Video Game Addiction - What It Is, Symptoms and Treatment

By Stephen Smith

Video games have been a big hit in America since the 1970s, starting with simple games. These early games didn't look as cool as the ones we have now, but many kids, teens, and adults still loved playing them. People quickly saw that video games could take up a lot of time because players wanted to keep trying to win. Nowadays, being addicted to video games is seen as similar to being addicted to gambling, where the excitement of winning makes people want to play more.

Back then, you could only play most games on arcade machines, which weren't always open. But now, you can play games almost anywhere, anytime, on handheld devices, computers, and smartphones. Video games have become much fancier, with amazing worlds, many characters, and complex stories. Shy kids or teens might prefer playing online with others as characters with amazing powers instead of interacting with real-life friends.

When Gaming Becomes an Addiction

Not everyone believes that playing video games is harmful or leads to addiction. Many people, including parents, think that video games can boost creativity, encourage teamwork, and improve problem-solving skills in kids. However, if children spend too much time gaming and neglect their schoolwork, physical exercise, family time, or socialising with friends, the benefits of gaming become less obvious.

Additionally, there is a debate about whether video gaming is similar to gambling. Some argue that gaming can become addictive in the same way gambling can, as both can trigger a release of dopamine in the brain, providing a rush that players seek repeatedly. However, others point out that, unlike gambling, video gaming doesn't involve financial stakes or material losses, and winning a game relies on skill and reflexes rather than luck. This distinction highlights that while video gaming can be compelling, its impact differs from gambling on https://india.1xbet.com.

There is a debate about whether playing video games can be as addictive as gambling, taking drugs, or drinking too much alcohol.

According to Psychology Today, comparing video games to gambling isn't quite right. Unlike gambling, video games don't involve losing money or other valuable things. Winning a video game takes skill and quick thinking while winning at gambling is mostly about luck.

We don't exactly know why gaming can be so addictive, but scientists think it might be because playing and winning games releases dopamine, a chemical in the brain that makes you feel happy and excited. This same chemical is involved in other addictions, like drinking alcohol or using drugs.

Right now, video game addiction isn't officially listed as a mental disorder in the big book doctors use to diagnose mental illnesses. However, being overly obsessed with games and ignoring real-life activities or responsibilities looks like addictive behaviour. How can parents tell if their child's gaming has gone from just fun to an addiction? Here are some signs to watch for:

- Doing poorly in school, at work, or with chores because of too much gaming
- Ignoring other hobbies or friends
- Not taking care of personal hygiene or grooming
- Not being able to limit gaming time
- Getting irritable, anxious, or angry when having to stop gaming, even for a little while
- Needing to play more and more to feel the same enjoyment
- Showing signs of withdrawal, like not eating, not sleeping well, being restless, or having emotional outbursts if the game is taken away
- Using games to escape from stressful situations at school, work, or home

Popular Beliefs About Video Games

There are many wrong ideas about video games. Some people think video games are all bad because they encourage violence and sexism and make kids feel lonely. Other people believe that video games can be good for learning and building character, letting kids pretend to be strong heroes. The truth is that video games have both good and bad sides, and how they affect someone often depends on how that person feels about games and life.

Parenting Science suggests that what makes video games so compelling might not be because they are addictive but because of something called "flow." Flow happens when someone gets so absorbed in an activity that they lose track of time. Any interesting activity, like working on a project or studying, can create this feeling of flow. There's nothing wrong with being deeply involved in a fun and educational game, but it can become a problem if the person can't stop playing, and it takes time away from other important activities or relationships.

Health Risks and Concerns

Playing video games too much can be bad for both kids and adults. Here are some key concerns for young players:

Sedentary lifestyle: Spending hours sitting and playing games can be bad for a young person's body. Not getting enough exercise can lead to weight gain, poor posture, and a higher risk of type 2 diabetes in kids and teens.

Lack of social engagement: Even though video games involve playing with others online, they don't teach kids how to socialise. It's important for kids to learn how to interact with their peers in person, which they might miss out on if they play too much.

Problems with concentration and attention: Fast-paced video games can make it harder for kids to concentrate on activities that require more focus, like reading books.

Avoidance of developmental tasks: Teenagers need to go through challenges and learn about themselves to become mature adults. While some video games can teach valuable lessons, playing games to escape real-life problems can prevent kids from growing up properly.

Increased aggression or violence: Kids who play a lot of violent video games might become more aggressive. Parents should be aware of the game content and use the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) ratings to choose appropriate games.

Seizures and repetitive stress injuries: Some kids with epilepsy or seizure disorders can have seizures triggered by the flashing lights in video games. Playing games for too long can also cause repetitive stress injuries to the wrists or hands.

Parents should monitor their children's gaming habits to ensure a healthy balance with other activities and responsibilities.

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