INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION: CAUSES, SYMPTOMS, AND NEGATIVE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES"

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Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqola internet va ijtimoiy tarmoqlarga bog'liqlikning sabablari, alomatlari, ijtimoiy va psixologik oqibatlarini chuqur tahlil qiladi. Raqamli texnologiyalarning tez rivojlanishi bilan internet kundalik hayotning ajralmas qismiga aylandi. Shu bilan birga, me'yordan oshiq foydalanish ruhiy salomatlik, o'quv va ish samaradorligi, shuningdek ijtimoiy munosabatlarga salbiy ta'sir ko'rsatadi. Maqolada bog'liqlikning psixologik va neyrobiologik mexanizmlari, rivojlanish bosqichlari va oldini olish hamda davolash usullari yoritiladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *internetga bog'liqlik, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, psixologik salomatlik, raqamli odatlar, kognitiv ta'sir.*

Annotation: *This article deeply analyzes the causes, symptoms, and socio-psychological consequences of internet and social media addiction. With the rapid development of digital technologies, the internet has become an inseparable part of daily life. Excessive use, however, negatively affects mental health, academic and work performance, and social relationships. The paper examines the psychological and neurobiological mechanisms, stages of addiction, and presents strategies for prevention and treatment.*

Keywords: *internet addiction, social media addiction, mental health, digital habits, cognitive impact*

Аннотация: *В данной статье подробно рассматриваются причины, симптомы и социально-психологические последствия зависимости от интернета и социальных сетей. С быстрым развитием цифровых технологий интернет стал неотъемлемой частью повседневной жизни. Чрезмерное использование отрицательно влияет на психическое здоровье, учебную и рабочую эффективность, а также на социальные отношения. Статья исследует психологические и нейробиологические механизмы, стадии зависимости и представляет стратегии профилактики и лечения.*

Ключевые слова: *интернет-зависимость, зависимость от социальных сетей, психическое здоровье, цифровые привычки, когнитивное влияние.*

In the last two decades, internet and social media usage has expanded dramatically, reshaping human interaction, education, and work. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become central to daily routines, creating both opportunities and challenges. While these technologies facilitate communication, knowledge sharing, and entertainment, their excessive use can lead to addictive behaviors. Internet and social media addiction (ISMA) is characterized by compulsive engagement, difficulty controlling online activity, and neglect of real-life responsibilities.

The prevalence of ISMA has been documented worldwide. According to Kuss & Griffiths (2017), approximately 6–9% of internet users meet the criteria for problematic use, with higher rates among adolescents and young adults. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and consequences of ISMA is essential for mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers.

2. Definition of Internet and Social Media Addiction

Internet addiction refers to uncontrolled use of online resources that negatively affect daily functioning. Social media addiction is a subset of internet addiction, characterized by excessive engagement in social networking platforms. Both forms involve compulsive behavior, preoccupation with online activities, withdrawal symptoms when offline, and a neglect of offline responsibilities (Andreassen, 2015).

ISMA is often compared to substance addictions because it involves the brain's reward system. Dopamine release during social media interactions reinforces repeated use, creating a cycle of compulsive engagement.

3. Causes of Internet and Social Media Addiction

3.1. Psychological Factors

1. Stress and Anxiety Management: Many individuals use the internet to escape negative emotions or life pressures.

2. Self-Esteem and Social Validation: Social media provides likes, shares, and comments that satisfy the need for recognition.

3. Loneliness: Individuals lacking offline social support often turn to online interactions to fill social voids.

3.2. Neurobiological Factors

Repeated online engagement activates the brain's reward circuits, particularly dopaminergic pathways. This activation leads to reinforcement of behavior, tolerance (needing more online activity for satisfaction), and withdrawal symptoms when offline (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017)

3.3. Environmental and Societal Factors

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Easy access to smartphones and high-speed internet

Peer influence and social norms encouraging constant connectivity

Educational or occupational demands relying on digital tools

4. Symptoms and Behavioral Patterns

Key signs of ISMA include:

Preoccupation with Online Activity: Constantly thinking about being online.

Loss of Time Control: Spending more time online than intended.

Mood Disturbances: Anxiety, irritability, or depression when offline.

Neglect of Responsibilities: Ignoring work, school, or household duties.

Social Withdrawal: Preference for online interaction over face-to-face communication.

5. Social and Psychological Consequences

5.1. Mental Health Impact

Increased risk of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem

Sleep disturbances due to excessive screen time

Emotional instability and difficulty managing stress

5.2. Academic and Work Performance

Decreased concentration and productivity

Procrastination and poor time management

Lower academic achievement and professional performance

5.3. Social Relationships

Reduced quality of family and friendship connections

Increased interpersonal conflicts due to online preoccupation

Social isolation despite online connectivit

6. Prevention and Intervention Strategies

6.1. Individual Approaches

Establishing digital detox routines

Setting time limits and monitoring online activity

Practicing mindfulness and offline hobbies

6.2. Educational Measures

Introducing digital literacy and responsible usage in schools and universitie

Promoting awareness campaigns about online addiction risks

6.3. Psychotherapeutic InterventionsCognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to modify compulsive online behavior

Counseling and support groups

Combining therapy with lifestyle modifications, including physical activity

7. Discussion

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Internet and social media addiction is increasingly recognized as a significant behavioral concern, with wide-ranging consequences for mental health, productivity, and social interactions. Understanding ISMA requires a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating psychological, neurobiological, and social perspectives. Early intervention is key, especially for adolescents and young adults, who are most susceptible to compulsive online behaviors.

While complete eradication of ISMA is unrealistic in today's digital society, education, self-regulation, and therapeutic measures can significantly reduce negative impacts. Future research should focus on long-term effects, gender differences, and the effectiveness of digital detox interventions across different populations.

8. Conclusion

ISMA poses a growing challenge in modern society, affecting mental health, education, work, and social life. By combining education, preventive measures, and psychotherapeutic interventions, individuals can develop healthier digital habits. Awareness of ISMA and its consequences is essential for creating a balanced and productive digital lifestyle.

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