



Adolescents in urban regions are more likely to experience problem video gaming

What is this research about?

Video games are available in many different platforms, including computers, consoles, smart phones, and tablets. There is a lack of research that compares rates of problem video gaming in teens living in urban and rural areas. There is a need for evidence to inform policy and interventions to prevent gaming problems in teens.

This study compared the rates of problem video gaming among teens living in urban and non-urban regions. Specifically, they looked at whether there was a connection between problem video gaming and demographic characteristics, mental health status, delinquent behaviour, problem gambling, and achievement at school.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers used data from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health survey. This survey is conducted every two years among students in Grades 7 through 12 in Ontario's public schools. It looks at substance use, gambling, delinquent behaviour, and mental and physical health.

For this study, the researchers analyzed data from the 2011 survey and focused on students in Toronto and Northern Ontario who played video games at least once in the

What you need to know

Teens living in urban areas are more likely to have video game-related problems than those in non-urban areas. This study also found predicting factors that are associated with these problems, including poor mental health status, being male, and being engaged in delinquent behaviour. The study found that problem gambling was an additional factor for teens in urban areas, and low school achievement was an additional factor for those in non-urban regions.

previous year. Problem video gamers were identified from this group.

What did the researchers find?

The rate of problem gaming in Toronto (urban) was double that of Northern Ontario. Males were about six times more likely to have a gaming problem than females. Those who had worse mental health status, as well as those engaged in delinquent behaviours were more likely to have a gaming problem, regardless of the region where they lived.



Grade level was not associated with having a gaming problem. Among students in Toronto, those with a gambling problem were more likely to have a gaming problem than those who did not gamble. While for students in Northern Ontario, those with poor performance in school were more likely to have a gaming problem.

How can you use this research?

This study shows that strategies to prevent video gaming problems are needed for teens living in urban areas. There also is a need for more research to better understand the factors that contribute to differences between urban and non-urban regions, such as factors related to the environment and lifestyle.

Limitations and next steps

The findings of this study are limited by the lack of a gold standard for measuring problem video gaming, particularly among teens. Also, respondents' self-reports may have been inaccurate or incomplete and possibly influenced by their need for others to view them in a favourable light.

About the researchers

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Keywords

Problem video gaming; adolescents; addiction; youth; internet gaming disorder; rural; urban

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