

The Impact of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) and the Potential of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) in Young Adults: A Literature Review

Veeleah Lok^{1, a}

¹ Department of Global Public Health, Karolinska Institute, Karolinska University Hospital, Stockholm, Sweden.

^aveeleahlok@gmail.com

Abstract

The digital age benefits young adults and adolescents but raises concerns about excessive internet use's impact on mental health. This literature review delves into empirical research on Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) and explores Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) as an intervention. IGD, characterized by uncontrolled online gaming, is prevalent among young adults and adolescents. Addictions extend beyond substances to behavioral patterns, with stress playing a pivotal role in their development. MBCT combines mindfulness meditation and cognitive therapy, showing positive effects on psychological well-being. Although limited research explores MBCT's application to IGD, its potential is significant. Investigating interventions for problematic online gaming is crucial due to the similarities between IGD and other behavioral addictions. Impulsivity supports exploring mindfulness-based approaches. In conclusion, this review highlights the urgency of addressing the psychological implications of Internet Gaming Disorder in young adults and adolescents. With the growing prevalence of IGD and its detrimental psychological impact, further research and innovative interventions are essential. MBCT holds promise for addressing IGD's psychological aspects, necessitating comprehensive research to confirm its efficacy and suitability in the digital age. Recognizing shared psychological components among different addictions, exploring innovative approaches, and understanding the role of stress in addiction development are integral to promoting mental well-being in our technology-driven world.

Keywords

Internet Gaming Disorder, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, Psychological Well-being, Young Adults, Adolescents, Internet Addiction, Stress, Behavioral Addiction, Digital Age, Literature Review.

1. Introduction

In recent years, our digital landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation, leaving a profound impact on the lives of young adults and adolescents. While this digital revolution has ushered in a host of benefits, it has also brought to light significant concerns about the consequences of excessive internet use on our mental well-being. One particularly pressing concern in this era is Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). In this comprehensive review, we embark on a thorough exploration of the existing body of empirical research on IGD, and we delve into the potential of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) as an innovative and promising solution for addressing the intricate psychological implications associated with IGD.

2. Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

2.1. Trends in Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD)

The significant work of Kuss and Griffiths [1], presented in their systematic review from 2017, has cast light on the increasing prevalence of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). This condition, characterized by uncontrollable engagement in online gaming with subsequent adverse consequences, has captured particular attention among young adults and adolescents. Their comprehensive review emphasizes the urgent need for effective screening methods and interventions, given the complex web of psychological outcomes associated with IGD .

Equally noteworthy is the contribution of King, Delfabbro, and Zajac [2] , who have introduced a groundbreaking validation tool designed to identify problematic video game use. This tool, serving as a crucial component for the development of effective interventions, aids in recognizing individuals at risk of IGD.

2.2. Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

The integration of mindfulness meditation and cognitive therapy techniques in MBCT has drawn interest as an intervention for various mental health issues. Van Dam et al. [3] provide a critical evaluation and agenda for mindfulness and meditation research. MBCT shows promise by enhancing self-awareness and emotional regulation to alleviate psychological distress.

Within the realm of mental health interventions, a beacon of hope arises from the integration of mindfulness meditation and cognitive therapy techniques in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). In a critical evaluation and research agenda outlined by Van Dam and colleagues [3] in 2018, MBCT emerges as a potential game-changer. This intervention stands out by enhancing self-awareness and emotional regulation, offering a promising path to alleviate psychological distress .

2.3. Exploring the Link Between MBCT and IGD

While MBCT displays great promise as an intervention, research into its application for Internet Gaming Disorder remains relatively uncharted territory. As highlighted by Billieux and colleagues [4] in 2015, the investigation of interventions for problematic online gaming is of paramount importance. This is particularly pertinent because of the shared characteristics between IGD and other forms of behavioral addiction. This common ground makes the application of MBCT, renowned for its effectiveness in managing addictive behaviors, a potentially fruitful endeavor. Furthermore, Choi and associates [5], in their 2014 study, underscored the significance of addressing impulsivity in the context of Internet addiction, reinforcing the rationale for exploring mindfulness-based approaches in the treatment of IGD.

3. Internet Addictions and Innovative Approaches

3.1. Convergence of Internet Addictions

The exploration of internet addictions extends our comprehension of the issue, and this is where the work of Sussman, Lisha, and Griffiths [6] comes into play in 2011. Their study delved into the prevalence of various forms of addiction, including internet addiction. In doing so, they emphasized that addictions transcend the realm of substances, extending their grip into the domain of behavioral patterns. It is within this context that recognizing the shared psychological components among different forms of addiction, including IGD, becomes pivotal. Such recognition is the foundation upon which effective interventions can be formulated.

3.2. The Role of Stress and Sensitization

A significant revelation within the realm of addiction research comes from the work of Zvolensky and colleagues [7] in 2015, which primarily focuses on sensitization to subsequent life stress in disaster responders. Their findings have not only underscored the profound impact of stress on the initiation and perpetuation of problematic behaviors but have also emphasized its role in the multifaceted issue of IGD. Addressing stress within the broader context of addiction research and interventions is nothing short of indispensable.

3.3. Innovative Approaches: App-Enhanced Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment

Innovation often paves the way for pioneering approaches in the field of behavioral treatment. A notable contribution by Noe, Cole, Gondoli, and Molnar [8] in 2016 introduces a groundbreaking approach that harnesses the power of mobile applications to enhance cognitive-behavioral treatment. Although their primary focus was on pediatric headache treatment, this innovative approach lays the groundwork for considering app-enhanced interventions in the context of addressing psychological distress among adolescents. This holds the potential to be extended to conditions such as IGD, aligning with the evolving landscape of technology and its increasingly prominent role in contemporary mental health treatment.

3.4. Cross-Comparative Analysis: Internet Dependency and Social Media Addiction

A cross-comparative analysis conducted by Liu, Lin, Pan, and Lin [9] in 2016 provides valuable insights into psychological and behavioral patterns associated with internet dependency and social media addiction. While their primary focus was on social media addiction, the findings of this study have broader implications. They offer valuable insights into behavioral patterns that may also find application in the realm of IGD. Moreover, the study underlines the significance of distinguishing between various forms of internet addiction, each characterized by unique traits and underpinned by distinct psychological mechanisms.

4. Conclusion

This comprehensive review underscores the critical imperative to address the complex psychological implications associated with Internet Gaming Disorder, particularly among young adults and adolescents. With the relentless increase in the prevalence of IGD and the detrimental psychological consequences that accompany it, further research and the exploration of innovative interventions become not just a necessity but a moral obligation. Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), with its significant promise as a potential approach for addressing the intricate psychological aspects of IGD, beckons for more in-depth investigation. Extensive research is warranted to ascertain the efficacy of MBCT in the context of internet addiction, ultimately paving the way for the development of comprehensive interventions tailored to the demands of the digital age. The recognition of shared psychological components across different forms of addiction, coupled with the exploration of innovative approaches, and an in-depth understanding of the role of stress in the development of addictive behaviors, remain integral elements in the quest to enhance mental well-being in our increasingly technology-driven world.

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