



UNLOCKING HOPE: BATTLING VIDEO GAME ADDICTION IN CHILDREN THROUGH THE HEALING TOUCH OF NURSING

Prof. Gangotri Khairwar

Principal, Community Health Nursing (Dept), Regional Institute of Nursing, Jabalpur

ABSTRACT

This comprehensive review article delves into the concerning issue of video game addiction in children and underscores the pivotal role of nursing in addressing this growing problem. By examining the definition, causes, and consequences of video game addiction in children, as well as nursing interventions and prevention strategies, this article aims to provide a thorough and in-depth understanding of the subject. The importance of nursing in tackling this critical public health issue cannot be understated, as they play a central role in assessing, treating, and educating children and their families about healthy digital media use.

KEYWORDS: *Video game addiction, Child addiction, Nursing, Prevention, Intervention*

1. INTRODUCTION

Background: The introduction of digital technologies, including video games, has revolutionized the way children entertain themselves and engage with media. While digital media can have numerous benefits, including educational content and entertainment, it has also given rise to a concerning issue - video game addiction in children. In the ever-evolving landscape of digital technology, video games have emerged as a prominent form of entertainment and recreation for children in India and around the world. While video games can offer educational benefits, entertainment, and a sense of achievement, they also present a dual-edged sword in the form of video game addiction—a phenomenon that has been on the rise in recent years. This article explores the critical issue of video game addiction in children, with a particular focus on current cases in India, and underscores the indispensable role of nursing professionals in addressing this growing problem.

Current Video Game Addiction Cases in India: The subcontinent of India has witnessed a significant surge in video game addiction cases among children and adolescents, mirroring the global trend. As access to digital devices and high-speed internet has expanded, so too has the prevalence of video game addiction. With the advent of online multiplayer games, the appeal of virtual worlds has become increasingly compelling. India is now home to numerous young gamers who spend extensive hours in virtual realms, often neglecting other essential aspects of their lives. As per the data published in the Indian Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health 2020, about 3.5 per cent Indian adolescents suffer from Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD)

The rapid growth of video game addiction cases in India is indicative of a broader global phenomenon. As the lines between online and offline life blur, children in India find themselves more immersed in digital media, including video games, than ever before. The consequences of this digital dependency are manifold, affecting their mental health,

physical well-being, and academic performance. In this context, the role of nursing professionals becomes paramount as they are uniquely positioned to recognize, address, and mitigate the adverse effects of video game addiction on young lives.

This article seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue by examining the definition and diagnostic criteria of video game addiction, its prevalence and contributing factors, and the multifaceted consequences it entails. Additionally, it will explore the critical role of nursing professionals in assessing, treating, and educating children and their families about healthy digital media use. As the number of cases continues to escalate, it is vital to recognize the urgency of this problem, and nursing professionals stand as the first line of defence in the battle against video game addiction

Video game addiction, also known as gaming disorder or internet gaming disorder, is a condition characterized by excessive and compulsive use of video games, resulting in significant impairments in various aspects of an individual's life. It has gained increasing recognition as a legitimate public health concern, prompting discussions about its impact on mental health, physical health, and overall well-being. This article explores the phenomenon of video game addiction in children, its causes, consequences, and the indispensable role of nursing professionals in addressing this growing problem.

Objectives: The primary objectives of this article are as follows:

- To provide an in-depth exploration of video game addiction in children, including its definition and diagnostic criteria.
- To examine the prevalence and trends associated with video game addiction.
- To identify and analyze the risk factors contributing to video game addiction in children.



- To shed light on the psychological, physical, social, and academic consequences of video game addiction in children.
- To discuss the multifaceted role of nursing professionals in managing video game addiction, including assessment, intervention, treatment, education, and counseling.
- To emphasize the importance of prevention strategies involving parents, schools, and communities.
- To advocate for a collaborative approach involving healthcare professionals, educators, and policymakers.
- To address ethical and legal considerations associated with managing video game addiction in children.

2. VIDEO GAME ADDICTION IN CHILDREN: AN OVERVIEW

Definition and Diagnostic Criteria: Video game addiction is characterized by a persistent and compulsive engagement with video games to the detriment of other important life activities. It can lead to a range of negative consequences, both psychologically and socially. Recognizing the seriousness of this issue, the World Health Organization (WHO) included "gaming disorder" in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), officially acknowledging it as a mental health condition. The diagnostic criteria for gaming disorder, according to the ICD-11, include impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite negative consequences.

While there isn't a specific diagnosis for video game addiction in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), the manual used by mental health professionals in the United States, it does acknowledge the existence of internet gaming disorder as a condition that requires further research.

Prevalence and Trends: The prevalence of video game addiction among children has been on the rise, especially in the age of smartphones, readily accessible internet, and a plethora of engaging online games. Research studies have revealed varying prevalence rates in different regions, ranging from 1% to 9% of children and adolescents being at risk for or affected by gaming disorder. These statistics underscore the urgency of addressing this issue, as it impacts a significant portion of the younger population.

Risk Factors: Understanding the factors contributing to video game addiction is critical in addressing this problem. Several risk factors have been identified, including:

- **Excessive Screen Time:** A high number of hours spent on screens, including video game consoles, computers, and smartphones, is a common risk factor. Excessive screen time is often associated with neglecting other essential activities, such as homework, social interactions, and physical exercise.
- **Game Design:** The design of video games plays a significant role in addiction. Game developers employ various techniques to make games more engaging,

including reward mechanisms, social interaction elements, and constant challenges.

- **Psychological Factors:** Individuals with certain psychological vulnerabilities, such as high impulsivity or escapism tendencies, may be more susceptible to developing video game addiction.

