

Scientific evidence supports the inclusion of Gaming Disorder in ICD-11

There is substantial clinical and public health evidence that video gaming, particularly online gaming, can become excessive and lead to psychological distress and/or significant functional impairment that requires professional treatment. This notion has led to the inclusion of Gaming Disorder (GD) as an official mental health condition in the International Classification of Diseases, 11th Edition (ICD-11; World Health Organization, 2018; <https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en#/http://id.who.int/icd/entity/1448597234>).

Existing evidence shows that excessive video gaming is associated with significant deficits in the personal life, family roles, social, educational, and occupational responsibilities, and other important areas of functioning. Furthermore, an increasing number of published reports are now documenting treatment-seeking cases with functional impairment. These reports are not limited to East Asian countries, such as China, South Korea, or Japan, but are also coming from Europe and other parts of the world, implying that this is a global phenomenon. Longitudinal studies also support the notion that functional impairment (e.g. impaired functionality and onset of psychopathological symptoms) may be caused by prolonged excessive use of video games. Comorbidity studies, examining treatment-seeking populations have indicated that gaming disorder represents a primary health condition in need of intervention. In this context, an appropriate level of public concern and awareness (without rising to panic) related to excessive gaming and gaming disorder is required. The best available evidence and the current clinical context support the need for a diagnostic entity for gaming disorder from both a clinical and public health perspective.

Supporting References

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