

Forum: Youth Assembly**Issue:** Preventing Net Addiction**Student Officer:** Erika Kunstmann-Drakouli**Position:** Co-Chair

INTRODUCTION



Evavandendam. Social Media Pills.

For many of us, the internet is a staple part of our daily routine. Whether we use it for leisure purposes such as instagram, snapchat, an online games or for researching and business purposes, the internet is being used daily by over 4.3 billion users.

Especially now, with a global pandemic, the internet usage has escalated. It is very hard to stay away from the internet, considering the amount of information one can find and the convenience of speed of access to different sources with the

ability to communicate and exchange opinions and views. Shopping, business meetings and bank transactions, consulting your doctor, buying groceries, talk to a friend, do schoolwork; you can do all that with one click.

As internet addiction becomes a more significant issue, questions have been raised, such as the appropriate duration of internet exposure in a day as well as amongst different age groups, the threshold between usefulness, habit and addiction.

Throughout the years a series of online and 'in-person' surveys, meetings and discussions amongst specialists all around the world have been conducted aiming to understand and determine the importance of internet addiction disorder by recording and classifying the different causes, the variety of symptoms, the diagnosis and the appropriate treatment.

Since Internet addiction disorder is a relatively new occurrence, knowledge is not yet concrete. In this ongoing process studies continue to take place and new information gets revealed. Even with this information scientists have concluded they can tell that this addiction is and will be a problematic phenomenon.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Disorder

Disorder is defined as an illness of the body or mind. According to the Cambridge Dictionary other Definitions include a disorder being a status of untidiness or an angry expression of dissatisfaction. ¹

Net addiction

Internet Addiction has many names. Compulsive internet use (CIU), Problematic internet use (PIU), disorder, Internet dependency, Internet compulsivity and Internet addiction disorder (IAD). An internet addiction can be subdivided in many categories. These include: gaming, social networking, email, blogging, online shopping and pornography use. Net addiction is not officially recognized as a disorder.

Dopamine

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter. It boosts mood, motivation and attention and regulates movement, learning and emotional responses. You can increase your dopamine levels by exercising, eating foods with high magnesium and tyrosine levels, avoiding processed foods and by getting enough sleep.²

Serotonin

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter. It has many functions in the human brain and body. One of them is affecting the mood of a person. It also transmits messages between nerve cells. Higher serotonin levels make a person happier. Serotonin is often described as the happy chemical. ³

Habit

¹ "DISORDER: Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/disorder.

² "Dopamine | Psychology Today International." *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/dopamine.

³ "Serotonin: Facts, Uses, SSRIs, and Sources." *Medical News Today*, MediLexicon International, www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/232248.

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The meaning of a habit is a repetitive behavior, that occurs without notice. This applies to oneself and to other individuals.⁴

Addiction

An addiction is defined as a repetitive and usually harmful behaviour.⁵



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Internet Addiction Disorder is not officially recognized as a disorder, but it affects from 8.2% up to 38% of the population and is often compared to pathological gambling. It was first satirically theorized as a disorder in 1995 by Dr. Ivan K. Goldberg. He played a joke to members of PsyCom, which is a cyberclub he founded in 1986. Dr. Goldberg posted an article about Internet addiction disorder (IAD) following with many symptoms such as “important social occupation or occupational activities that are given up or reduced because of internet use. However several colleges of his sought his help after admitting to him that they fall in this category of Internet addiction disorder. Following these events Dr. Goldberg formed an Internet addiction support group where everyone could post about

⁴ “HABIT: Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/habit.

⁵ “ADDICTION: Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/addiction.

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their addiction. Even though Dr. Goldberg finds it ridiculous having an online forum about Internet addiction he still is a contributor to this forum.

Among scientists and mental health professionals Internet addiction disorder is researched and treated differently. Ethnic cultures, genetics and environmental factors also play a big part on how it is researched upon. Some mental health experts suggest that people who do not have a right balance of serotonin and dopamine are more likely to be predisposed to addictive behaviors. Other risk factors include emotional, physical, social and functional impairments, impulsive internet use and the dependence on the internet. Scientist are questioning if Net addiction is an addiction, an obsessive compulsive or an impulsive control disorder.

