

## **INTERNET ADDICTION**

Due to its ability to provide faster access to information and facilitate communication through alternative means, internet usage has significantly increased in recent years. With the preparation of web content and applications in various fields, ranging from official/private institution transactions to educational content, team/individual games to social interaction, the increase in the number of users continues. Additionally, easy access to the internet through devices such as mobile phones/tablets has further increased the frequency of internet usage.

While the ease of internet access has become a part of daily life, the inability to control the time spent on the internet can lead to problems such as disruption of daily tasks, regression in social/academic areas, and more. Especially, young people and students, who use the internet more for playing games or communication purposes, are considered to be at risk of internet addiction.

For internet addiction to be discussed:

- Inability to resist the desire to use the internet,
- Spending more time on the internet than planned,
- Showing withdrawal symptoms when not using the internet (restlessness, irritability, aggression, etc.),
- Weakening of relationships with the social environment (family, school, work) due to internet use, neglect of basic needs such as sleep/food, and neglect of other responsibilities,
- Unsuccessful attempts to reduce internet usage,
- Using the internet to avoid problems or negative emotions,

These conditions are expected to occur for at least a few weeks, and the individual's daily functionality begins to deteriorate (1,2).

Factors such as the freedom to express ideas and thoughts on the internet, socializing, feeling a sense of belonging by participating in group games/group messages, winning/feeling powerful by gambling, and the need to access excessive information have been observed to be reasons that can lead to excessive internet use (2). In line with these reasons, when the concept of addiction is re-evaluated, it is seen that it is actually a dependence on the content offered by the internet. If the accessed content meets the individual's perceived deficiency, the real reason that creates addiction and needs to be addressed is this; the internet becomes a tool in this context.

Especially for students who go to another city for university education and experience a change in their surroundings, it is a common situation for the adaptation process to the new environment and the negative emotions brought about by feelings of loneliness to lead to the intensive use of the internet as a coping mechanism (3). Trying to find solutions in real life for needs or ongoing problems that are attempted to be addressed through activities on the internet can be a functional method to reduce addiction.

When symptoms suggestive of addiction are observed, directing individuals to a professional they can seek support from will be the first step in providing assistance. If you notice the symptoms mentioned above in yourself, you can think about what need you expect to meet when you go online. Dealing with addiction primarily involves understanding the underlying needs that cause addiction and then discovering and developing alternative, healthier behaviors to alleviate these needs. If you are struggling to cope with your situation on your own and this is significantly affecting your daily life negatively, you can request an appointment for psychological support from Altınbaş University Psychological Support Unit.

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#### References

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