



No. 353 June 2018

## WHO confirms “gaming disorder” as a mental health problem

On 18 June the World Health Organization (WHO) released its new International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). And for the first time WHO is classifying gaming disorder as an addictive behaviour disorder so now it will be possible to measure how many people are affected.

[www.who.int/health-topics/international-classification-of-diseases](http://www.who.int/health-topics/international-classification-of-diseases)



The ICD is the foundation for identifying health trends and statistics worldwide, and contains around 55 000 unique codes for injuries, diseases and causes of death, providing a common language which allows health professionals to share health information across the globe. Inclusion of a disorder in the ICD is taken into account by countries when planning public health strategies. WHO reports that including gaming disorder reflects a consensus of experts from different disciplines and follows the development of treatment programs for persons with similar conditions.

The diagnosis only applies if the game playing, either digital or video, is characterized as impairing control which gives gaming priority over other activities to the extent that it continues or escalates despite negative consequences.

The behaviour pattern “must be of sufficient severity to result in significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning and would normally have been evident for at least 12 months.” *The Lancet* medical journal discussed the imminent listing in February 2018:

[www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(18\)30025-7/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(18)30025-7/fulltext)

and cited brain studies by Aviv Weinstein in support:

[www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2017.00185/full](http://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2017.00185/full)

In the US, diagnoses are usually based on criteria in the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). DSM-5 includes “Internet Gaming Disorder” in Section III as a condition that is not yet classified as a formal disorder “but warrants additional clinical research and study.” After further research, the APA may or may not decide to make the disorder “official” in future editions of the DSM.

While some researchers deny that internet gaming is addictive (see Editorial ), individual stories point to struggles and devastation.

The ICD-11 will be presented at the World Health Assembly in May 2019 for adoption by Member States, and will come into effect on 1 January 2022.

## Design strategies keeping children online

The UK group 5Rights Foundation has just published its report, “*Disrupted childhood: the cost of persuasive design*”.

The report explains how persuasive design strategies, deployed to maximise the collection of personal data, impact on children’s social, mental and physical development. It “*highlights how automated technology both leverages and reinforces human instinct in order to trigger habits and behaviours...Those formed before 9 yrs old take significant intervention to change.*” “*The costs for children*”, they say, “*are palpable*”.

<https://d1qmdf3vop2107.cloudfront.net/eggplant-cherry.cloudvent.net/compressed/bb24215ada7264f0db4b3a0060e755b1.pdf>

## Strategies for struggles with screens



A conversation with US “mediatrician” Dr Michael Rich & Australian parenting expert Dr Justin Coulson for parents and teachers  
Facilitated by Dr John D’Arcy, a family doctor.

*Parents say that ‘too much screen time’ is a top health concern. Worries include how screen use impacts on sleep, relationships, school performance, exercise, connection with nature, and posture, and how to get children off games like Fortnite. Here’s a unique chance to discuss these issues with a top US expert in this field, and a leading Australian parenting specialist.*

7:30pm – 9pm, Thursday 9th August 2018

Presbyterian Ladies’ College, Sydney  
Boundary St Croydon NSW 2132 Australia  
Tickets \$35 Concession \$30

[www.trybooking.com/WUNP](http://www.trybooking.com/WUNP)

WHO CONFIRMS  
‘GAMING DISORDER’ AS  
MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

EDITORIAL:  
WHO’S WHO IN LISTING  
CONTROVERSIES

SYDNEY SEMINAR:  
STRATEGIES FOR  
STRUGGLES WITH SCREENS



no. 353 June 2018

## small screen

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## EDITORIAL

### Who's who in the WHO listing controversies.

The WHO's listing of "internet gaming disorder" in the ICD (see front page) was greeted by acclaim by many therapists, but also a chorus of controversy. One article from US Professor of Psychology Chris Ferguson, and published in Fairfax media, attracted our attention. There are some statements in the piece, *Moral panic over Fortnite is misplaced* 18/6/18, that deserve to be challenged.

