Internet addiction and self-evaluated ADHD traits among Japanese college students.

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Abstract

AIM:
Internet addiction (IA), also referred to as internet use disorder, is a serious problem all over the world, especially in Asian countries. Severe IA in students may be linked to academic failure, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and forms of social withdrawal such as hikikomori. In this study, we performed a survey to investigate the relation between IA and ADHD symptoms among college students.

METHODS:
Severity of IA and ADHD traits were assessed by self-report scales. Subjects were 403 college students (response rate 78%) who completed a questionnaire including the Young’s Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS)-V1.1.

RESULTS:
Out of 403 subjects, 165 were male, mean age was 18.4 ± 1.2 yrs, and mean total IAT score was 45.2 ± 12.6. One hundred forty-eight respondents (36.7%) were average internet users (IAT <40), 240 (59.6%) had possible addiction (IAT 40 to 69), and 15 (3.7%) had severe addiction (IAT 70 and higher). Mean length of internet use was 4.1 ± 2.8 hrs/day on weekdays and 5.9 ± 3.7 hrs/day on the weekend. Females used the internet mainly for social networking services (SNS) while males preferred online games. Students with a positive ADHD screen scored significantly higher on the IAT than those negative for ADHD screen (50.2 ± 12.9 vs. 43.3 ± 12.0).

CONCLUSION:
Our results suggest that internet misuse may be related to ADHD traits among Japanese youth. Further investigation of the links between IA and ADHD is warranted.