

Behavioural Addictions

Addictions, Substance Abuse &
Psychological Dependencies



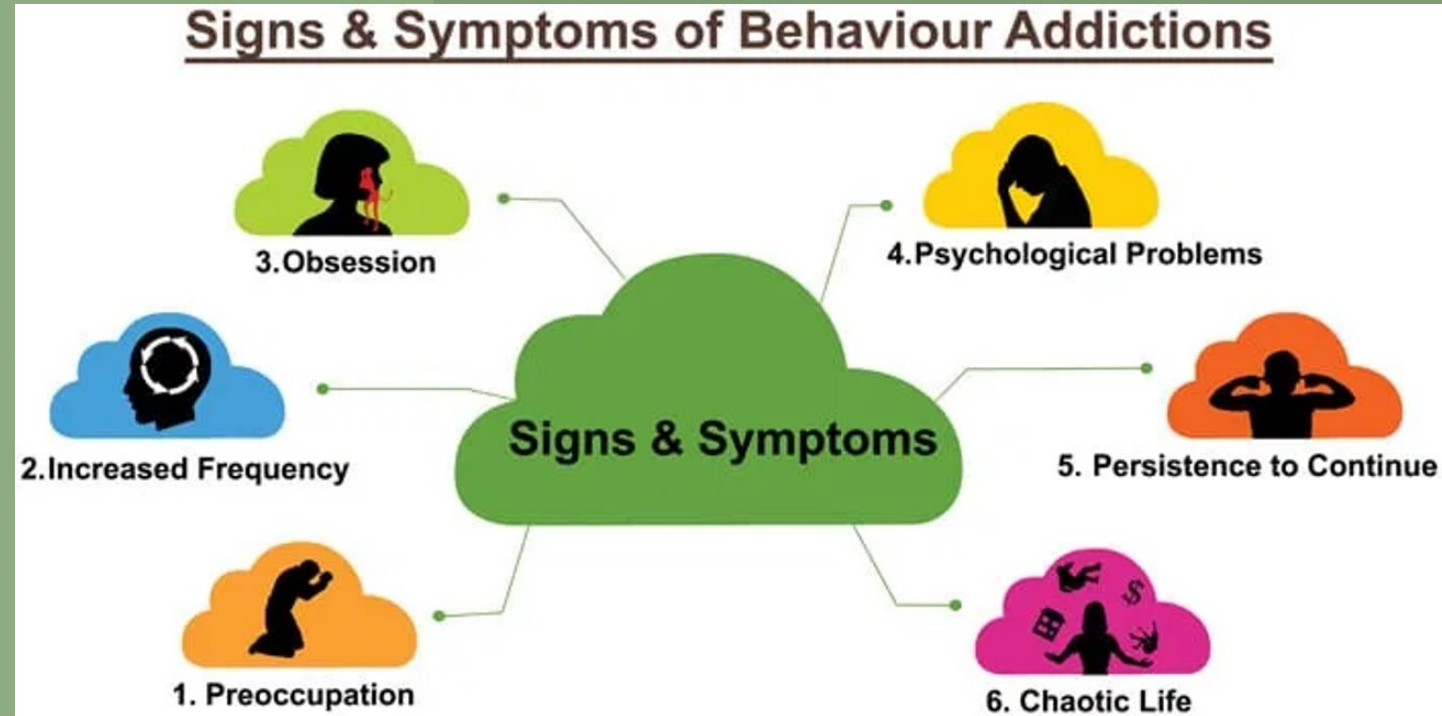
Behavioural Addictions

Non-substance behavioural addictions

Impulsive-compulsive spectrum (impulse control disorders)

Growing evidence (e.g., Internet addiction, gaming, kleptomania)

Scientific and clinical heuristic value



Diagnostic Criteria



Non-substance related disorders (Gambling Disorder)

Internet

Sex addiction

Shopping

Gaming

Exercise

Eating

Tanning

Diagnostic Criteria

Common Features of Behavioral Addictions: Relationship to Substance Use Disorders

"The essential feature of behavioral addictions is the failure to resist an impulse, drive, or temptation to perform an act that is harmful to the person or to others. Each behavioral addiction is characterized by a recurrent pattern of behavior that has this essential feature within a specific domain. The repetitive engagement in these behaviors ultimately interferes with functioning in other domains. In this respect, the behavioral addictions resemble substance use disorders. Individuals with substance addictions report difficulties in resisting the urge to drink or use drugs." (Grant et al. 2010, p. 2).

Typology of patients with behavioral addictions or eating disorders during a one-year period of care: Exploring similarities of trajectory using growth mixture modeling coupled with latent class analysis

Table 1

Assessment tools used to perform the diagnosis of each behavioral addiction.