[www.smh.com.au/technology/moral-panic-over-fortnite-is-misplaced-20180615-p4ztra.html](http://www.smh.com.au/technology/moral-panic-over-fortnite-is-misplaced-20180615-p4ztra.html)

Firstly, Ferguson stated that:

*"The American Psychological Association asked policy makers and journalists to stop linking video games to societal violence, given the lack of evidence to support such claims."*

This is a distortion of the truth. Ferguson was citing his own APA Div. 46 statement that made a lot of other Div 46 members angry because they weren't consulted and it doesn't represent the opinion of many long-time researchers in this field. In fact that statement conflicted with the official position of APA, which can be accessed here:

[www.apa.org/about/policy/violent-video-games.aspx](http://www.apa.org/about/policy/violent-video-games.aspx)

This policy was based on a technical report written by the APA Task Force on Violent Media that can be accessed at the following:

[www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2015/08/violent-video-games.aspx](http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2015/08/violent-video-games.aspx)

Secondly, Ferguson claimed that:

*"As society has consumed more violent video games, youth violence rates have plummeted, not increased, and the release of popular violent games is associated with immediate reductions in crime".*



Barbara Biggins  
OAM  
Hon CEO

Really? Societal violence is hugely multifactorial and it is impossible to conclude that just because the overall level is falling, any one of the hundreds of possible contributing factors is still not impacting violence levels. And youth violence is growing against the overall trend in some places anyway. While much attention is given to criminal violence, we should also be concerned about everyday aggression, such as bullying, and hurtful behaviour in homes, schools and everyday life, which are much more common. And there's plenty of evidence from many researchers that exposure to violent video games increases those risks.

Thirdly, Ferguson's dismissal of the risks of addiction must be weighed against the World Health Organisation's acceptance of the evidence, and others', eg the very recent UK report *"Disrupted childhood : the costs of persuasive design"*

<https://d1qmdf3vop2l07.cloudfront.net/eggplant-cherry.cloudvent.net/compressed/bb24215ada7264f0db4b3a0060e755b1.pdf>

*Fortnite* is not blameless when it comes to content or problematic use, with many parents reporting associated behaviour and self-management problems.

### Deadlines for Australian Inquiries

It is a busy time for reviews and inquiries into aspects of media in Australia. Those for which submissions have been invited include:

- A review of the *Enhancing Online Safety Act 2015* which establishes the Office of the eSafety Commissioner to take a national leadership role in online safety for all Australians.
- A review of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* ( One of the functions of the eSafety Commissioner is to administer the Online Content Scheme, established under Schedules 5 and 7 to address illegal and offensive online content)

[www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00123](http://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00123)

Have your say about these two reviews by 25 July 2018

- A Senate inquiry into the extent to which gaming micro-transactions for chance-based items, sometimes referred to as 'loot boxes', may be harmful.

[www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment\\_and\\_Communications/Gamingmicro-transactions](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Gamingmicro-transactions)

The closing date for submissions is 27 July 2018.

Meanwhile the ACMA (the Australian Communications and Media Authority) calling for consumer reps on its Consumer Communications Forum and is also going to look at Australian content in advertising soon. [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au)

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

## ADVERTISING

De Pauw, P; Hudders, L; Cauberghe, V; 2018.

**Disclosing brand placement to young children.**

*International Journal of Advertising*, 37(4), pp.508-525.

Kent, M.P; Pauzé, E; 2018.

**The effectiveness of self-regulation in limiting the advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages on children's preferred websites in Canada.**

*Public Health Nutrition* 21, 1608–1617.

Lapierre, M.A., et al 2017.

**The effect of advertising on children and adolescents.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S152–S156.

Montgomery, K.C; Chester, J; Milosevic, T., 2017.

**Children's privacy in the big data era: research opportunities.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S117–S121.

O'Dowd, A., 2018.

