

Gaming is playing an electronic game, whether a person is using a gaming console, PC, or smartphone. Gaming is one of the most popular activities a person can do worldwide. 3 billion people play games and the gaming market is capped between \$180 billion to \$220 billion, about double the market of the global film industry. The origin of gaming goes way back to the 15th century. Back then, it referred to gaming in dice or card games and was referred to gambling up until the late 1900s when it applied to playing recreational board games and pen-and-paper role-playing games. In the 1970s the introduction of video games became more associated to the term “gaming.”

Throughout the decades, consequences have developed with gaming. One of those consequences is the internet gaming disorder. The disorder is also known as video game addiction and is characterized by severely reduced control over gaming habits, resulting in negative consequences in many aspects of a person’s life, such as their relationships, school, or work. The internet and video gaming addiction is debated among many researchers on whether it is an addiction or a mental illness. Many researchers believe that addiction to video games is similar to a gambling disorder. Video game addiction affects children, teens, and even adults.

Some of the consequences connected with video game addiction include:

1. Poor performance at school, work, or household responsibilities.
2. Symptoms such as sadness, anxiety, or irritability, when games are taken away or when gaming isn’t an option.
3. The need to spend more hours on playing video games to get to a certain level of enjoyment.
4. Giving up other enjoyed activities, and being unable to reduce playing time.
5. A decline in personal hygiene or grooming due to excessive hours of game time.

In today’s age, researchers are still trying to determine the exact cause of the addiction and the qualities of the internet and video games that make them addictive. So far, research has shown that the process when playing video games may trigger a release of dopamine which plays a key role in bodily functions including pleasurable reward and motivation. It is the same neurotransmitter that is involved in other disorders such as gambling and substance use. According to the Cleveland Clinic,

*“Recent neurological research shows similarities in the brains of people with video game addiction and substance use disorders.”* In getting diagnosed with video game addiction, your healthcare provider may refer you to a psychologist or psychiatrist. These professionals in their fields use the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) when diagnosing mental disorders. These health professionals may ask you questions about your medical and personal history, including gaming patterns and more. In general, for internet gaming disorder to be diagnosed, your gaming behavior patterns must be extreme enough to result in significant impairment.

You may wonder, how is the addiction treated? The main treatment option for addiction is talk therapy, also known as psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is a term for a variety of treatment techniques that aim to help you identify and change troubling emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. (Cleveland Clinic, 2024). Some of the types of psychotherapy that may benefit someone with video game addiction include:

1. Family or marriage counseling- This type of therapy educates family members about the disorder and creates a more stable home environment.
2. Group therapy- This type of therapy is when a group of people meets to describe and discuss their problems together under the supervision of a therapist or psychologist.
3. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)- This type of therapy is a structured, goal-oriented type of therapy. A therapist or psychologist helps you take a close look at your thoughts and emotions. You'll come to understand how your thoughts affect your actions.

In conclusion, numerous studies show that video game addiction affects only a small number of people who play online games or video games. However, if you play video games, it's important to be aware of the amount of time you're spending time on them, especially if you're starting to neglect other daily activities, such as hygiene, social interactions, and school or work. Billions of people around the world play video games and while the majority of people don't develop any complications, it is still possible for gaming to become all-consuming and negatively impact your daily functioning.

## REFERENCES:

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