

CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND DISORDER-SPECIFIC COGNITIONS IN TREATMENT-SEEKING PATIENTS WITH INTERNET ADDICTION AND BORDERLINE PERSONALITY ORGANIZATION

K.J. Wölfling¹, K.W. Müller², M.E. Beutel²

¹Outpatient Clinic of Computer Game and Internet Addiction - Clinic for Psychosomatic Medicine, ²Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, University Medical Centre Mainz, Mainz, Germany

Introduction: Several epidemiological studies revealed prevalence-rates of Internet Addiction (IA) - which was currently proposed as an independent disorder for DSM-5 - ranging from 0.5 to 1 per cent. Above all, patients with IA show psychopathological patterns (craving, tolerance, withdrawal, mood modification, relapses) comparable to substance-related disorders. Besides, IA is frequently accompanied by various comorbidities, such as anxiety, depression or personality disorders.

Objectives: The aim of the present study was to assess typical clinical characteristics and disorder-specific cognitive styles in a subgroup of patients with IA and an underlying Borderline Personality Organization (BPO) in a consecutive sample of over 450 treatment-seekers in an Outpatient Clinic for Internet and Computer game Addiction.

Methods: 20 patients, who fulfilled both: the diagnostic criteria of IA and a Borderline Personality Disorder were compared with a matched control-group of BPO-patients without psychopathological but extensive Internet use. Both groups were assessed with the FGQ (Questionnaire on borderline-specific cognitions and feelings, Renneberg et al., 2004) and further psychological features (e.g. global assessment of functioning (GAF), self-efficacy (SWE) and sensation seeking).

Results: BPO-patients with IA show an increased mean of the total score of the FGQ as well as of further clinical measures. The results lead to the assumption, that BPO-patients with IA use more disorder-specific cognitions, show higher mental strains and lower levels of health-related well-being compared to BPO-patients with only an extensive internet use.

Conclusions: Internet addictive behavior in BPO-patients may serve as avoidance behavior in order to subdue the burden of the primary disease.