

AS32-01 - INTERNET ADDICTION OR ELSE? A WAY OUT OF CONCEPTUAL CRISIS AND A CALL FOR NOSOLOGICAL PRECISION

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The appeal of the Internet rests on many factors, including intense intimacy, disinhibition, loss of boundaries, timelessness, being in control, experimentation with identity, interactivity and play, and the ease of forming supportive online communities, which may be transferred to real life. For all the pleasures the Internet may offer, recent studies suggest that some types of excessive usage may lead to symptoms associated with addiction.

Internet addiction appears to be emerging as mental health problem for society. It is associated with psychopathology, including mood and anxiety disorders, ADHD, depression, schizophrenia, OCD, and social phobia/anxiety. Thus, Internet addiction has the potential to be a severe mental health problem, suggesting that further scientific investigation is necessary.

Nevertheless, a recently published meta-study suggests that the abundance of diverse terminology and measurement currently leaves the scientific community in a conceptual crisis about the factual prevalence of and negative consequences associated with Internet addiction. Specifically, scholars claim that Internet addiction is too heterogeneous as a concept, so that it necessitates a reconceptualization with regards to specific Internet applications. Recent reviews suggest that Internet gaming addiction, Internet gambling addiction, and social networking site addiction appear as valid and discrete phenomena worthy of separate investigation.

The purpose of this talk is to

- (i) Highlight the different conceptualizations of Internet addiction currently used,
- (ii) And to propose a nosological framework which pays respect to the diversity of phenomena that that are presently included in the concept of Internet addiction.