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The Threat of Electronic Sports Addiction to Adolescents' Mental Health and Countermeasures

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Abstract: With the rapid development of modern technology, electronic sports (e-sports) have become an integral part of adolescents' lives. However, as its popularity increases, the issue of e-sports addiction has become increasingly prominent, posing serious threats to the mental and physical health of adolescents. Adolescence is a critical period for psychological development, where mental state directly impacts future learning and life. However, e-sports addiction can lead to adolescents becoming immersed in virtual worlds, neglecting real life, and even triggering a range of developmental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the threat of e-sports addiction to adolescents' mental health and take proactive measures to help them establish a correct view of gaming, foster healthy psychological qualities, and safeguard their healthy development.

Keywords: E-sports Addiction; Mental Health; Countermeasures.

1. Introduction

E-sports is the most popular form of entertainment among contemporary adolescents, but as e-sports culture becomes more widespread, the problem of adolescent e-sports addiction has become increasingly apparent, posing a serious threat to their mental health. Since adolescence is a critical phase for psychological growth and personality development, mental health can directly impact future development. E-sports addiction can lead to excessive immersion in virtual worlds, loss of interest and passion for real life, and can trigger a series of psychological issues, further affecting adolescents' mental and physical health, and hindering their growth and progress. Thus, addressing the potential threats of e-sports addiction to adolescent mental health and implementing appropriate countermeasures is crucial. By enhancing educational guidance, establishing regulatory mechanisms, and providing social support, we can help adolescents establish a correct perspective on e-sports, balance the relationship between virtual and real worlds, and promote their healthy and comprehensive development [1-3].

2. The Importance of Strengthening Mental Health Education for Adolescents

2.1. Promoting Healthy Physical and Mental Development

Mental health education plays a significant role in promoting adolescents' healthy physical and mental development. In today's fast-paced world, adolescents face pressures from academics, family, and social interactions. Mental health education not only helps cultivate a positive attitude but also teaches them how to effectively manage emotions and prevent the accumulation of negative feelings. Additionally, good interpersonal relationships are indispensable for adolescents' healthy growth. Through mental health education, they can better understand and respect others, establishing harmonious interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, fostering self-confidence and self-esteem is an important task during adolescent growth. These psychological qualities make them more resilient and brave in facing life's challenges [4-5].

2.2. Improving Learning Efficiency

When adolescents maintain a positive and healthy psychological state, their focus and motivation to learn are significantly enhanced. They can concentrate more easily, absorb and master knowledge more efficiently. Moreover, psychologically healthy students usually have better social skills, enabling them to establish positive, harmonious relationships with teachers and peers, thus gaining more support and assistance in their studies. This conducive learning and social environment further boosts their learning efficiency and academic performance. Therefore, paying attention to adolescents' mental health is crucial for enhancing their learning capabilities and academic achievements.

2.3. Preventing Psychological Issues

Adolescence is a key stage for psychological growth and also a period prone to psychological issues and disorders. Strengthening mental health education can effectively prevent these problems. Through education, adolescents can understand the causes and symptoms of psychological issues, learn to observe and identify potential mental distress. Additionally, mental health education enhances adolescents' psychological qualities, such as stress resistance and emotional regulation skills, making them more composed and confident when facing challenges and difficulties. These enhanced abilities significantly reduce the risk of psychological disorders, laying a solid foundation for their healthy growth.

3. The Threat of E-sports Addiction to Adolescents' Mental Health

3.1. Social Isolation

With the rapid rise of e-sports, more and more adolescents are drawn to it, spending a significant amount of time on games. However, this excessive immersion brings a serious issue: social isolation. Adolescents should be developing their

social skills and building friendships during this critical stage. However, when they become overly engrossed in e-sports[6-7], their interaction with the real world significantly decreases. This lack of real social experiences can not only potentially decrease their social skills but also make them uneasy in actual social situations, possibly leading to social phobias. Hence, it is crucial to be wary of the potential threat of excessive immersion in e-sports to adolescents' social health.

