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Introduction

For some adolescents surfing the web can turn into a psychological defense and to be in contrast with a healthy mental development. It happens if the internet surfing becomes a compulsive need (Drusian, 2005). Massive use of the internet can promote the development of behavioral addictions such as pathological gambling (Cantelmi, D'Andrea, 2000).

Objectives and Aims

The study investigates the correlation between social introversion, modality of the internet surfing and propensity to pathological gambling in a sample of Italian adolescents.

Methods

The research used a questionnaire divided into four areas: school performance, use of the internet, social introversion (SI scale of the MMPI-A); experiences of gambling (LIE/BET Questionnaire). 583 adolescents (45% males and 54% females, mean age 17 years) responded to the questionnaire.

Results

Adolescents with high social introversion (high scores on Si scale) are 7.4% of the sample. These teenagers use the Internet many hours per day. They state that surfing the internet is a way to drive away negative thoughts about their lives. They think that life would be boring without the internet. Many adolescents with social introversion have high scores to LIE/BET Questionnaire. The study does not show a correlation between school performance and the others variables (social introversion, use of internet and propensity to pathological gambling).

Conclusions

Social introversion seems to be a predictor of psychological disease such as internet addiction and pathological gambling.