

Are you addicted to the internet?

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People worried about the amount of time they spend online are invited to take part in a study about internet addiction.

Psychology researchers from QUT's Faculty of Health are trying to determine if internet use disorder exists and, if so, refine criteria for diagnosis.

Principal researcher Tania McMahon said she hoped to better understand excessive internet use, which could include problems with [social networking sites](#), online games, blogging or forums.

"At the moment it's not classified as a proper disorder like [alcohol dependence](#) or depression, for example," Ms McMahon said.

"Critics say it's a problem and that the cause is actually people with [anxiety and depression](#) and if we treat these disorders they won't be addicted to the internet.

"However, we're trying to find out if it is a disorder in itself."

Ms McMahon, who is studying for a Professional Doctorate of Clinical Psychology at QUT, said symptoms of excessive internet use include an inability to control the amount of time spent online, and neglect of work or personal responsibilities.

Internet use disorder is not part of the [American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders](#) (DSM), which

is widely used by health and [mental health professionals](#).

But Ms McMahon said the study could help facilitate its inclusion in the manual.

"A lot of people think internet addiction is a fad diagnosis but clinicians and therapists would disagree because they're the ones getting people with serious problems," she said.

To take part in the study, participants must be aged 16 or older, speak fluent English and identify as having mild to severe problems with internet use.

Participants will be asked to complete a confidential online screening survey, which includes questions such as, how would you rate your problems with internet use?

More information: Visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/internetuseresearch for more information on the research and how you can participate.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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