

Title: The relationship between difficulties in emotion regulation and dysfunctional technology use among adolescents

Titolo: La relazione tra difficoltà nella regolazione emotiva e uso disfunzionale della tecnologia negli adolescenti

Category: Original Article

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Summary.

Objectives. Since two decades scientific research is studying excessive and dysfunctional new technologies use and its influences on people's lives, in terms of personal, relational, scholastic and work functioning impairment. The objectives of the present study are to investigate gender differences in problematic new technologies use as well as to examine the relationship between problematic new technologies use, emotional regulation and its specific dimensions.

Methods. 280 Italian adolescents (51.1% males) aged 11 to 18 years (mean age=13.31; SD = 2.33) were recruited from two Italian secondary public schools and involved in this study. Data were collected using the *Internet Addiction Test*, the *Video Game Dependency Scale*, the *Brief Multicultural Version of the Test of Mobile-Phone Dependence* and the *Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale*.

Results. Results indicate significant association between emotion dysregulation and problematic internet ($r=.504$; $p<.001$), videogame ($r=.372$; $p<.001$), mobile-phone ($r=.424$; $p<.001$) use. These results support hypothesis that adolescents with greater emotion dysregulation are more likely to experience problematic new technologies use. Additionally, stepwise multiple regression analysis pointed out that the lack of effective emotion regulation strategies is a common risk factor between the problematic new technologies use, but regression analysis highlighted specific risk factors for some of the investigated dependent behaviors.

Conclusions. Findings of this study highlight a link between problematic new technologies use, emotion dysregulation and its specific dimensions. The results are discussed considering scientific advances and the role of emotional dysregulation in determining problematic new technologies use in adolescence. Further research with larger sample sizes is needed to confirm our data.

Keywords: Internet Gaming Disorder, Internet Addiction, Problematic Mobile-Phone Use, Emotion Regulation, Adolescence.