

P-598 - PREVALENCE OF PATHOLOGICAL INTERNET USE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN EUROPE: DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH-RELATED RISK FACTORS

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Aims: To investigate the prevalence of pathological Internet use (PIU) among adolescents in eleven European countries in relation to demographic and health-related risk factors and Internet accessibility using homogenous methodology.

Design: Cross-sectional analysis.

Setting: The 7th Framework European Union funded project, Saving and Empowering Young Lives in Europe (SEYLE), is a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) evaluating preventive interventions for risk-behaviors among adolescents in Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Romania, Slovenia and Spain with Sweden as the coordinating site.

Participants: 11,956 adolescents (F/M: 6731/5225; mean age: 14.9±0.89) recruited from randomly selected schools within the eleven study sites.

Measurements: Internet users were classified by gender into three categories: adaptive, maladaptive and pathological, based on the Young Diagnostic Questionnaire for Internet Addiction (YDQ).

Findings: The overall prevalence of PIU was 4.4%. The rate was higher among males than females (5.2% vs. 3.8%). Students not living with a biological parent or relative had the highest risk for both maladaptive and pathological Internet use. Low-parental involvement and parental unemployment showed high relative risk for both maladaptive and pathological Internet use. PIU significantly correlated with the average number of hours spent online. No correlation was found between national levels of Internet accessibility and pathological Internet use.

Conclusion: Prevalence of PIU varied by gender. Youth in households without a biological parent and/or low level of parental involvement had the most significant health-related factors associated with PIU. National levels of Internet accessibility were not a risk factor for either maladaptive or pathological Internet use.