

The influence of social networks on the development of addiction in adolescents

Uticaj socijalnih mreža na razvoj zavisnosti kod adolescenata

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ABSTRACT

With the development of civilization the rate of adoption of new technologies has been increased drastically, and the researches show that media are generally adopted faster than other forms of new technologies. In this sense, the Internet has become a global phenomenon in a short period of time. A significant place in the variety of interactive communications on the Internet is occupied by social networks. They become an inevitable way to communicate, make contact, follow events and connect with the environment. Social networks such as Tik Tok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and many others have escalated into imperative usage, especially among young people. These are specific online communities, where users (especially young people) try to create their profiles in a creative and fun way, start communication, and some individuals also try to make money. In the last few years, the question of the real consequences of computer usage and the Internet usage especially by children, has become a new and very dynamic area of research. A large number of documents are being written about the consequences of using these innovations on the intellectual, emotional and social development of children, adolescents and adults. The work of a nurse as a member of a team in the prevention of addiction to the Internet and social networks is extremely important, especially in the field of counseling, which refers to a wide range of technically simpler psychological therapies, from giving advice,

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APSTRAKT

Brzina usvajanja novih tehnologija se drastično povećala sa razvitkom civilizacije, a istraživanja pokazuju i da se mediji generalno brže usvajaju nego ostali oblici novih tehnologija. U tom smislu internet je za kratko vreme postao globalni fenomen. Značajno mesto u miksu interaktivnih komunikacija na internetu zauzimaju društvene mreže. One postaju nezaobilazan način na koji se komunicira, ostvaruje kontakt, prate dešavanja i povezuje sa sredinom. Društvene mreže kao što su Tik Tok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube i mnoge druge danas su eskalirale u imperativ korišćenja, naročito kod mladih. U pitanju su specifične online zajednice, gde se korisnici (naročito mladi) trude da na kreativan i zabavan način kreiraju svoje profile, pokrenu komunikaciju, a pojedinci i da ostvare zaradu. U poslednjih nekoliko godina pitanje stvarnih posledica upotrebe kompjutera i korišćenja interneta od strane korisnika, a naročito dece, postalo je nova i vrlo dinamična oblast istraživanja. Sve više se piše o posledicama korišćenja ovih inovacija na intelektualni, emotivni i socijalni razvoj dece, adolescenata i odraslih. Rad medicinske sestre kao člana tima u prevenciji zavisnosti od interneta i društvenih mreža ima izuzetan značaj, naročito u oblasti savetovanja koje se odnosi na širok spektar tehnički jednostavnijih psiholoških terapija od davanja saveta, preko saosećajnog slušanja mladih koji se bore sa depresivnim poremećajima, do strukturisanih načina podsticanja mlade osobe na rešavanje problema. Cilj ovog rada je razmatranje uticaja socijalnih mreža

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through compassionate listening to young people struggling with depressive disorders, to structured ways encouraging young people to solve problems. The aim of this paper is to consider the influence of social networks on the development of depression in adolescents, as well as the importance of nurses as educators of young people in the prevention of depressive disorders. A descriptive method is used in the paper in order to consider the influence of social networks on the development of depression in adolescents, as well as the role and importance of the nurse in educating young people about the risks of inappropriate use of social networks.

Key words: social networking; adolescent; behavior, addictive; education; nurses.

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, the question of the real consequences of computer usage and the Internet usage especially by children has become a new and very dynamic area of research. A lot of research and documents are being written about the consequences of using these innovations on the intellectual, emotional and social development of children, adolescents and adults.¹

The subject of this paper is the analysis of the influence of social networks on the development of depression in adolescents, as well as the importance of nurses as educators of young people in the prevention of depressive disorders. In this sense, the paper discusses the impact of using social networks on adolescents, especially the negative consequences of being in the virtual world. In addition, attention has been paid to the possibilities for young people who need help to cope with the negative effects of using the Internet and social networks through the health education work of nurse educators in counseling centers for young people at health centers. Counseling centers for young people at health centers have a multidisciplinary approach to work and include health education work with adolescents aged 10 to 19 years, individual counseling work with a specialist in pediatrics, gynecology, psychologist, nurse and other healthcare workers who are involved, if necessary, as well as examination and treatment of health disorders in young people of both sexes.^{2,3}

The work of a nurse as a member of a team in the prevention of addiction to the Internet and social networks is extremely important, especially in the field of counseling, which refers to a wide range of technically simpler psychological therapies. These therapies may start from giving advice, through compassionate listening to young people struggling with depressive disorders, to structured ways encouraging young people to solve problems.