**Child obesity plan must include legal action on junk food advertising and discounts, say MPs.**

*BMJ* 361, k2398.

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k2398>

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Anderson, D.R., Subrahmanyam, K., Workgroup, on behalf of the C.I. of D.M., 2017.

**Digital screen media and cognitive development.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S57–S61.

Disney, L; Geng, G.,

**A case study of young children's use of ipad for digital storytelling for a study of self.**

*Proceedings of the 25th International Conference on Computers in Education. New Zealand: Asia-Pacific Society for Computers in Education*

Jurdi, S., et al 2018.

**Children's acceptance of a collaborative problem solving game based on physical versus digital learning spaces.**

*Interacting with Computers*, 30(3), pp.187-206

Oliemat, E., Ihmeideh, F. Alkhaldeh, M., 2018.

**The use of touch-screen tablets in early childhood: Children's knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards tablet technology.**

*Children and Youth Services Review*, 88, pp.591-597.

Ruest, S., et al 2018.

**The inverse relationship between digital media exposure and childhood**

**flourishing.**

*The Journal of Pediatrics* 197, 268-274.e2.

Uncapher, M.R., et al 2017.

**Media multitasking and cognitive, psychological, neural, and learning differences.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S62–S66.

## HEALTH

Gonçalves, S., et al 2018.

**The impact of exposure to cartoons promoting healthy eating on children's food preferences and choices.**

*Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 50(5), pp.451-457

Ngantcha, M., et al 2018.

**Revisiting factors associated with screen time media use: a structural study among school-aged adolescents.**

*Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 15(6), pp.448-456

Robinson, T.N., et al 2017.

**Screen media exposure and obesity in children and adolescents.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S97–S101.

Husarova, D., t al 2018.

**Do sleeping habits mediate the association between time spent on digital devices and school problems in adolescence?**

*Eur J Public Health* 28, 463–468.

Hoge, E; Bickham, D; Cantor, J (2017)

**Digital media, anxiety, and depression in children**

*Pediatrics* V 140 / ISSUE Supplement 2

## MEDIATION

Bickham, D.S., et al 2018.

**A preliminary evaluation of a school-based media education and reduction intervention.**

*The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 39(3), pp.229-245.

Cingel, D.P., Hargittai, E., 2018.

**The relationship between childhood rules about technology use and later-life academic achievement among young adults.**

*The Communication Review* 21, 131–152.

Coyne, S.M., t al 2017.

**Parenting and digital media.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S112–S116.

Turner, K.H., et al. 2017.

**Developing digital and media literacies in children and adolescents.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S122–S126.

## MOBILE PHONES

Fletcher, A.C., Benito-Gomez, M., Blair, B.L., 2018.

**Adolescent cell phone communications with mothers and fathers: Content, patterns, and preferences.**

*J Child Fam Stud* 27, 2125–2137.

## VIDEO GAMES

Gentile, D.A., et al 2017.

**Internet Gaming Disorder in Children and Adolescents.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S81–S85.

Paulus, F.W., et al 2018

**Internet gaming disorder in children and adolescents: a systematic review.**

*Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology* 60, 645–659.

## VIOLENCE

Anderson, C.A., et al 2017.

**Screen Violence and Youth Behavior.**

*Pediatrics* 140, S142–S147.

## EVENTS

**Generation Next Seminars 2018**

- Adelaide - Friday 27 July, 2018
- Sydney - Friday 3 August, 2018

[www.generationnext.com.au/seminars/generation-next-seminars/](http://www.generationnext.com.au/seminars/generation-next-seminars/)

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**What matters most to families in the 21st century?**

**AIFS 2018 Conference  
25–27 July 2018  
Melbourne, Vic**

<https://aifscconference2018.com.au>

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**ACEL Early Childhood Conference  
Encourage teach support: from child to citizen**

9 – 10 August 2018  
Hilton, Sydney

[acel.org.au](http://acel.org.au)

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**ECA National Conference 2018  
Be the difference for children and families**

19–22 September 2018  
Sydney ICC

[ecaconference.com.au](http://ecaconference.com.au)

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**Digital Media & Developing Minds**

October 15-18 2018  
Long Island, New York USA

[meetings.cshl.edu](http://meetings.cshl.edu)

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## WORLD NEWS

### Parent technology use, parenting stress, and child behaviour problems

US researchers say that that parents who use their smartphone to escape from the stress caused by their children's negative behaviours may be making the behaviour worse.

