New tool to assess digital addiction in children

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A new study developed and validated a tool for assessing children's overall addiction to digital devices. The study, which found that more than 12% of children ages 9-12 years were at risk of addiction to digital devices for uses including video gaming, social media, and texting, is published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

The article entitled "The Digital Addiction Scale for Children: Development and Validation" was coauthored by Nazir Hawi and Maya Samaha, Notre Dame University -Louaize (Mosbeh, Lebanon), and Mark Griffiths, Nottingham Trent University (UK). The researchers based the Digital Addiction Scale for Children (DASC) on the nine diagnostic criteria for addiction. They also mapped it onto six core addiction criteria: preoccupation, tolerance, withdrawal, mood modification, conflict, and relapse. They included three additional criteria: problems (with life necessities that could become uncontrollable due to digital addiction, such as sleep, discord with parents, or academic achievement); deception (how children lie to their parents about the amount of time and what they do on their digital devices); and displacement (parental feelings of disconnectedness from their children that result in compromising the family unit).

"Using validated scales, many pediatricians proactively screen their patients for problematic and risky internet use and internet gaming disorder to identify and address issues that may negatively affect child and adolescent health and wellbeing. The DASC may prove a useful assessment tool for clinicians to also consider," says Editor-in-Chief Brenda K. Wiederhold, Ph.D., MBA, BCB, BCN, Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, California and Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium.

More information: Nazir S. Hawi et al, The Digital Addiction Scale

for Children: Development and Validation, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* (2019). DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2019.0132

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