

da " www.healthnews.com ", "Teens With Psychosocial Disorders Prone to Internet Addiction"
By: Madeline Ellis, Published: Thursday, 8 October 2009

Most people are able to integrate online time (internet) into their lives in a balanced healthy manner, but others develop a stronger dependency, often replacing work, school, friends and even family with countless hours surfing the Web, instant messaging and blogging, or playing Internet video games (it is estimated that as many as 10 percent of Internet users may be considered addicted).

Experts say that people who abuse the Internet are typically struggling with other problems, like anxiety or depression, and new research lends credence to that theory.

Cheng-Fang Yen, MD, PhD, of Kaohsiung Medical University Hospital in Taiwan, and colleagues conducted a prospective study of 2,293 seventh-graders, whose average age was 12, from 10 junior high schools in southern Taiwan in September of 2005. The students were asked to fill out questionnaires that assessed whether they had attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, social phobia or abnormal feelings of hostility. Then, 6, 12 and 24 months later, they were asked about their Internet usage, including the number of hours they spent on the Internet and the sorts of sites they frequented.

After two years, roughly 11 percent of the students were addicted to the Internet. Males, those who spent more than 20 hours a week on the Internet and teens who played online games were more likely to be deemed addicted. Boys and girls with ADHD had a 72 percent increased risk of developing unhealthy dependence on the Internet and those who exhibited significant hostility had a 67 percent increased risk. Girls with social phobias and those suffering depression were also at greater risk, though these factors did not affect boys.

Internet addiction will be recognized as a separate disorder by the American Psychiatric Association and included as a separate illness in the next edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders?