

Prevention of Online Addictions-A call for action? A Systematic Literature Review

Melina A. Throuvala, Mark D. Griffiths, Mike Rennoldson, Daria J. Kuss
Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

BACKGROUND ☒ Adolescence is a critical phase for identity, value, personality formation and rapid psychological development ☒ Adolescents are the highest risk group for the development of addictions ☒ Internet addiction is a phenomenon with high prevalence worldwide ☒ Problematic internet, gaming and social media use has increased ☒ Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) and Social Media Addiction raise a growing societal concern over adolescents' digital use ☒ Limited evidence base for prevention for online addictions ☒ Current emphasis on safety, responsible use and digital citizenship

METHODS

☒ A systematic database search of quantitative and qualitative studies, aiming:

☒ to identify school-based prevention programmes or protocols for internet addiction and gaming for adolescents and to examine their effectiveness

☒ to highlight strengths, limitations, and best practices to inform the design of new initiatives, by capitalizing on these studies' recommendations

PREVENTION

13.9%

European adolescents are at-risk
(EU-Net ADB, 2012)



Prevalence Rates:
0.8% in Italy to 26.7% in Hong Kong
(Kuss, Griffiths, Karila & Billieux, 2014)

0,8%

26,7%



SOCIAL MEDIA

RESULTS

The systematic literature search yielded 1,597 sources. 23 school based IA and screen time prevention programmes were identified. Limited evidence was found for school-based prevention programmes with focus on the areas of Internet Addiction/Gaming, Sedentary Behaviours/Screen Time and Multi-Risk Behaviours (alcohol, drugs, Internet addiction). The findings of the reviewed studies to date presented mixed outcomes and are in need of further empirical evidence.

DISCUSSION

The current review identified the following needs to be addressed in future designs, to:

- define the clinical status of Internet Addiction more precisely,
- use more current psychometrically robust assessment tools for the measurement of effectiveness (based on the most recent empirical developments),
- reconsider the main outcome of Internet time reduction as it appears to be problematic,
- build methodologically sound evidence-based prevention programmes,
- focus on skill enhancement and the use of protective and harm-reducing factors, and
- include IA as one of the risk behaviours in multi-risk behaviour interventions

PROGRAMMES

Internet Addiction/
Gaming

9

Sedentary Behaviours /
Screen Time

8

Multi-Risk Behaviours

6

CONCLUSION

There is a lack of school-delivered, evidence-based prevention for online addictions. The few conflicting outcomes of current studies emphasize the need for additional research timely and the use of evidence base that will contribute to the development of impactful prevention programs to promote balanced internet use amongst adolescents at the school level.

GAMING

e-mail: melina.throuvala2016@my.ntu.ac.uk