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PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK FACTORS OF INTERNET ADDICTION IN ADOLESCENT RELATED WITH STRESS

The importance of psychological research on internet addiction in adolescents cannot be overstated. Adolescence are one of the most vulnerable period when it comes to internet addiction, as young people are at a developmental stage where they are still forming their identities and social relationships. Internet addiction can have a significant impact on their psychological, social, and academic development, which can have long-term consequences for their overall well-being.

Psychological research on internet addiction in adolescents can help us better understand the risk factors, underlying causes, and consequences of this disorder. This knowledge can then be used to develop more effective prevention and treatment strategies for adolescents who are at risk for or have developed internet addiction [5].

On the other side, stress does the most impactful influence to adolescents. Chronic stress can lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and physical health problems [2, 4, 7].

Secondly, stress is a common experience among adolescents, and understanding the factors that contribute to stress can help to identify those who may be at risk of developing stress-related disorders. Psychological research can help to identify the specific stressors that are most common among adolescents, as well as the coping mechanisms that are most effective in reducing stress.

Thirdly, psychological research on stress in adolescents can inform the development of interventions and treatment strategies for stress-related disorders. By understanding the underlying mechanisms of stress, we can develop targeted interventions that address the specific needs of adolescents.

There are several psychological risk factors of internet addiction in adolescents that are related to stress. Following 4 of them are mainly related to stress [5, 6, 7]:

1. Anxiety as a risk factor for the development of internet addiction in adolescents due to its impact on the brain's reward system and coping mechanisms. When an individual experiences anxiety, the brain activates the stress response, which increases the levels of stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones can activate the brain's reward system, which releases dopamine and other neurotransmitters that create a feeling of pleasure or relief [2].

When adolescents repeatedly turn to the internet as a way of coping with their anxiety, this can lead to a pattern of compulsive internet use, as the brain begins to associate internet use with the release of dopamine and the relief of anxiety. Over time, this can lead to the development of internet addiction, as the adolescent's brain becomes increasingly dependent on the internet to regulate their emotions.

In addition to its impact on the reward system, anxiety can also lead to negative coping mechanisms, such as avoidance or social isolation. Adolescents who experience high levels of anxiety may turn to the internet as a way of avoiding social situations or as a way of distracting themselves from their anxiety. This can lead to excessive internet use and may increase the risk of developing internet addiction [4].

2. Low self-esteem as a risk factor for the development of internet addiction in adolescents due to its impact on emotional regulation and social interaction. Adolescents with low self-esteem may feel insecure, anxious, or socially isolated, and may turn to the internet as a way of coping with these negative feelings [7].

Internet use can provide a temporary escape from feelings of low self-esteem and may provide a sense of validation and acceptance that is lacking in the adolescent's real-world relationships. For example, social media platforms may provide a platform for the adolescent to receive likes, comments, and positive feedback, which can boost their self-esteem and provide a sense of social connection.

However, excessive internet use can ultimately lead to a negative cycle, where the adolescent becomes increasingly reliant on the internet for validation and social interaction. This can lead to a pattern of compulsive internet use, where the adolescent feels unable to regulate their internet use and may experience negative consequences such as academic problems, social isolation, and mental health issues.

In addition to its impact on emotional regulation, low self-esteem can also affect social interaction and communication skills. Adolescents with low self-esteem may struggle to initiate or maintain social relationships, which can lead to social isolation and further reinforce their reliance on the internet for social interaction [1].

3. Social isolation is a risk factor for the development of internet addiction in adolescents due to its impact on social interaction and emotional regulation. Adolescents who experience social isolation may feel lonely, disconnected, and may struggle to form meaningful social relationships. In some cases, they may turn to the internet as a way of filling this social void and may become dependent on the internet for social interaction [1].

Excessive internet use can provide a sense of social connection and validation that is lacking in the adolescent's real-world relationships. Online communities and social media platforms may provide a platform for the adolescent to connect with others who share their interests and experiences, which can be especially appealing to those who feel socially isolated in their offline lives [5].

However, excessive internet use can ultimately lead to negative consequences and may reinforce social isolation. Adolescents who spend excessive amounts of time online may miss out on opportunities for real-world social interaction and may struggle to form meaningful relationships outside of the internet. This can lead to a negative cycle, where the adolescent becomes increasingly reliant on the internet for social interaction and becomes more socially isolated as a result [1].

In addition to its impact on social interaction, social isolation can also affect emotional regulation. Adolescents who experience social

isolation may be more vulnerable to stress and negative emotions, which can increase the risk of developing internet addiction as a way of coping with these negative feelings.

4. Negative coping strategies as a risk factor for the development of internet addiction in adolescents due to their impact on emotional regulation and the development of maladaptive coping mechanisms. Adolescents who rely on negative coping strategies, such as avoidance, denial, or substance use, may turn to the internet as a way of escaping negative emotions or stressful situations.

Excessive internet use can provide a temporary escape from negative emotions and may provide a sense of distraction or relief. However, over time, this can lead to the development of maladaptive coping mechanisms, where the adolescent becomes increasingly reliant on the internet for emotional regulation and may struggle to cope with negative emotions or stressful situations in healthy ways [6].

It is important to note that not all adolescents who experience stress will develop internet addiction, and there are many other factors that can contribute to the development of this disorder. Such as perfectionism [3]. However, all these psychological risk factors may increase an adolescent's vulnerability to developing internet addiction if they are not addressed.

In conclusion, stress is a significant risk factor for the development of internet addiction in adolescents. Adolescents who experience high levels of stress may turn to the internet as a way of coping with negative emotions or stressful situations. This can lead to the development of maladaptive coping mechanisms, where the adolescent becomes increasingly reliant on the internet for emotional regulation and may struggle to cope with negative emotions or stressful situations in healthy ways.

Stress can also affect social interaction and academic performance, which can further reinforce the reliance on the internet as a way of coping with these difficulties. The impact of stress on internet addiction can be further exacerbated by other risk factors such as anxiety, low self-esteem, social isolation, negative coping strategies, and perfectionism, which can increase vulnerability to the development of this disorder.

Thus, understanding the importance of the complex interplay between stress and internet addiction in adolescents requires to promote healthy coping strategies and positive mental health practices that can

help mitigate the negative impact of stress on adolescent development. This can include promoting positive coping mechanisms, such as exercise or mindfulness, fostering supportive relationships, and providing access to mental health resources for adolescents who may be struggling with stress and its associated risk factors.

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