

Problematic Internet Use Among Youngsters

Liljana Ignjatova

Faculty of Medicine, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia
liljana.kiteva.ignjatova@medf.ukim.edu.mk Abstract

While internet has positive uses many individuals develop Problematic Use of the Internet (PUI), an umbrella term including excessive and compulsive video gaming, compulsive sexual behavior, buying, gambling, streaming or social networks use. There is growing public and health authority concern about the health and societal costs of PUI across the lifespan. (Fineberg NA et al 2018). Epidemiology is unclear with a wide range of prevalence estimates (1% to 36.7%), likely reflecting population differences, diversity of assessment tools and different definitions of PIU. Young people/students are considered most vulnerable.

The aim of this study was to examine the prevalence of PUI among the youth in high schools and the possible difference between students of different nationalities. A PIUQ-18 questionnaire was used which was completed by 16 year old students in high schools in Republic of North Macedonia. PIUQ—at the present moment of unclear diagnostic criteria is not a diagnostic tool assessing Internet addiction, but a valid and reliable tool for the assessment of the problematic nature of one's Internet use. We use recommended 41 points as a cut off score for the distinguish of problematic Internet use. (Koronczai et al 2011) Out of 1645 questionnaires, only 1494 fully completed questionnaires were analyzed.

The results showed that among 903 (60.4%) students the score is 41 or higher and there is no significant difference between students of different nationality ($p=0.11$)

Conclusion: The high percentage of students with problematic use of the Internet cannot be considered just the lifestyle of “today” and requires social and public health efforts that will prevent and treat the threat to young people.

Key words: youth, high school, problematic use of Internet

Reference:

1. Fineberg NA et al. Manifesto for a European research network into Problematic Usage of the Internet. *European Neuropsychopharmacology* (2018)28, 1232–1246
2. Koronczai B et al. Confirmation of the Three-Factor Model of Problematic Internet Use on Off-Line Adolescent and Adult Samples. *CYBERPSYCHOLOGY, BEHAVIOR, AND SOCIAL NETWORKING* Volume 14, Number 11, 2011