

Game Addiction

Video games from their inception in the 70's with simple games such as pong, to the vast amount of money spent in video game arcades in the 80's, to the popularity of video games systems from the past such as Atari, Intellivision, Nintendo, to the modern day Xbox and Playstation. Video games advancement in visuals, artificial intelligence, and accessibility have brought joy and entertainment to many households. What has come with that though is an addiction to them which has affected children and adults.

Video game addiction, also called internet gaming disorder, is a condition characterized by severely reduced control over gaming habits, resulting in negative consequences in many aspects of your life, including self-care, relationships, school and work.

This condition can include gaming on the internet or any electronic device, but most people who develop significant gaming issues mainly play on the internet.

Video game addiction affects all age groups but studies have shown that adult males are most likely to have this condition. The symptoms of this addiction are:

- Poor performance at work or household responsibilities as a result of excessive video game playing.
- Withdrawal symptoms, such as sadness, anxiety or irritability, when games are taken away or gaming isn't possible.
- A need to spend more and more time playing video games to get the same level of enjoyment.
- Giving up other previously enjoyed activities and/or social relationships due to gaming.
- Being unable to reduce playing time and having unsuccessful attempts to quit gaming despite the negative consequences it's causing.
- Lying to family members or others about the amount of time spent playing video games.
- A decline in personal hygiene or grooming due to excessive video gaming.
- Using video games as a way to escape stressful situations at work or school or to avoid conflicts at home.

- Using video games to relieve negative moods, such as guilt or hopelessness.

Video gaming at one point was considered a fad in the 70's that some thought would go away. But today video games and popularity are a main form of entertainment that pulls in more revenue than the movie industry itself. In 2021 the gaming industry earned 180 billion dollars.

Statistics indicate that video gaming addiction is by far the most problematic in people aged 34 and younger, with the average age of a gaming addict being 24 years of age.

Over two billion people play video games worldwide, and the number is likely to surpass three billion by 2023. 3-4% of gamers are addicted to video games. In a 2021 systematic review and meta-analysis That means there can be as many as 60 million people (or more) suffering from gaming disorders. Game addicts neglect their basic needs such as food, sleep, exercise and personal hygiene in order to continue playing video games.

It was discovered that between 0.3% and 1% of the general population have symptoms associated with gaming disorder.

The risk factors involved in developing video game addiction can be both psychological and behavioral. The psychological risk factors are Impulsivity, low self-control and anxiety. The behavioral risks are spending an increasing amount of money on gaming, Increasing weekday gaming time and not completing work and home responsibilities.

Gaming addiction involves ethnicities and gender since gaming is so popular. Gaming addiction by ethnicity shows that caucasians play games the most by 67%, followed by hispanics 15%, African 12%, and Aians 5%.

By gender males and females are gamers equally but the numbers decrease among adults compared to teenagers. Single people are more likely to have video game addiction and younger adults have more problems with video game playing.

Video game addiction has also increased since COVID. Studies shown that since post COVID

- People played an average of eight hours and 27 minutes of video games per week.
- Forty-four percent of adults played video games for at least seven days a week.
- Twenty-five percent of adults played video games for at least 12 hours weekly.

- One-third of adults reported playing video games for at least five consecutive hours.
- Binge gaming increased by 13%.

Video games are deliberately designed to be addictive. The gaming industry employs cognitive psychologists, reward psychologists, and computer science and human behavioral scientists. They apply their knowledge of attention, perception, memory, emotion, reward and learning principles, and psychological vulnerabilities in game design. Every second of color, light, sound, purpose, task, instruction and experience within video games is carefully crafted to keep players (brains) gaming for as long as possible and spending money on in-game purchases.

Adults deemed as being more responsible are more likely to continue their addictions since they are able to pay for more expensive gaming systems, equipment and audio devices on their own to keep their addiction going. Compared to teenagers it can be said that parents are responsible for their children's addictions since most teenagers can't purchase video games without money from their parents.

As for younger gamers, they are online more than ever before. New research shows that teens spend more than eight and a half hours online for entertainment. This increased exposure to digital media—including gaming as well as social media, web surfing, and watching videos—can trigger gaming disorder.

But the causes of video game addiction go deeper than how much time kids spend playing. There are underlying psychological factors that increase a teen's vulnerability to video game addiction. Research shows a correlation between teenage video game addiction and the prevalence of depression and anxiety. Studies have also found that adolescents with an insecure attachment to parents are more prone to internet addiction, including gaming.

Teenage video game addiction works the same way as other so-called process addictions or behavioral addictions. They activate the brain's reward center, releasing the "feel-good" chemical dopamine. This creates a craving for the behavior and a compulsion to continue it. Therefore, kids addicted to video games feel an uncontrollable urge to continue playing.

Teenagers that engage in pathological video gaming are at higher risk of substance abuse disorder, because teenage video game addiction primes the brain for other types of addiction.

Also physical issues are produced by the sedentary nature of gaming. As a result, the negative effects of video game addiction include the following:

- • Difficulty paying attention and controlling impulses

- · Poor emotion management
- · Decreased levels of compassion, creativity, and interest in learning
- · Depression, irritability, and anxiety
- · Lowered immune function caused by chronic stress
- · Unhealthy diet and weight
- · Sleep deprivation, insomnia, and circadian rhythm disorders
- · Becoming desensitized to violence
- · Enhanced risk of ADHD

Parents that want to limit and control the rate at which their children are gaming should attempt the following:

- Set a family agreement on which games can be played, when, and for how long. Hold each other accountable for sticking to the rules.
- Keep a firm rule against gaming during other activities, in-person or virtual.
- Confine game consoles to communal rooms (kids with consoles in their bedrooms log more than triple the play time).
- Consider programming all computers to “lock down” during certain hours.
- When everyone retires, put smartphones to bed in a different room. (Use a landline or apps-free phone for legitimate wee-hours emergencies.)
- Require that everyone get the whole family’s permission before downloading any new video games.

Video games are popular amongst all groups and can have serious effects and well-being . It will be up to teenagers and adults to purposely adopt strategies not to be addicted to gaming and moderating the amount of screen time they are having so that they will not affect their way of having a normal lifestyle and poor health.

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