Correlates of Problematic Internet Use among college and university students in eight countries: An international cross-sectional study

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## Sample

An international, cross-sectional study with a total of 2749 participants recruited from universities/colleges of eight countries: Bangladesh, Croatia, India, Nepal, Turkey, Serbia, Vietnam, and United Arab Emirates (UAE). A total of 2643 participants (mean age 21.3 ± 2.6; 63% females) were included in the final analysis.

## Implications For Parents About

Parenting guidance / support

# Abstract

Background and aims: Internet use has increased worldwide exponentially over the past two decades, with no upto-date cross-country comparison of Problematic Internet Use (PIU) and its correlates available. The present
study aimed to explore the pattern and correlates of PIU across different countries in the European and the Asian
continent. Further, the stability of factors associated with PIU across different countries were assessed.
Materials and methods: An international, cross-sectional study with a total of 2749 participants recruited from
universities/colleges of eight countries: Bangladesh, Croatia, India, Nepal, Turkey, Serbia, Vietnam, and United
Arab Emirates (UAE). Participants completed the Generalized Problematic Internet Use Scale -2 (GPIUS2) assessing PIU, and the Patient Health Questionnaire Anxiety-Depression Scale (PHQ-ADS) assessing the depressive and anxiety symptoms.
Results: A total of 2643 participants (mean age 21.3 ± 2.6; 63% females) were included in the final analysis.
The overall prevalence of PIU for the entire sample was 8.4% (range 1.6% to 12.6%). The mean GPIUS2 standardized scores were significantly higher among participants from the five Asian countries when compared to the three European countries. Depressive and anxiety symptoms were the most stable and strongest factors associated with PIU across different countries and cultures.
Discussion and conclusions: The PIU is an important emerging mental health condition among college/university going young adults, with psychological distress being the strongest and most stable correlate of PIU across different countries and cultures in this study. The present study highlighted the importance of screening university and college students for PIU.

# Outcome

"The findings of this study indicated that 8.4% of the study participants showed PIU. However, the prevalence of PIU varied between countries, with 1.6% in Serbia to 12.6% in Nepal. The prevalence in three European countries was between 1.6% to 4.8% and its was lesser than in the five Asian countries (10.8% to 12.6%)."
"Depressive and anxiety symptoms were the most stable and strongest factors associated with PIU across different countries and cultures." (Balhara, Y.P et al., 2019, p. 117)