Videogame addiction linked to ADHD

April 25 2016, by Kim E. Andreassen

Persons with ADHD and psychiatric disorders seemingly have a problematic relationship to videogames and a pattern largely detrimental to health, work, school, and/or social relations than others. Credit: Colourbox/University of Bergen

Young and single men are at risk of being addicted to video games. The addiction indicates an escape from ADHD and psychiatric disorder.

"Video game addiction is more prevalent among younger men, and among those not being in a current relationship, than others," says, Cecilie Schou Andreassen, doctor of psychology and clinical psychologist specialist at Department of Psychosocial Science, University of Bergen (UiB).

Schou Andreassen has carried out a study with more than 20 000 participants who answered questions related to videogame addiction. The study is published in the journal *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, of the American Psychological Association.

Escape from psychiatric disorders

The study showed that video game addiction appears to be associated with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and depression.

"Excessively engaging in gaming may function as an escape mechanism for, or coping with, underlying psychiatric disorders in attempt to alleviate unpleasant feelings, and to calm restless bodies", Doctor Andreassen says.

According to Doctor Andreassen, the large study shows some clear tendencies as to which people develop addictive use of social media.

"The study implies that younger with some of these characteristics could be targeted regarding preventing development of an unhealthy gaming pattern."

Sex difference in addiction

The study also showed that addiction related to videogames and

computer activities shows sex differences.

"Men seem generally more likely to become addicted to online gaming, gambling, and cyber-pornography, while women to social media, texting, and online shopping", Schou Andreassen says.

Seven Warning Signs

The study uses seven criteria to identify video game addiction (developed by Lemmens et al., 2009), where gaming experiences last six months are scored on a scale from Never to Very often:

- You think about playing a game all day long
- You spend increasing amounts of time on games
- You play games to forget about real life
- Others have unsuccessfully tried to reduce your game use
- You feel bad when you are unable to play
- You have fights with others (e.g., family, friends) over your time spent on games
- You neglect other important activities (e.g., school, work, sports) to play games

Scoring high on at least four of the seven items may suggest that you are addicted to video gaming associated with impaired health, work, school and/or social relations.

"However, most people have a relaxed relationship to video games and fairly good control,"Doctor Cecilie Schou Andreassen highlights.

Provided by University of Bergen

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