3.2. Sleep Issues

In today's fast-paced life, e-sports games have become a favorite pastime for many adolescents. However, excessive indulgence in e-sports games can disrupt their regular sleep patterns. When adolescents devote excessive time to gaming, they tend to neglect their sleep, leading to disordered sleep schedules. Staying up late not only causes insomnia but also significantly decreases the quality of sleep, making them tired and lethargic during the day. This unhealthy sleeping habit further impacts their mental health, potentially leading to anxiety and depression. Thus, paying attention to the impact of e-sports games on adolescents' sleep patterns and mental health, and guiding them to establish healthy living habits, is crucial for their future learning and development.

3.3. Impact on Academics

Due to the prevalence of e-sports, more and more adolescents are immersed in this virtual world. However, excessive involvement in e-sports often means significant time consumption, which inevitably has a negative impact on their academics and career. Adolescence is a critical period for knowledge accumulation and skill development, but long hours spent on e-sports can lead them to neglect the importance of academics, resulting in declining grades. Similarly, for adolescents about to enter the workforce, excessive indulgence in e-sports can also cause them to miss opportunities to enhance professional skills and gain experience, thereby affecting their career development and prospects. Therefore, parents and educators need to be alert to the impact of e-sports on adolescents' academics and careers, guiding them to allocate their time reasonably, ensuring comprehensive and healthy development [8-10].

3.4. Distortion of Values

In today's society, electronic sports games have become an important part of many adolescents' daily entertainment. However, to attract players, some games incorporate inappropriate elements such as violence and robbery. Although these elements may stimulate players' senses in the short term, long-term exposure can subtly influence adolescents' values and worldview. Because adolescents are still maturing and are at a critical stage in forming their values and constructing their worldview, frequent exposure and identification with negative elements in games could lead to a distorted perception of the real world, potentially leading to a range of inappropriate behaviors such as bullying and theft. These distorted values can also trigger deeper psychological issues, such as tendencies toward violence and personality disorders.

4. Countermeasures to Resolve E-sports Addiction

4.1. Strengthening Education and Awareness

In the information age, when adolescents primarily engage in e-sports as their main form of entertainment, if they become excessively immersed, it can lead to various problems. Strengthening the education and awareness of adolescents is thus of great importance. Schools and parents, as key guides in adolescents' growth, should take on the responsibility of educating and raising awareness about the harms of e-sports addiction, including improper time management, social isolation, and impediments to academic and professional progress. By sharing real-life cases and organizing expert lectures, adolescents can gain a deeper understanding of the negative impacts of e-sports addiction and be guided to view e-sports games correctly. At the same time, parents and schools should also actively cultivate healthy interests and hobbies for adolescents. By offering a variety of activities and learning opportunities, they can spark their interest in other fields, such as sports, artistic creation, and scientific exploration. This can enrich adolescents' lives and help them establish a healthy and positive lifestyle, preventing excessive indulgence in e-sports games.

4.2. Establishing a Regulatory Mechanism

In the digital age, new forms of entertainment and learning are available to adolescents. However, excessive immersion in gaming has triggered a series of issues, such as impacts on academic performance, health deterioration, and a decline in social skills. As guardians of public interest, governments should strengthen the regulation of the esports market, as shown in Figure 1. This includes limiting gaming time for adolescents to ensure they have sufficient rest and study time. For those overly dependent on gaming, governments should provide necessary interventions and treatment measures to help them step out of the shadows of gaming and reintegrate into real life. Additionally, game developers, as upstream entities in the industry chain, should also assume their social responsibility by actively developing more games that are beneficial to the physical and mental health of adolescents, such as educational and sports games, providing healthier and more beneficial entertainment options for adolescents and promoting their comprehensive development.

