Prevalence and Risk Factors of Internet Addiction among Hungarian High School Students

# Details

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2540 Hungarian high-school students

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Parenting guidance / support

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Healthcare

# Abstract

Introduction: The extensive availability of the internet has led to the recognition of problematic internet use (so-called internet addiction—IA) mostly concerning adolescents. Aim: Here, we present a study focusing on the prevalence and risk factors of internet addiction in Hungarian high school students, using a questionnaire-based survey. Results: Overall, 3000 paper-based questionnaires were successfully delivered and 2540 responses were received (response rate of 84.6%). A total of 1309 males (mean age 17.6 ± 1.43 years) (51.5%) and 1231 females (mean age 17.5 ± 1.4 years) (48.5%) took part in our study. Internet addiction was detected in 486 (19.1%) students (232 males, mean age 17.6 ± 1.35 years, and 254 females, mean age 17.34 ± 1.37 years) based on the Problematic Internet Use Questionnaire. In a multivariate analysis, age (age of 17, OR = 3.688, p < 0.001), family status (living without parents) (OR = 2.091, p = 0.034), the size of the household (more than five people per household) (OR = 2.546, p = 0.026), spending more than 6 h online (OR = 5.457, p < 0.001), and daily time interval (OR = 84.316, p < 0.001) were significantly associated with internet addiction. Alcohol use (OR = 10.341, p = 0.001), drug intake (OR = 6.689, p = 0.001) and musculoskeletal disorders (OR = 3.966, p = 0.047) were also strongly associated with IA. Conclusion: A significant proportion of our students suffered from IA, which is associated with substance intake (possible abuse) and musculoskeletal pain in the multivariate analysis. Our study also draws attention to the preventable risk factors of IA, such as working hours or nighttime internet use, number of hours spent online and family surroundings.

# Outcome

Based on the result almost 20% of the respondents suffered from internet addiction what is significantly higher than the respective proportion in the general population, meaning that this age group is more at a risk from this respect. There was no difference related to gender, what is in contrast to previous results. IA is positively associated with living in a single-parent family or in big family, bit not with living in rural areas or low educational level. Also, hours spent online and some usage forms, especially gaming were connected to IA. IA were associated with substances abuse and musculoskeletal pain as well.

"Living without parents or living in a family with more than five people were associated with IA. Low social support, insecure attachment style, poor parent–adolescent relationships and lack of affection were previously shown as risk factors of internet addiction. Growing up without parents can be associated with the abovementioned factors which can explain the higher rate of IA in children living without parents. Living in a large family can also be associated with more conflicts, less communication, and lack of attention and parental support, which can also result in IA"
"In general, our study is one of the most comprehensive reports from Hungary, showing the prevalence and risk factors of internet use among adolescents. A significant proportion of our students suffered from IA, which was associated with substance intake (possible abuse) and musculoskeletal pain in the multivariate analysis. Our study also draws attention to the preventable risk factors of IA, such as working hours or night-time internet use, number of hours spent online and family circumstances."

(Kapus et al.: Prevalence and Risk Factors of Internet Addiction among Hungarian High School Students, Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2021, 18(13), 6989; https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18136989)