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GAME TRANSFER PHENOMENA AND PROBLEMATIC SMARTPHONE USE IN AN AUGMENTED REALITY GAME

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Objectives

Examine the effects of playing Pokémon Go among those who experienced Game Transfer Phenomena (GTP) (e.g., hallucinations (e.g., sounds, images), cognitive/perceptual distortions, and involuntary behaviours with video game content) and have Problematic Smartphone Use (PSU).

Background and Aims

The investigation of the psychopathology of interactive media has been dominated by paradigms of addiction. However, distress/dysfunction, especially in those with impaired control/dysfunctional gaming has been reported when experiencing GTP. This paper compares gamers with only GTP (OnlyGTP) (49.2%), GTP and PSU (GTP&PSU) (31.8%), no GTP and no PSU (noGTP&noPSU) (15.7%), and only PSU (onlyPSU) (3.3%).

Materials and Methods

Online survey (N=1,085), 55.8% females. MAge=32.44.

Results

Those with GTP were significantly more likely to have PSU, and most with PSU reported GTP. The GTP&PSU played significantly more times p/day (5+) than the other groups, and played more p/week (13hrs). The GTP&PSU were significantly higher in gaming-related risks (e.g., accidents, trespassing), immersion and escapism than the other groups, and significantly higher in conflicts (e.g., neglect responsibilities, deceive, arguments/fights) than onlyGTP and noGTP&noPSU. However, they also obtained more compensations from playing (e.g., feeling less lonely, less anxious to go out).

Conclusions

Special attention should be paid to individuals with PSU, particularly those with both GTP and PSU. They have more problems and appear to compensate some needs via playing, which has been found to lead to negative outcomes. To understand the effects of smartphone gaming it is crucial to consider both the gaming (the activity) and the attachment to the smartphone (the medium) in the context of impaired control, and GTP.

Keywords:

Mobile phone addiction
Game Transfer Phenomena
Video games
Gaming disorder
Augmented reality games