INTERNET, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND VIRTUAL REALITY

The Internet got its present appearance in 1989 with the

na razvoj depresije kod adolescenata, kao i značaj medicinske sestre kao edukatora mladih u prevenciji depresivnih poremećaja. U radu je korišćen deskriptivni metod kako bi bio razmotren uticaj socijalnih mreža na razvoj depresije kod adolescenata, kao i uloga i značaj koju ima medicinska sestra u edukaciji mladih o rizicima neadekvatne upotrebe društvenih mreža od strane mladih.

Ključne reči: socijalna mreža; adolescent; ponašanje, zavisničko; obrazovanje; medicinske sestre.

help of Tim Berners-Lee who made the first proposal for the development of the World Wide Web, at the Institute for Particle Physics in Geneva. In 1991, the first browser appeared that enabled users to search the Internet pages, i.e. surfing. The Internet revolution, modernization and digitization of business have changed the everyday way of life of people. In this era of shared information, social networks have emerged which support online communities of like-minded people who use that space for various goals and outcomes, from purely altruistic to purely commercial.

Social networks have become an unavoidable part of everyday life. They are defined as social structures composed of people and virtual profiles of real people who present themselves to other network users, share their preferences, wishes, data and are based on mutual communication through communication tools and other types of messages.^{4,5}

Social networks are considered a specific product of the digital age and they made a revolution within the Internet. They changed the world, people's understanding of communication and the way of communication itself. There is a small number of Internet users who do not use or have no experience with any of the popular social networks.^{6,7} Each social network has its own characteristics, thanks to which it differs from other similar content and which attracts certain target groups of users. Different social networks provide their users with different possibilities of identity performance in the virtual space, so it is possible for the same person to behave and present himself differently on TikTok, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, because on each of those media the individuals more or less adapt their personalities to the specific language of that social network.⁸

TikTok

TikTok is a platform for sharing video content of up to 60 seconds and aims to become the fastest growing social network in the world. The main user group of this social network is person between the ages of 16 and 24. The incredible statistics that follow TikTok show that in a relatively short time this application has become a hit all over the world. TikTok was intro-

duced in September 2016, and three years after its introduction, it is safe to say that its popularity has exploded, especially among young people.^{9,10}

Instagram

In the myriad of extremely popular free mobile applications, one of those that is extremely highly rated around the world is the Instagram application. Basically, Instagram is designed and functions as a social network whose main purpose is to share photos. The user's profile says a lot about the user himself. Thus, every user of the Instagram network is able to record an important or interesting moment at any time and in any place and share it in the form of a photo with friends, that is, with people who follow him on the Instagram, as well as to access the photos of other users.¹¹

Facebook

Facebook is a social network for exchanging countless number of contacts and photos. Facebook allows its users to establish their identity based on the information they provide about themselves. Facebook has grown into an impressive platform that offers users countless opportunities and breaks its own attendance records month after month. Facebook offers its users a whole spectrum of opportunities to easily get away from their real lives, which is especially pronounced among teenagers, for whom the virtual world of Facebook becomes an alternative to the real world. Failures in creating and maintaining direct face-to-face communication with people from the environment result in additional withdrawal into their virtual world, making the situation even more difficult.¹²

Twitter

Twitter is a social network and a type of service for sending short posts of up to 40 characters. It appeared in 2006 and is localized in English and Japanese language. Twitter enables the constitution of the user's identity in such a way that a registered user can follow a certain channel on a certain topic, establish his own channel and hope to gather followers.¹³ It is safe to say that Twitter is fundamentally adapted to mobile phones.

You Tube

You Tube is a website designed to serve as a place for displaying and sharing video material. You Tube is a modern system for creating online content that is largely based on the active participation of interested online users. You Tube has its stars, they are young people who run so-called blogs, i.e., video blogs, where they report daily on what they do, where they eat, what they buy and similar things.¹²

CREATING AN ADDICTION TO BEING IN VIRTUAL REALITY

It is assumed that about 5% of all people who use the In-

ternet develop addiction. It has been scientifically proven that the work of the brain cells of an Internet addict is similar to the work of the brain cells of drug addicts or alcoholics. It is interesting that some studies claim that this change in behavior physically changes the structure of the brain, especially the amount of gray and white matter in the areas of the front part of the brain, i.e. the part that controls memory and is in charge of attention, planning and setting life priorities. As a result, we have difficulties in determining priorities in our lives and the Internet takes precedence over real life obligations.¹⁴ The use of social networks can arouse various feelings, including sadness. This is precisely the reason for the appearance of the term "social network depression", which denotes depressive thoughts caused by the use of such sites.¹⁵ Experts recognize the connection between depression and Internet usage but discovering the exact cause of depression is problematic. It is still unclear whether the use of websites alone causes depression or whether people with depressed thoughts are more inclined to use Internet content more often. Internet addiction is a set of addictive behaviors that are realized by using the internet as a technical support. This group of addictions includes excessive use of social networks, internet gambling, addiction to video games, etc. Like gambling addiction, the Internet addiction belongs to the group of non-chemical addictions. The most severe form of addiction is when a person who is addicted to computers does not go to school, college, or work.

