Video games positively impact variety of health outcomes

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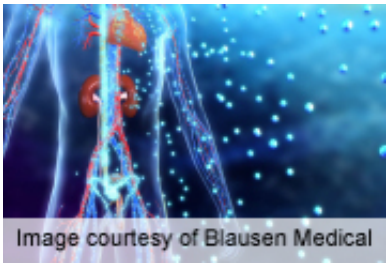
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(HealthDay) -- Although additional rigorous clinical trials are warranted, the literature suggests that video games can be useful in improving a variety of health outcomes, particularly those in the areas of psychological and physical therapy, according to research published online in the June issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

Brian A. Primack, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of Pittsburgh, and colleagues conducted a systemic review of the literature to identify 1,452 journal articles describing randomized controlled trials that evaluated the effect of video games on a positive, clinically relevant health consequence.

A total of 195 different health outcomes were evaluated from 38 randomized controlled studies that met the authors' criteria for inclusion. The researchers deemed the majority of studies to be of poor quality, with no blinding of study researchers and follow-up periods less than 12 weeks. Overall, however, video games were shown to improve outcomes associated with psychological therapy, physical therapy, physical activity, clinician skills, health education, pain distraction, and disease self-management.

"Despite these limitations, this comprehensive systematic review demonstrates that video games may have potential for improving health in a wide variety of areas, for a variety of sociodemographic groups," the authors conclude. "This is a valuable finding, particularly given the growing popularity and ubiquity of video games worldwide."

More information: Abstract
Full Text

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