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BEHAVIOURAL DEPENDENCES IN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS: RESULTS FROM AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

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Introduction: Our study aims to assess the prevalence of behavioural addictions in an adolescent populations, evaluating the effects of gender and age, and to assess the correlations and associations between different behavioural addictions.

Methods: A population of 2853 students (1142 F and 1711 M, mean age 16.7± 1.9) was assessed in order to evaluate the prevalence of behavioural dependences such as Pathological Gambling (PG), Compulsive Buying (CB), Exercise Addiction (EA), Internet Addiction (IA), and Work Addiction (WA). The South Oaks Gambling Screen-Revised Adolescent, the Compulsive Buying Scale, the Exercise Addiction Inventory, the Internet Addiction Test, and the Work Addiction Risk Test, were compiled anonymously by the students.

Results: Overall prevalence was 7.0% for PG, 11.3% for CB, 1.2% for IA, 7.6% for WA, 8.5% for EA. PG, and EA were more common among boys, while gender had no effect on the other conditions. CB was more common among younger (< 18 years old) students. Each of these conditions showed a strong association with others, and the scores of all of these scales were correlated.

Discussion: In line with previous studies our results indicate that behavioural addictions are quite common among adolescents. The strong association between behavioural addictions stresses the concept that treatment for one of these conditions should involve assessment and treatment for the others.