3. CONSEQUENCES OF VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

Psychological Impact: Video game addiction can lead to a range of psychological consequences. Individuals affected by gaming disorder often experience withdrawal symptoms when they are not playing, which can include irritability, restlessness, and a strong desire to return to gaming. Additionally, gaming disorder has been associated with depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. This highlights the importance of recognizing video game addiction as a mental health concern and the need for intervention and treatment.

Physical Health Implications: Excessive video gaming often goes hand in hand with sedentary behavior, leading to a host of physical health problems. Prolonged periods of inactivity can result in obesity, musculoskeletal problems, and even sleep disturbances due to late-night gaming sessions. The impact on physical health is a growing concern as it contributes to the overall well-being of children.

Social and Academic Consequences: Video game addiction can have profound effects on a child's social life and academic performance. Children addicted to video games may withdraw from social interactions, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Furthermore, addiction can affect school performance, as children may prioritize gaming over homework and classwork, resulting in lower grades and a reduced focus on academic pursuits.

The consequences of video game addiction are multifaceted and can have a substantial impact on a child's overall development and well-being. Recognizing these consequences is essential in order to implement effective intervention strategies.

4. THE ROLE OF NURSING IN MANAGING VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

Assessment: Nursing professionals play a pivotal role in assessing video game addiction in children. During well-child visits or other healthcare interactions, nurses can inquire about a child's digital media habits, including video game use. It's crucial for nurses to recognize the signs and symptoms of video game addiction, such as withdrawal, a decline in academic performance, or social withdrawal. By identifying these early warning signs, nursing professionals can take proactive steps to address the issue.

Intervention and Treatment: Once video game addiction is identified, nursing professionals can initiate appropriate interventions and treatments. These may include cognitive-behavioral therapy, family counseling, and behavioral interventions to help children and their families understand and manage addiction. Nurses can also work closely with psychologists and other mental health professionals to provide comprehensive care.



Education and Counseling: Nursing professionals are ideally positioned to educate children and their families about healthy digital media use. They can offer guidance on setting boundaries, time management, and the importance of a balanced lifestyle. Moreover, they can provide counseling to children struggling with addiction, helping them develop coping strategies and resilience.

Nursing professionals also serve as a source of emotional support for children and their families as they navigate the challenges of video game addiction. By offering empathetic counseling and guidance, nurses contribute significantly to the healing process.

5. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Parental Guidance: Preventing video game addiction starts with parents and caregivers. They must be aware of the risks associated with excessive screen time and video game use. Parents can set limits on screen time, encourage physical activity, and provide alternatives to video games. Additionally, they should be vigilant in monitoring their child's gaming behavior and look out for signs of addiction.

School-Based Programs: Schools can play a vital role in preventing video game addiction by incorporating awareness programs into their curricula. These programs can educate students about the potential dangers of excessive gaming and promote responsible media consumption. School counselors and nurses can also be instrumental in identifying at-risk students and providing support and resources.

Community Engagement: Communities can come together to address the issue of video game addiction. Support groups for parents, educational workshops, and community initiatives can help raise awareness and provide resources for affected families. Collaboration with local healthcare facilities and professionals is essential for a comprehensive approach to addressing the problem.

6. COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: A collaborative approach involving various stakeholders is crucial for effectively managing video game addiction in children. Healthcare professionals, educators, policymakers, and parents must work together to develop and implement strategies that address the issue from multiple angles. This collaboration ensures that children receive comprehensive care and support.

Policy Development: Policymakers play a significant role in addressing video game addiction by developing regulations and guidelines for responsible gaming. They can work with healthcare organizations and educational institutions to create policies that promote healthy digital media use and protect children from the potential harms of addiction.

Research and Data Collection: Continued research and data collection are essential to better understand the scope and impact of video game addiction. Researchers can investigate the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies and

identify emerging trends in video game addiction. This data informs healthcare practices and policy development.

7. ETHICAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Privacy and Confidentiality: When nursing professionals assess and treat children with video game addiction, it is essential to uphold privacy and confidentiality standards. The sensitive nature of addiction treatment requires nurses to maintain the privacy of patient information and adhere to legal and ethical guidelines.

Informed Consent: Informed consent is crucial when children receive treatment for video game addiction. Nurses must ensure that both the child and their parents or guardians fully understand the treatment options, risks, and benefits. This informed consent process respects the autonomy and decision-making capacity of the child and their family.

Legal Obligations: Nursing professionals must be aware of their legal obligations when working with children affected by video game addiction. These obligations include reporting child abuse or neglect if it is suspected, as well as adhering to state and federal laws related to healthcare and mental health treatment for minors.

8. CONCLUSION

Summary of Key Points: In summary, video game addiction in children is an increasingly prevalent and concerning issue with far-reaching consequences. The psychological, physical, social, and academic impacts of video game addiction necessitate urgent attention and intervention. Nursing professionals play a central role in identifying, treating, and educating children and their families about this addiction.

Implications for Nursing Practice: The importance of nursing in addressing video game addiction cannot be overstated. Nurses are well-positioned to assess, treat, and provide emotional support to children struggling with addiction. They also have a vital role in educating children and their families about responsible digital media use and in guiding them toward healthier alternatives.

Future Directions: As technology continues to evolve, so do the challenges associated with video game addiction. Future research should focus on the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies, the impact of emerging technologies on addiction, and the development of standardized diagnostic criteria. Additionally, policy development and advocacy efforts are needed to address this public health concern comprehensively.

In conclusion, video game addiction in children is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires the collective efforts of healthcare professionals, educators, policymakers, and families to address. Recognizing the critical role of nursing in managing this problem is the first step toward developing effective solutions and promoting the well-being of the younger generation



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