Helping Parents Make Sense of Video Game Addiction

# Details

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# Abstract

Digital technologies, including video games, are the cause of much concern and much optimism. Many parents are concerned by reports in the popular press about the concept of video game addiction. This chapter aims to critically examine some of the most prolific concerns surrounding the concept of video game addiction and provide a discussion of the science behind such concerns. Among the concerns discussed in this chapter are (1) the idea that increasing amount of time spent playing is a symptom of addiction, (2) the notion that video games are forms of digital substances akin to cocaine or heroin, (3) the concern that Internet descriptions of symptoms can be used for diagnostic purposes, and 4) the concern that video games necessarily have negative consequences. We argue that the term “addiction” is not well suited to describe children’s involvement with digital media.

# Outcome

"We argue here that the term ‘addiction’ is not well-suited to describe the complex interaction that most children have with digital technologies, even when their engagement seems excessive [..] We believe that negative stereotypes about gamers in general and the social stigma applied to individual gamers do far more damage to the psychological development of young people than video games ever could on their own. Until evidence exists of a direct link between video games and harmful outcomes, such stigmatization should be avoided" (p. 259)