There are many categories to Internet addiction disorder. These include: Gaming, social networking, email, blogging, online shopping and pornography use. Considering that everything is online researchers are trying to figure out when the Internet use stops being a habit and starts being an addiction. Considering all the above-mentioned factors the Internet addiction disorder is still stigmatized by many.



Wordpress.com. *IAD3.Jpg*.

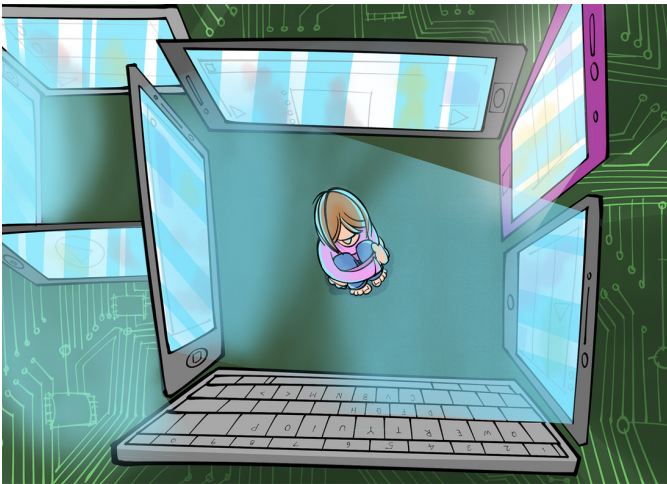
Causes

There are no exact causes for internet addiction disorder (IAD). Yet it is theorized, that people who suffer from a chemical dependency, such as alcohol or drug addiction, have a similar brain make-up to those with Internet addiction. IAD is linked to a physical change in the brain structure. The grey and white matter of the Prefrontal region of the brain are associated with planning, the attention span, remembering details and the prioritizing of important tasks. With the altering of this region it is theorized, that the brain cannot determine if an everyday task is important and should be prioritized or if a video game is more important. This also affects the pleasure center of the brain. The internet addiction triggers a release of dopamine in the brain to promote pleasure. As the tasks become more common the brain needs a larger dose of dopamine to be released. Individuals who have an internet addiction often suffer from low levels of dopamine and

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serotonin and have a higher risk of suffering with anxiety, depression and social anxiety. Socio-economic and demographic factors are also amongst the causes of Internet addiction.

Symptoms



Media.npr.org. Internet-Addiction-1.

There are mental and physical symptoms of internet addiction. These can affect an individual's work, school and personal life. The person is isolating themselves from the outside world in order to be online. This could lead to an eating disorder and to poor personal hygiene. Moreover the individual could develop a mental disorder such as depression or anxiety. Furthermore this person could lose the sense of time and thus not being able to keep schedules and avoid work. Then the individual would be dishonest and have feelings of guilt, because of their procrastination. They would develop a feeling of euphoria when using the

internet. Further symptoms include Insomnia, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Vision problems, mood swings and loneliness.

Diagnosis

Until now, there is no clear diagnosis, as with many disorders. Keith W Beard from the psychology department from the Marshall University proposed five diagnostic criteria. Beard proposed five diagnostic criteria, where at least one should be met before making an official diagnosis. The individual suffering should be already preoccupied with the internet and has the urge to use the internet for an extended period of time to gain satisfaction. The individual has made unsuccessful efforts to control their internet usage and is moody while trying to compress such urges and in the end the individual is occupied longer than intended on the internet. Beard also suggested that one of the following symptoms must be present for a diagnosis to take place. The individual suffering has used the internet as an escape or has risked their job, relationship, educational or career opportunity in order to stay longer on the internet and afterwards has lied about their whereabouts on the internet.

The most common tests used to help finalise a diagnosis include the youngest internet addiction test, the problematic internet use questionnaire and the compulsive internet use scale.

Treatment

To find treatment you will first have to accept and acknowledge the problem. Many characterize Internet Addiction Disorder a fake illness and believe that it will resolve on its own. Others believe that Internet addiction is a symptom of another disorder. It is thought that if you take medication for anxiety and depression the addiction may resolve itself. There have been cases where such medication has had an effect on the amount spent online; going from 35+ hours a week to 16 hours a week. Physical activity has been effective in the increase of serotonin and dopamine levels.

