

# Recognizing addiction won't stigmatize all gamers, say researchers

June 14 2023

---



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

"Some clinicians argue that the gaming addiction label might create stigma toward regular gamers, by conveying the idea that gaming is inherently harmful," says Flinders University's Associate Professor Daniel King. "It's an argument that some have accepted without any evidence."

Flinders University researchers now have measured the effect of [addiction](#)-based and non-addiction-based conceptualizations of problem gaming on the [stigma](#) of gamers—and found that the gaming addiction category generates negligible stigma toward gamers.

The Flinders researchers' randomized controlled trial involved giving two groups of participants different information about gaming disorder. One identified it as a type of addiction, and the other linked problem gaming to lifestyle choices and rejected the notion that gaming was addictive.

"We were interested in whether explaining problem gaming as an addiction would affect how participants react emotionally to different gamers," says lead researcher by Christina Galanis, a Ph.D. student from the College of Education Psychology and Social Work at Flinders University.

"It was interesting that participants who received the addiction information about problem gaming tended to be less blaming of gamers for their problems, compared to those given the non-addiction information.

"We found that the addiction information made negligible difference to people's stigma responses, including avoidance, anger and fear, which showed that the diagnostic category seems unlikely to be an important influence on stigma toward gaming."

The research—"Gaming disorder and stigma-related judgements of gaming individuals: An online randomized controlled trial," by Christina Galanis, Nathan Weber, Paul Delfabbro, Joel Billieux, and Daniel King—has been published in *Addiction*.

"The concept of gaming addiction seems unlikely to be an important

influence on the public stigma of gaming," says Associate Professor King, "so this study is important for showing the value of the diagnostic category and that it is unlikely to affect other perceptions of gaming as a normal recreational activity."

**More information:** Christina R. Galanis et al, Gaming disorder and stigma-related judgements of gaming individuals: An online randomized controlled trial, *Addiction* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/add.16211](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.16211)

Provided by Flinders University

Citation: Recognizing addiction won't stigmatize all gamers, say researchers (2023, June 14) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-06-addiction-wont-stigmatize-gamers.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.