



INTERNET GAMING DISORDER

INTRODUCTION:

Internet Gaming Disorder, or IGD, is the excessive use of computers or other devices that provide the user access to the Internet, for example tablets, and smartphones, for online activities to the extent that they profoundly compromise daily life activities and responsibilities. In 2013, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5 (DSM-5) included IGD in Section III—Conditions Warranting More Experience and Research before it might gain recognition officially (APA, 2013). Young and Nabuco de Abreu (2011) prefer the term Internet Use Disorder, or IUD, because it more closely encompasses the countless Internet activities available rather than simply gaming. Due to the expansive online venues available using the Internet, some experts argue to change the name of the disorder, for example, "Excessive Web Use" or another name that is more inclusive of the myriad ways possible to use the Internet excessively (Wolchover, 2012). Time will tell if the disorder is ever recognized officially, and by what name, although "Internet Use Disorder" covers a much broader spectrum than gaming.

Always consult a mental health or medical professional regarding any questions you may have about a mental health diagnosis and treatment options.



SYMPTOMS:

According to the DSM-5, there is insufficient research on IGD to establish diagnostic criteria and prevalence, therefore it strongly encourages purposeful investigations on IGD. In 2014, Wallace identified the following symptoms associated with IGD:

- Overwhelming preoccupation with online-activities to an extent, that leads to impairment or distress
- Inability to limit time spent on the Internet
- Loss of other interests
- The need to spend increasing time on the Internet
- Unsuccessful attempt to quit Internet-use
- Use of the Internet to improve or escape aversive conditions, for example stress, Unfavorable duties, dysphoric mood
- Withdrawal symptoms when the Internet is no longer available.

In addition, Wallace discusses several subtypes of IGD including inappropriate pornography use, overwhelming, Online-gaming, Internet-shopping, online social networking, or blogging. Some of these to be symptoms of other mental health problems. Wallace, 2014, offers two examples, 1) that excessive Internet-shopping might be a symptom of a depressive disorder and 2) extreme social networking can be an avoidance-behavior among individuals suffering from social anxiety disorder.

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TREATMENT:

According to the DSM-5, despite IGD receiving extensive media coverage, there are few randomized trials on the treatment of IGD using a double-blind model. Most of the research on IGD to date used inconsistent criteria to define IGD or lacked a highly robust methodological quality in assessing the therapeutic outcome. That said, Wallace, in 2014, discussed cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and self-help programs having effective outcomes on persons with IGD. Along with this, family counseling and psychological education therapies might also be helpful treatment approaches. Currently, there is a paucity of data on the pharmacotherapy efficacy on IGD. However, the following approved medications are recommended: antidepressants, anxiolytics, mood stabilizers, and Naltrexone.

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