Many treatment Centers around the world have been offering Multimodal and psychological treatment such as Therapy, anonymous support groups and Behaviour modification.

In China 'Boot Camps' are being used to discipline the individuals. Their 'training' is military like. Teenagers are reportedly being locked in a room by themselves for 10 days. In some cases of Internet addiction recovery in China electro-shock treatment was being used, which was banned. Other facilities use less harmful ways to discipline their patients.



KPDMedia. "Boy, Who Came to Behavioral Therapy Due to His Social Problems. Psychotherapist and a Client, Discussing the Ways of Behavioral Changing Concept. Colorful Vector Illustration for Web and Printing." *Boy Who Came Behavioral Therapy Due Stock Vector (Royalty Free) 1310894207,*

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

China

China has reported of having over 20 million Internet addicts. There are over 250 'boot camps' that treat young addicts. The first camp was founded in 2005 in Beijing. In 2016 Chinese camps were caught using electro-shock treatment on young addicts, even though it was banned seven years prior. In 2018 an internet survey showed that China was

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amongst the top ten most internet addicted countries. To be specific China was the third most internet addicted country with 77%.

United States of America

The United States of America have approximately 246.3 million active mobile users. The United States have also contributed to the recovery aspect by having many online research Centers. A recent study published in 2019 by Daniel L. King Ph.D. showed, that between the years 2004 and 2009 the average screen time for 8 to 18 year olds has increased from 24 to 73 minutes daily. In 2018 a survey declared the United States of America as the fifth most internet addicted Country with 73%.

Japan

Japans first Internet addiction programme started in 2011. It was created by the Kurihama Medical and Addiction Center. In 2014 a meeting in Tokyo was conducted regarding the conditions associated with behavioural addictions. In the same internet survey as mentioned above, Japan was voted the tenth most internet addicted country with 62%.

Italy

The first international Congress on Internet Addiction Disorder was held in Milano, Italy from the 21st until the 22nd of March in 2014. In the 2018 survey, that was mentioned above, Italy was announced as the ninth most internet addicted country with 62%.

India

In 2014 the first NGO internet de-addiction center was build in New Delhi. In 2018 an internet survey acclaimed that India was the most internet addicted country amongst 23 different countries. 82% of its residents can not live without the internet.

Republic of Korea

In 2015 a meeting in Seoul was conducted, which discussed the clinical and diagnostic aspects of Internet addiction. They identified the need of a Multisectoral approach to education, training and awareness of IAD, the clarification between the health and social aspects of IAD and the sharing of information on IAD between countries.

Australia

Over half of the population in Australia spends an average of 18 hours a day on the internet. The most used site is Facebook with 9.8 million visits each week. 12% of Australians disclose a fear of missing out. In 2015 the Cabin Sydney, an addiction center that tackles any kind of addiction, was created.

United Kingdom

In 2018 the first NHS-funded Internet addiction center for all ages was founded. This center mostly revolves around gaming disorders, which was classified by the World Health Organisation as a mental health condition. According to the above mentioned survey 78% of citizens of the UK are addicted to the internet.

Russia

Researchers have concluded, that one-third of students in Russia have shown symptoms of Internet addiction, while only 10% of students are ordinary Internet users. As mentioned in the survey above 66% of Russians are dependant on the internet.

France

In France education is the primary focus on internet addiction. Parents are educated on how they should introduce the internet to their children. As per the survey above 64% of individuals in France are addicted to the internet.

reSTART

This facility was founded in 2009 in Seattle, Washington State. It was first created for pathological computer use. In 2013 they used a USB-connected keyboard device that provided a very low voltage shocks to users, who visited specific websites banned for them. In current times they work towards preventing net addiction.