Regulatory aspect	Content Description
Government regulation	Set up a special e-sports market regulator
	Set up a special e-sports market regulator
	Strengthen the daily supervision of the e-sports market
	Set a limit on play time for teenagers
	Provide necessary interventions and treatments
Responsibilities of Game Developers	Assume social responsibility
	Comply with the government's e-sports market access standards
	Put an anti-addiction system in the game
	Strengthen supervision of in-game transactions and virtual goods
	Actively cooperate with the supervision of government departments

Figure 1. Establishing Esports Market Regulatory Mechanisms

4.3. Enhancing Self-Management Skills

In the rapidly developing digital age, esports games have become a part of many adolescents' lives, offering them a rich entertainment experience. However, excessive immersion in esports can lead to a range of problems such as declining academic performance, health issues, and weakened social skills[11]. For this reason, adolescents should cultivate good time management skills. They should learn to plan their study and leisure time properly, ensuring that they complete their academic obligations while also enjoying appropriate leisure activities. By setting clear schedules, they can better control the amount of time spent on esports games and avoid excessive immersion. When adolescents find themselves unable to effectively manage their time or emotions, they may consider seeking professional psychological counseling or therapy. Professional psychologists can help them adjust their psychological state, develop healthy psychological habits, and better cope with life's challenges. By improving their self-management skills, adolescents can better balance their academics, entertainment, and health, laying a solid foundation for their future development.

4.4. Introducing Psychological Counseling

For adolescents who are already addicted to esports, psychological counseling or therapy can be introduced based on the actual situation to help them adjust their psychological state and identify and resolve the root causes of their addiction. Adolescents may become addicted to gaming due to family relationships, academic pressures, or issues with self-identity. Through professional psychological counseling, they can gain a deeper understanding of their inner selves, identify the root causes of their problems, and learn methods to cope with and resolve these issues. Additionally, professional psychologists will employ a variety of therapeutic techniques, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and psychoeducation, to help adolescents develop healthy gaming perspectives and learn self-management and game time control. They will also teach effective emotion regulation skills to help adolescents better handle the pressures and setbacks of life, reducing their dependency on gaming. Psychological counseling provides a safe environment for adolescents, allowing them to feel cared for and understood, gradually overcoming gaming addiction, and regaining a healthy and positive lifestyle [12-13].

4.5. Strengthening Social Support

Esports addiction not only affects adolescents' academics and physical health but can also cause long-term damage to their mental health and social functioning. Therefore, all sectors of society should strengthen their attention and support for adolescents addicted to esports, providing them with the necessary assistance. On one hand, dedicated esports addiction treatment centers could be established, staffed with professional psychologists, therapists, and counselors to offer psychological treatment and rehabilitation services to adolescents. They would provide personalized treatment plans to help adolescents recognize and overcome their addiction issues while also offering necessary psychological support and education. On the other hand, schools, families, and communities should also actively participate in supporting adolescents addicted to esports, as shown in Table 1. Schools could enhance mental health education to help adolescents develop correct values and gaming perspectives; families could strengthen communication and companionship, providing more love and support; and communities could organize a variety of activities to offer adolescents more social and entertainment options.

Table 1. Countermeasures Against Esports Addiction

Support Aspects	Specific measures
School Support	Strengthen mental health education in schools
	Set up special counselors or psychological counselors
	Organize relevant lectures and activities
Family support	Strengthen parents' understanding of e-sports addiction
	Strengthen communication and companionship with children
	Network with treatment centers or professionals
Community Support	Organize diverse community events
	Set up community counseling stations or hotlines
	Strengthen cooperation between communities and schools

5. Conclusion

In today's rapidly evolving information and networked world, esports, as a new form of entertainment, has won the hearts of many adolescents. However, as esports become more widespread and competitive, the problem of adolescent esports addiction has become increasingly prominent, representing a significant societal issue. Fundamentally, esports addiction not only deprives adolescents of opportunities to engage with the real world but also insidiously erodes their mental health. It is crucial, therefore, to recognize the threat esports addiction poses to adolescent mental health and actively seek countermeasures based on real-world conditions to truly help adolescents escape the grip of esports addiction and create a healthy, harmonious, and positive environment for their growth.

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