Behavioral addictions	Assessment tools	Threshold used ^a
Problem gambling (PG)	Interview based on the DSM-IV [14] diagnostic criteria for pathological gambling [15–17]	3/10 [18–20]
Eating disorders (ED)	DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder, partly achieved with the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI 5.0) [21]	- <i>Inclusion of EDNOS</i>
Excessive videogame use (EVU)	Problem Videogame Playing (PVP) questionnaire [22]	4/9 [23]
Sexual addiction (SA)	Sexual Addiction Screening Test (SAST) [24]	10/25 [24].
Compulsive buying (CB)	McElroy's criteria [25]	-

^a We used lower thresholds than those typically employed to include subclinical forms of behavioral addictions.

Evidence

"The present results indicate that self-identified excessive exercising, sexual behavior, shopping, online chatting, video gaming, and/or eating tend to be fairly transient for most people. This aspect of the results is inconsistent with conceptualizations of addictions as progressive in nature, unless treated." (Konkoly et al. 2015, p. 1).

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Natural course of behavioral addictions: a 5-year longitudinal study

[Barna Konkoly Thege](#) , [Erica M Woodin](#), [David C Hodgins](#) & [Robert J Williams](#)

[BMC Psychiatry](#) **15**, Article number: 4 (2015) | [Cite this article](#)

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Abstract

Background

Resolving the theoretical controversy on the labeling of an increasing number of excessive behaviors as behavioral addictions may also be facilitated by more empirical data on these behavioral problems. For instance, an essential issue to the classification of psychiatric disorders is information on their natural course. However, longitudinal research on the chronic vs. episodic nature of behavioral addictions is scarce. The aim of the present study, therefore, was to provide data on prevalence, substance use comorbidity, and five-year trajectories of six excessive behaviors—namely exercising, sexual behavior, shopping, online chatting, video gaming, and eating.

Evidence

1. "In conclusion, we would like to warn against the current trend that too easily assimilates a wide range of everyday behaviors (e.g., eating, shopping, [mobile phone use](#), working, exercising) as behavioral addictions. For example, the current study suggests that excessive involvement in the targeted behaviors is not necessarily associated with the presence of core symptoms of addiction. Furthermore, this trend contributes to the pathologization of everyday behaviors (see [Billieux et al., 2014](#), [Mihordin, 2012](#)). It also neglects the fact that the behaviors under the scope of investigation in the present paper are multi-determined and heterogeneous. Therefore, they should not necessarily be conceptualized as addictions." (Deleuze et al. 2015, p. 55).



Prevalence and characteristics of addictive behaviors in a community sample: A latent class analysis



Jory Deleuze ^{a,*}, Lucien Rochat ^b, Lucia Romo ^c, Martial Van der Linden ^b, Sophia Achab ^d, Gabriel Thorens ^d, Yasser Khazaal ^d, Daniele Zullino ^d, Pierre Maurage ^a, Stéphane Rothen ^d, Joël Billieux ^{a,*}

^a Laboratory for Experimental Psychopathology (LEP), Psychological Science Research Institute, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

^b Cognitive Psychopathology and Neuropsychology Unit, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

^c Clinique Psychanalyse Développement (CLIPSYD), University Paris Ouest-Nanterre la Défense, Paris, France

^d Addictology Division, Department of Mental Health and Psychiatry, Geneva University Hospitals, Geneva, Switzerland

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ABSTRACT

While addictions to substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs have been extensively investigated, interest has been growing in potential non-substance-related addictive behaviors (e.g., excessive gambling, buying or playing video games). In the current study, we sought to determine the prevalence and characteristics of a wide range of addictive behaviors in a general population sample and to identify reliable subgroups of individuals displaying addictive behaviors.

Seven hundred seventy participants completed an online survey. The survey screened for the presence and characteristics of the main recognized substance and behavioral addictions (alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, other drugs, gambling, compulsive shopping, intensive exercise, Internet and mobile phone overuse, intensive work involvement, and overeating) in a three-month period. Key aspects of addiction were measured for each reported behavior, including negative outcomes, emotional triggers (positive and negative emotional contexts), search for stimulation or pleasure, loss of control, and cognitive salience.

Latent class analysis allowed us to identify three theoretically and clinically relevant subgroups of individuals. The first class groups problematic users, i.e., addiction-prone individuals. The second class groups at-risk users who frequently engage in potentially addictive behaviors to regulate emotional states (especially overinvolvement in common behaviors such as eating, working, or buying). The third class groups individuals who are not prone to addictive behaviors.

The existence of different groups in the population sheds new light on the distinction between problematic and non-problematic addiction-like behaviors.

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