

WHAT WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT GAMING DISORDER? A USEFUL OVERVIEW OF THIS NEW PROCESS ADDICTION

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Introduction / Issues: Internet addiction (IA) is an umbrella term which addresses repeated online behaviours leading to significant harm. The World Health Organization (WHO) has included gaming disorder in the spectrum of addictions. The aim is to examine the theoretical underpinnings of gaming disorder.

Method / Approach: A narrative literature review involving an evaluation of the knowledge developed so far (i.e., reviewing relevant literature to the validity of gaming disorder to offer a useful overview).

Key Findings: Gaming disorder has been critically surveyed from several angles of the phenomenon: Evolution of this new addiction problem, national and cross-cultural perspectives, how it is screened, its estimated prevalence, the usual population groups, the user profile, treatments, prognoses, and policy options drawn for its prevention. Main findings are: It is the longest studied process addiction after gambling, sometimes mixed with IA, measured through proper tools but not clinically tested, and there is still a need for epidemiological studies. There are ongoing debates, and while recognised by the WHO, research is quickly being updated. Improvements in clinical settings are still slowly developed, as well as policy options, and strategies to prevent it.

Discussions and Conclusions: This review is valuable for researchers, clinicians, and workers in the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector. There is evidence about the existence of gaming disorder, but it is not consistent with regards to its diagnosis and treatment. Lessons learned about how to tackle this health problem, train professionals in the AOD sector, and advance research will be shared.

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