A recent study shows that when parents are on their devices that they have fewer conversations with their children and are more hostile when their offspring try to get their attention. This can in turn lead children to show more frustration, hyperactivity, whining, sulking or tantrums.

The online study involved 183 couples with a child age 5 years or younger. Participants indicated how often different devices interrupted their conversations or activities with their children, rated their child's behaviours and also reported on their own levels of stress and depression, the co-parenting support they received from their partners, and their child's screen media use.

[www.nature.com/articles/s41390-018-0052-6](http://www.nature.com/articles/s41390-018-0052-6)

### Children signing up to policies that only university students can understand

In the UK, a BBC investigation shows that the policies to which users of websites and apps sign up are written in such a way that many of the users cannot read and understand them.

The BBC carried out a readability test to work out the education level required to understand the policies, including a binding privacy policy. They found that 15 sites had policies that were written at a universi-

ty reading level. This is despite the fact that many of the apps and sites can be used by children aged 13. According to Ofcom, more than eight in 10 children in the UK aged between five and 15 used YouTube last year.

As well as being hard to understand, some of the terms and policies take almost an hour to read. However, several of the companies reported to the BBC that they were constantly working on improving the legibility of their legal documents.

[www.bbc.com/news/business-44599968](http://www.bbc.com/news/business-44599968)

### Robotics engineer Barbie

Mattel has announced Barbie's new career - robotics engineer. The new "Career of the Year" Barbie comes with safety goggles, a doll-sized laptop computer, and a small humanoid robot. She also comes in four skin tones.

Barbie has previously had several occupations in science, technology, engineering, and math, including computer engineer, astronaut, and video game developer, but this incarnation is said to be more than just a doll. Mattel will also offer seven free "Barbie-inspired" coding experiences through Tynker, an online platform that provides coding classes to children. The lessons will focus on logic, problem-solving, and other coding skills.

<https://mashable.com/2018/06/26/barbie-careers-stem-robotics-engineer/#8zU2KnbFwOqG>

### French action on phones in school

French school students will be banned from using mobile phones anywhere on school grounds from September, after the lower house of parliament passed what it called a "detox" law. President Emmanuel

Macron had promised during his election campaign that he would outlaw phones for children in nursery and primary schools, and in middle-schools until around the age of 15.

One middle school in France, however, has already introduced policies that attempt to break the cycle of screen addiction among children and teens. La Gautrais Middle School, in the French village of Plouasne, banned the use of mobile phone on its grounds four years ago. The school has 290 students between 12 and 16 years of age.

The teachers say they have noticed more social interaction between children, greater empathy, and increased eagerness to learn. Students appear to have become much more focused on their studies, and many say they appreciate and enjoy the ban which enables them to have proper conversations with their friends rather than concentrating on screens.

<https://aplus.com/a/french-middle-school-banned-mobile-phones-limit-kids-screen-time?rel=homepage>

### ...and in Australia?

Meanwhile, in Australia, the NSW government is looking at the possibility of banning smartphones in schools and allowing only mobile phones which do not have internet access. The NSW study, which is the first of its kind in Australia, will examine smartphone use in schools from kindergarten to Year 12. It was prompted by concerns expressed by parents, teachers and academics, including increasing complaints about cyber-bullying.

[www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-21/ban-on-smartphones-in-nsw-schools-on-the-cards/9893186](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-21/ban-on-smartphones-in-nsw-schools-on-the-cards/9893186)