Usos problemáticos de Internet y depresión en adolescentes: Meta-análisis

Engl. transl.: Problematic Internet uses and depression in adolescents: A meta-analysis

# Keywords

* Meta-analysis
* adolescence
* Internet
* pathological use
* depression
* comorbidity
* correlation
* moderating effect

# Details

## Year

2020

## DOI

10.3916/c63-2020-10

## Issued

2020

## Language

Spanish

## Volume

28

## Issue

63

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Comunicar

## Publisher

Grupo Comunicar

## Topics

* Wellbeing
* Risks and harms
* Content-related issues
* Other

## Sample

The literature searches for studies related to pathological use and depressive symptoms in recent years (2013-2019) yielded interesting results. The 19 samples (K = 19) in the 13 selected studies comprised a total of 33,748 individuals. The smallest sample was 20 individuals, and the largest was 9,733 individuals.
Regarding the cultures examined in the research, 46.15% of the studies included European populations (France, Serbia, UK, Holland, Spain). The European population represented 42.81% of the total sample. A total of 30.76% of the studies were conducted in Asia (China and North Korea), accounting for 50.18% of the total sample. A total of 15.31% of the studies were carried out in Eurasian countries (Israel and Turkey), representing 2.60% of the total sample. Regarding the Americas (represented by Spanish-speaking countries), 7.69% of the studies were conducted in South America and represented 4.38% of the sample. The presence of various countries allowed an examination of differences among cultures.
It should be noted that no studies conducted in Africa, North America or Oceania were included. It would have been interesting to have a greater representation of Indo-European and Asian countries because the latter are only represented by China and South Korea, and Southeast Asia and the Middle East were ignored.
Regarding sex, it is worth indicating that two studies did not provide data related to this variable. Of the total sample, 38.15% were men and 41.02% were women. Three studies did not provide a mean age but instead present a range of years, while the rest reported the mean age of their participants. In sum, the mean age of the sample was 14.75 years (12-18 years old).

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

The need to implement educational strategies to detect pathologies such as depression on secondary education students to avoid problematic internet use

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

Widespread use of the Internet in 21st century society is not risk-free. This paper studies the comorbidity of some problematic uses of Internet with depression in order to assess their correlation. With that aim, a meta-analysis of 19 samples obtained from 13 different studies (n=33,458) was carried out. The subjects of these studies are adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 years (µ=15.68) from different cultures and continents (Europe, Euro-Asia, America and Asia). The effect size obtained from the use of a random-effects model (r=0.3, p<0.000) is significant, moderate and positive, thus confirming the relation between pathologic uses of the Internet and depression. Moreover, meta-regression test results showed that 9% of the variance (R2=0.09) is associated with the male gender, while age and culture are not significant variables. The variability rate of the studies is high (I2=87.085%), as a consequence of heterogeneity rather than publication bias, as Egger’s regression test shows (1-tailed p-value=0.25; 2-tailed p-value=0.50, and ?=1.57). Therefore, the need for specific interventions in secondary education dealing with this issue is evident to ensure that it does not extend into adult life.

# Outcome

The authors remark that the results of the meta-regression showed that age was not a significant moderating variable meaning that Internet addiction (IA), is not an evolutionary problem. Lozano-Blasco Cortés-Pascual (2020) also point out that according to results time spent online does seem to play a fundamental role. Nonetheless, "problematic use of the Internet and depressive symptoms appear to have a feedback loop so that one problem promotes the other" (Lozano-Blasco Cortés-Pascual, 2020: 111). The authors urge the need to intervene via education, adding that "because age and culture were not moderating variables, there is a risk of IA and depression being maintained in adulthood" (Lozano-Blasco Cortés-Pascual, 2010: 111).

[Translated by the coder]