Net Addiction

Dr. Kimberly Young founded the net addiction website in 1995 and is one of the first websites to be created concerning the Internet addiction disorder and its treatment.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

The World Health Organization has made many articles about Internet Addiction, specifically about Internet Gaming Disorder. In 2013 it was included in the classification of mental and behavioral disorders. In 2018 it was classified as a problem that should be further studied upon.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1995	Dr. Ivan K. Goldberg satirically conjured a disorder called Internet addiction disorder.
1995	One of the oldest treatment sites is being created by dr. Kimberly Young.
2005	Keith W Beard made an article, that helps distinguish a 'clear' diagnosis for Internet addiction disorder.
2005	The first Chinese 'boot camp' was created in Beijing.
2009	The internet addiction recovery website Restart is created.
2011	Japans first Internet addiction treatment programme is being created.
2013	The World Health Organisation (WHO) started recognising the Internet addiction disorder.
21-22 of March 2014	First International Congress on Internet addiction disorder in Italy.
2014	A meeting was conducted in Tokyo, Japan regarding the conditions associated with behavioural addictions.
2014	In new Delhi the first NGO internet de-addiction center is build.
2015	A meeting was conducted in Seoul, Republic of Korea regarding the clinical and diagnostic aspects of Internet addiction disorder.
2015	The Cabin Sydney was founded, which is an addiction center in Australia.
2016	China is under fire for using electro-shock treatment, which was banned seven years prior.
2018	The World Health Organisation (WHO) classified Internet gaming disorder a problem.
2018	The UK's first NHS-funded addiction center was founded in London.

2019	A study by Daniel L. King Ph. D. Showed that the average time spend in front of a screen increased rapidly between the years of 2004 and 2009.
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RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

In 2013 the American Psychiatric Association classified Internet gaming disorder among the mental and behavioral disorders (DSM-5)⁶. It was added amongst those disorders for further research.

Since 2014 the World Health Organization has conducted a series of events that are related to public health implications. These were organized by collaborating Centers, clinicians and academics to express their concern.

In 2018 the Internet gaming disorder was included in the 11th edition of the international classification of diseases (ICD-11)⁷. It was reported as a clinically recognizable and significant syndrome related to, family, social and occupational malfunctioning.

On the 3rd of December of 2018 a meeting was held with representatives of the video gaming industry. This meeting provided information on the public health implications of gaming. The World Health Organization and the representatives of the gaming industry exchanged opinions and views on how video games contribute to public health objectives.

Overall the World Health Organization has made 20 articles on the issue of internet gaming disorder. Up until now there have not been any UN Resolutions regarding this Topic.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

There have been some previous attempts to solve the issue. The most known are the online and 'in-person' treatment Centers. These Centers offer individual, family and group Therapy. Furthermore, therapies such as Dialectal Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and Art Therapy are in use.

Another Form of treatment is the multimodal treatment. With this approach the patient is being treated with medications, behavior therapy and education.

In addition to that China's 'boot camps' have also been regarded as successful. 70% of their patients overcome addiction. Up until 2016 these 'boot camps' were using electro-shock treatments, even though they were banned in 2011.

⁶ DSM-5 is the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)." *DSM-5*, www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm.

⁷ "ICD-11." *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, icd.who.int/en.

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Additionally in the restart program low voltage shocks were provided to patients who were in treatment if they used specific websites, that were blocked to them.

Ever since Internet addiction disorder became more present, educational programmes have been informing the public about the disorder. These programmes have made the public more aware and has de-stigmatised the Internet addiction disorder.

These however are only minor solutions and do not provide any long term solutions to diminish the problem.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS



Pngwave.com. Problematic Smartphone Use.

So many people, especially teenagers and young adults, suffer from Internet Addiction disorder and do not know it. One possible Solution would be conducting more research. There have been previous attempts to de-stigmatise the Internet addiction disorder, yet many individuals are misinformed about this topic. Because this is a very new topic and not all researchers agree there could be a meeting conducted regarding the Internet addiction disorder where scientists, mental health professionals and the World health organisation discuss what the official term for Internet addiction is. Furthermore, there could be a consideration of the causes of

IAD.

Another possible solution could be free call Centers for individuals that cannot afford Therapy. Taking into consideration that not everyone can afford Therapy or does not want to talk to a therapist in person because they have social anxiety or are afraid of judgement, there should be a 24/7 free hotline where everyone suffering could call and seek treatment.

A further possible solution could be having therapists being specially trained for internet addiction and recovery. These specialized therapists would understand the patient better and could diagnose the individual easier. The individual suffering could choose between individual, group, family, inpatient and outpatient treatment. Furthermore, these therapists could work in the above-mentioned free hotlines and operate them.

One last possible solution would be within recovery integrating specific regulations such as a time limit on the internet and engaging more in group activities. In addition to that the patient could receive a daily meditation time to help them relax.

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