

The Increase in Addiction during COVID-19

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The increase in addiction during COVID-19 is a condition that emerged as an aftermath of COVID-19-related events, for instance, fear of the spread of COVID-19, self-abstention from many activities, and restrictions established by the lockdown measures. This condition includes substance addictions such as drugs and alcohol but also behavioral addictions such as gambling, gaming, pornography, and smartphone and internet misuse.

Keywords: COVID-19 ; addiction ; oppression

COVID-19 has negatively affected society in many ways. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused in individuals the fear of contagion, leading to self-abstention from many social activities. Additionally, the lockdown measures limited even more citizens' activities, since only some of them were allowed, leading to even more oppression, with a physical and psychological aftermath ^[1]. In such difficult and prolonged periods, social and emotional closeness with relatives, colleagues, and friends are necessary ^[2], to adequately confront the difficult period without self-destructive practices.

Isolation can affect negatively individuals, rendering them lonely and abandoned, creating a vicious cycle of withdrawal and isolation ^[2]. In such cases of continuous and acute oppression, many people try to find alleviation in anti-stress behaviors. The problem is that some anti-stress behaviors are not healthy, since they may have a severe and long-term negative impact on individuals. To be more precise, many people resort to addictive practices, such as excessive gaming, gambling, illegal substances, alcohol consumption, etc. ^[3], since the aforementioned have a direct and short-run stress relief result, but the long-run consequences of these behaviors have a serious and negative impact on health, perpetuating a negative non-ending situation, which is termed as addiction.

Even though COVID-19 had unprecedented effects on society, many researchers in the past had highlighted the effect of crises on human behavior. There are many pieces of evidence, unveiling that the oppression caused by economic, financial, and other crises and also by unemployment make people more vulnerable to addictive behaviors ^[4]. In this context, it is very important to understand social phenomena that have a major impact on human societies, concealing also a probable biological or even genetic tendency of humans to addiction. A thorough examination of this specific field of study is imperative.

The present entry provides an extensive literature review for the main findings regarding addiction during COVID-19. Furthermore, the entry describes empirically the academic interest for the subject of "addiction" over the years, points out alternative investigations for this specific field of study, and, finally, concludes with some probable measures that can be taken to face such social phenomena.

References

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