

- Those with PVG have poorer mental and physical health
- Connection between time spent on social media and psychological distress
- Heavy screen users (4+ hours a day) are less happy and had more social and emotional problems than peers who used less
- Youth who played more sports were happier and reported fewer emotional difficulties (Booker, 2015)
- Screen use increases over time (with age) and the more time you spend the more likely you are to develop a problem



The Answer?

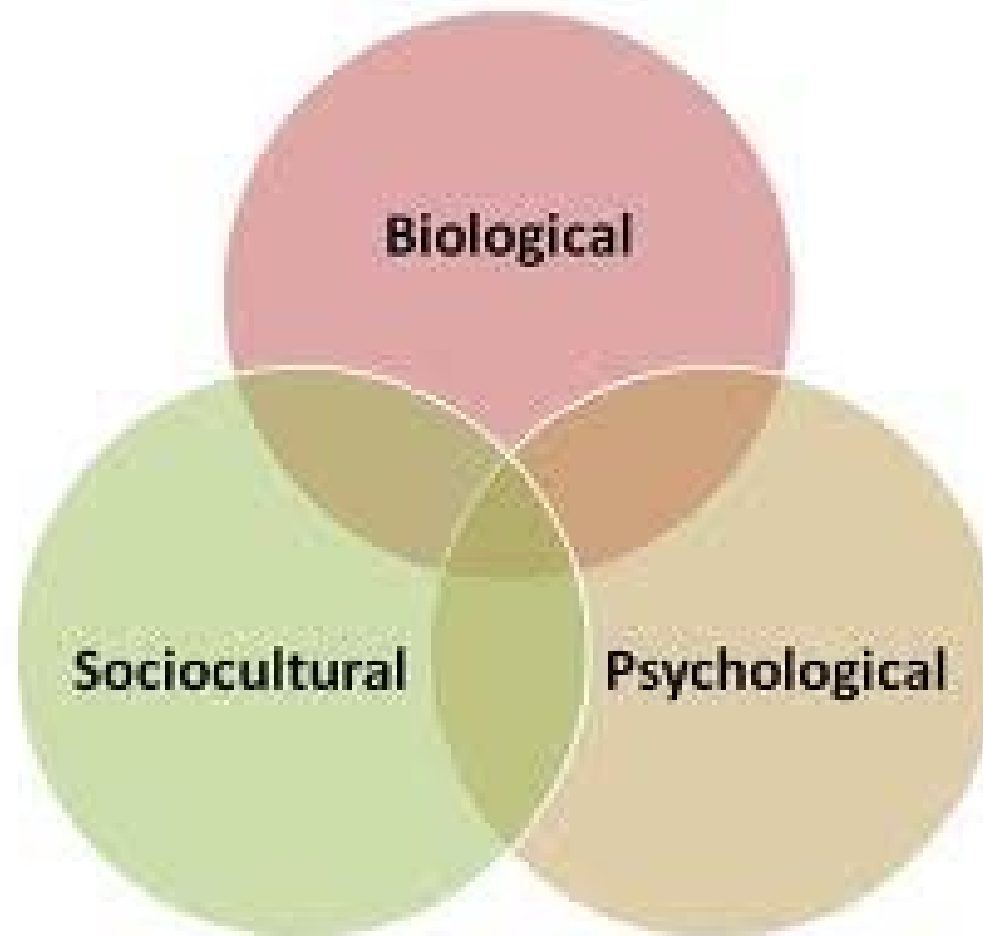


Reasons youth play video games

- Fun
- Like to feel in control
- Releases tension
- Relieves boredom
- Develop gaming skills
- Feel a sense of mastery
- Escape/Fantasy



Risk factors



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Co-occurring difficulties

- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Poor social adjustment
- Bullying/cyberbullying
- Poorer academic performance
- ASD
- Suicidal ideation



Characteristics of PGV adolescents

- Perfectionist
- Low self-esteem
- Introverted
- Loneliness
- Boredom
- Parental supervision -access and availability



Signs there might be a problem

- Spends long hours on computer
- School difficulties
- Skips chores/responsibilities
- Spends a lot more money on games
- Conflict with parents
- Social isolation/withdrawn
- Few other activities and interests
- Appears down/anxious/irritable
- Sleep difficulties



What makes video gaming addictive?

- Achievement
- Cyber socializing
- Games are infinite
- In game currency
- The brain gets hijacked (intermittent rewards)
- Virtual world continues when person is offline



Which games are most addictive?

- Massively Multi-Player Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGS or MMO) – E.g. World of Warcraft
- Real Time Strategy – E.g. Company of Heroes
- First Person Shooter – E.g. Call of Duty



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Screening

- Informal
- Formal



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Assessment

- Targets of assessment
- Collateral information
- Psychiatric
- Psychometric



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Treatment program at CAMH

- Individual
- Group
- Parent
- Family



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Treatment options

- Modalities
- Available resources



Using technology in a positive way? People are tracking everything!

- Address tech overuse
- Help with nutrition and fitness goals



Supporting families



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26

Recommendations

- Educate policy makers, those in health promotion and parents and those working with parents and youth about the risks
- Be cautious implementing new technology into your lives, homes and schools
- Balance online activity with other activities, especially physically active ones (limits to use)
- Recognize and advocate as this is a public health issue



Suggested reading

- Jennifer Kolari – You're Ruining My Life
- Gordon Neufeld – Hold On To Your Kids
- Dan Siegel – Brainstorm
- Kimberly Young – When Gaming Becomes an Obsession

Websites

- www.netaddiction.com
- www.techaddiction.ca
- www.drlarryrosen.com
- www.kidsmentalhealth.ca
- www.kidshelpphone.ca 1-800-668-6868



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Resources

Screeners:

Problem Video Game Playing Test

Internet Addiction Test

Internet Gaming Disorder Test

Online resources for clients:

Mediasmarts.ca

Online Gamers Anonymous

CAMH.ca



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29

Resources

yahoo group for Problem Gambling, Gaming and Internet Use
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