Abstract

In our technology-savvy population, mental health professionals are seeing an increasing trend of excessive Internet use or Internet addiction. Researchers in China, Taiwan and Korea have done extensive research in the field of Internet addiction. Screening instruments are available to identify the presence of Internet addiction and its extent. Internet addiction is frequently associated with mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, conduct disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Treatment modalities include individual and group therapies, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), family therapy and psychotropic medications. A significant proportion of Singapore adolescents engaging in excessive Internet use are also diagnosed to have concomitant Internet addiction. Despite the presence of a variety of treatment options, future research in this area is needed to address its growing trend and to minimise its negative psychological and social impact on the individuals and their families.

Key words: Aetiology, Pathophysiology, Treatment