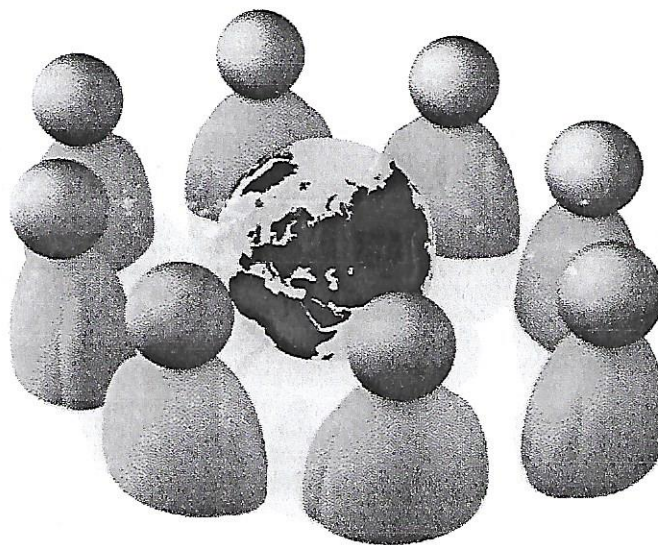


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Internet Addiction Disorder: Survey of a sample of University students

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Abstract—The use of the Internet is transforming social life in space and time. The risk of Internet addiction is a major threat to mental health. The objective of this study was to investigate the impact on the lives and behavior of college students compared to the use of the Internet. A survey was conducted on a sample of 866 non-randomized students in their first year. The questionnaire U.A.D.I. (Use, abuse, addiction to the internet) was administered for the detection of psychological components in the use of Internet: addiction, compensatory evasion, social impact, dissociation and experimentation. The average age of respondents is 20 years. On average, students are online for at least 17 hours per week, some students referred that they had exceeded 100 hours per week. 84% of respondents say they use the Internet to communicate (social networks, instant messaging, chat). The prevalence of strong user (weekly average use ≥ 60), was 7.4% (95% CI: 5.6-9.1). Males use the internet for work, play and participate in forums. Females report that they use it mainly to communicate, to keep up to date and to listen to or download music. There is not a relationship between dissociation and time spent on line. Addiction seems to be linked neither to the gender nor of being a strong user.

Keywords: Internet Addiction Disorder; Survey.

I. INTRODUCTION

Internet is really the big news of the 3rd millennium, appropriately called "the digital age". It's an extraordinary innovation, with huge potential, but with equally high risks. The advent of the internet has rapidly changed our habits and ways of understanding communication processes, introducing new experiential, cognitive, emotive and relational models. Man is spending more time with technologies than with human beings. More and more specialists believe it is essential to analyze the changes that occur in the human psyche in relation to the diffusion of the network and they evaluate not only the benefits but also the psychopathological risks related to abuse [1]. Since 1996, thanks to the pioneering work of Kimberly Young [2] a form of dependence to the Internet known under the acronym of IAD, "Internet Addiction Disorder", has been assumed and documented, it is one of the last forms of so-called "addictions without substance". Internet addiction, or formally, Internet Use Disorder (IUD), may soon be included as an actual mental health disorder (DSM-V)[3]. Moreover, according to the American Psychiatric Association a person with IUD will experience "preoccupation" with the internet or internet gaming, withdrawal symptoms when the substance

(internet) is no longer available, tolerance (the need to spend more and more time on the internet to achieve the same "high"), loss of other interests, unsuccessful attempts to quit, and use of the internet to improve or escape dysphoric mood. In fact, some on-line users are becoming addicted to the Internet in much the same way that others became addicted to drugs or alcohol, which results in academic, social, and occupational impairment [4]. So addiction or Internet Use Disorder (IUD) is a legitimate mental health disorder: research among sociologists, psychologists, or psychiatrists has identified IUD has many of the basic hallmarks of any other addiction [5]. People with internet addiction also have demonstrable changes in their brains and many of these are what you see happening in the brains of people addicted to cocaine, heroin, and other substances: These changes are both in the connections between cells and in the brain areas that control attention, emotion processing and executive control [6]. Recent epidemiological studies have shown that individuals most at risk for the development of the IAD are between the ages of 15 and 40, primarily men, with poor communication skills. Other predisposing factors are the high degree of computerization in work environments, night shifts and social isolation. In Italy ranked first among Internet employees are gamblers and second employees from cybersex [7]. Internet addiction was described for the first time by Ivan Goldebergh, who named Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD). Over the past few years, this type of discussion has represented a very controversial debate. IAD is characterized by two phases: toxicophilia and toxicomania and there are retomans for flight and those for action. The first is used to escape from your depressive way of living, the second to identify and substitute real life with a virtual one of cyberspace. The action retoman, on the other hand, needs Internet not just for a sense of excitement but to fulfill their deep expectations; Internet is thus like a tank full of stimuli to pursue unreal aims, until it reaches the purest intoxication mania. At the beginning Internet addiction is absolutely a flight retomania without a personal alteration, expectations towards Internet, until in some cases lead to having a true autistic behavior; only after internet addiction becomes action [8]. John Grohol, on the other hand, explains how it is quite impossible to define the right or the wrong time [9]. In his opinion the "Internet -addicted" are actually, social addicted people. Flight, emotional excitement, a very bad use of time, is what we call "a retomane" (according to the Young [10]). In this sense, women are considered to be the most internet addicted, above all as regards the use of