

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

REVIEW OF THE EXPERIENCE AND RESULTS OF EDITING A RESEARCH TOPIC IN THE JOURNAL FRONTIERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

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Background: The various forms of Internet use, including social networking, online shopping, gambling, and gaming are products of the time in which we live and represent an integral part of how we conduct and engage in social interaction. However, excessive use of Internet-related content has increasingly been linked with mental health issues and aspects, such as addictive behavior, which was a central theme of this Research Topic.

Methods and Objectives: Within this thematic unit, 51 papers were received, of which 20 were accepted for publication. It should be emphasized that distribution of the published articles by type was as following: 17 Original research, 2 Brief Research Report and 1 Hypothesis and Theory.

Results: The novel approaches, rigorous research methodologies and statistically significant findings, which are presented under this Research Topic, altogether speak in favor of the fact that Excessive Internet Use is quite problematic nowadays and that more care should be taken in how to deal with it. Although any Internet-related addiction is not specifically identified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM- 5) or International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), the growing body of literature suggest it shares a common underlying etiological framework with other (substance or behavioral) addictions.

In this regard, the connections between the excessive use of the Internet (especially social networks) with pronounced occurrences of various symptoms of mental health, as well as health in general, were unequivocally established.

Conclusions: Overall, it is of great importance that the research on the impact of Internet usage on mental health continues and gains momentum. Comprehensive and interdisciplinary efforts toward clarification of the hidden patterns and elusive aspects on the population level as well as on the individual level are largely needed.

Keywords: social networking, Internet-related addictions, mental health