

INTERNET ADDICTION AND RELATED ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS IN A SAMPLE OF MEDICAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Introduction: Internet addiction is a multi-faceted construct which is currently under review for inclusion in the forthcoming fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association. In Greece, a specialized outpatient counseling service has been setup by our Psychiatric department in order to provide counseling for any students with related problems.

Objectives: This survey has been setup in order to facilitate comparisons with those seeking help and validate the research measures used for their assessment. Furthermore, it sheds some light into Internet use from the future health professionals, an area of research that has been neglected.

Aims: To gather data on student Internet use, social media use, online gaming and gambling, use of online sexual content and any addictive phenomena related to those behaviors.

Methods: We employed an extensive battery of questionnaires identical to that employed by our counseling service. The battery includes detailed measures of all online behaviors, the SCL-90 psychopathology index, the Defense Styles Questionnaire (DSQ) and the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ).

Results: The presentation includes detailed results from the battery of questionnaires including comparisons with the validation samples and previous related research work carried out. Our sample demonstrated an unexpectedly high incidence of psychiatric symptoms and several cases of online addictive behaviors.

Conclusions: Our results are demonstrating the need for a broader reach out to the target populations since a large number of students may be hesitant to seek help for their online addictions or simply prefer to ignore them.