Data from UK and US survey in 2017 show the following: 34% of people check Facebook for 10 minutes, 80% of smartphone users say they check their phones as soon as they wake up in the morning, 79% of people aged 18-44 have a smartphone with them all the time - except when they sleep.¹¹

It is a generally accepted fact that the Internet addiction is only a subgroup of ubiquitous technological addiction. The trouble is that an addict of digital reality is surrounded by digital technology all the time. The Internet has prevailed in all areas of society and we do a lot of things online. It is difficult to precisely determine the exact cause of digital addiction. In February 2018, the American magazine *Psychology Today* published an article in which it is claimed that surfing the Internet in the human body releases dopamine (a neurotransmitter that sends signals to the brain for feelings of pleasure, motivation, and emotions in general). How time passes, the brain looks for more and more desired activities in order to stimulate that pleasant neurotransmitter response which necessarily leads to addiction. Dopamine regulates our impulse in search of pleasure. Some of the common psychological treatments for internet addiction disorder include individual or group therapy, and some of the more effective ones are dialectical behavioral therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, equine therapy, art and recreation. Guiding young people through counseling work aims to develop and improve the personal potential of a young person to achieve life goals. Improving problem-solving skills and awareness of one's thinking, developing communication skills, represents an effective method of personal development both in the domain of private and business life, the way in

which we deal with conflict situations, criticism, praise, anger and in many ways, they affect our life and business success. The goals of the workshops organized in the counseling center for young people are prevention, promotion and improvement of the health of adolescents, as well as the creation of a health culture and raising the quality of knowledge on topics that are important for the young population.¹⁶

Youth support programs are implemented through various activities, from watching interesting video content together, working on the computer, to psychological counseling with experts at the youth counseling center. The programs are designed in a way that young people feel safe and know at any time that they can get support, advice and understanding.

As with all addictions, the first step in solving the problem of digital addiction is acceptance and motivation for treatment, and then seeking professional help. If it is determined that the addiction has not taken off too much, individual therapy (self-help and self-education) is suggested. Most experts are of the opinion that complete abstinence from the computer is not an effective method of withdrawal. In some cases, drugs are prescribed for anxiety and depression.

Prevention must include the entire youth population. The nurse is a very important member of the team, who contributes to better prevention and treatment with her knowledge, abilities and skills. In addition to education, a nurse should also go through various educational workshops, seminars, with an emphasis in the field of psychotherapy and counseling.

The nurse is educated for many tasks in the care of depressed patients, such as taking anamnesis, physical examination, health education of patients and their families. In addition to the individual approach, the nurse performs prevention in the wider community as well. The key to successful prevention is achieving communication therapy through building trust. Prevention must include the entire youth population. Preventive measures implemented by the nurse: continuous education of both urban and rural youth during schooling; continuous education of family, teachers, and professors about the harmful effects of social networks; working with young people to improve communication with the environment; prevention must be well organized and up-to-date.¹⁷

Physical activity is a good way to fight against all forms of addiction, because it raises the level of serotonin and reduces the desire for bad habits related to addiction.

Stimulating young people towards healthy lifestyles is achieved through various strategies, projects, promotions and participation of young people in various activities as well as raising their awareness.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

Concrete face-to-face relationships between people are decreasing, while at the same time the number of interactions in virtual reality is increasing. Using the Internet and its services such as social networks also carry certain dangers, especially for young people. The solution for the prevention of numerous health-negative symptoms of inadequate use of the Internet in children and young people is to teach them to follow certain rules. They should be provided with knowledge about the correct ways to use computers and their enormous creative possibilities, as well as the possible consequences of not following the rules for adequate computer usage. Quality of life and prevention of risk factors are one of the most important prerequisites for human health. A well-managed preventive action also implies better communication among young people, family members, schools, counseling centers as well as health institutions in order to define or treat individual users who show the importance of abuse or addiction.

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