Video Game Addiction and Life Style Changes: Implications for Caregivers Burden

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ABSTRACT

Limitation of available information on caregiver perspective on managing the users excessive use of technology. The present case series explore the caregiver burden related to users addictive use of video game. The users and caregivers approached the service of healthy use of technology (SHUT clinic) for management. They were assessed using Griffith criteria for video game; General Health questionnaire and family burden interview schedule. It demonstrate the addictive use of video game and its impact on users life style and the presence of psychiatric distress/family burden in the caregivers. Caregivers also reported presence of disturbance in psychosocial domains and helplessness to manage the excessive use. It has implications for building support group and service to handle parents’ distress and enabling them to handle the dysfunction in users.

Key words: Caregivers, users, video game

INTRODUCTION

Increase use of internet especially video game has been seen among users in recent years. Caregivers have expressed concern about the manifestations of excessive use of video game on users’s in the form of truancy from school to play, losing academic grades at school, decreased social activities; irritability if unable to play longer period of time or advised to stop; an increase in expression of aggression; wrist pain and neck pain. It also leads to presence of psychiatric distress among caregivers and loss of pleasurable activities. Any illness has an impact on the individual as well as those around in terms of physical, emotional, academic, cognitive, distress and social dysfunctions. This leads to problems of communication, feeling of inability to help the individual among significant others. This impact manifest as burden. Burden is said to be largely determined by family environment in terms of coping styles of different family members and their tolerance of the patients’ aberrant behaviour. Though reviews and available literature talk about the presence of addiction to technology there is not much published work on caregiver burden, attributable to excessive use of technology in individual.

CASE REPORT

The present case is going to highlight the caregiver burden related to excessive use of technology in the individual. The parents (single child family) approached the Service for Healthy use of Technology (SHUT) clinic Bangalore, Karnataka, India for management of user’s video game. It is the India first clinic to manage technology addiction. Case 1:26-year-old medical professional, met criteria’s of video game addiction as per Griffith criteria. He used to prefer to spend time...
at gaming parlour rather at home. He used to spend his salary for meeting the requirements for playing game. The other dysfunctions seen in the form of decreased sleep, lack of personal hygiene, irregular food habits and reduced interaction with friends and parent. He used to get aggressive/irritable with parents, whenever he was advised/asked to seek help or to stop video game. The parents have psychiatric distress on 12 items General Health questionnaire and family burden interview schedule indicate disturbance in leisure activities, family interaction, physical and mental health. They reported preoccupation with excessive use of technology in the users and its impact as well as decreased interest in pleasurable activities. Others dysfunctions seen in form of decrease productivity at work place, sleep disturbance and frequent visit to professional for it management. They attributed it to helplessness to manage the users dysfunctions lifestyle. Case II: 18-year-old boy had the excessive use of video game for the last 2 years. He had video game addiction as per Griffith Criterias. Excessive playing led to losing interest in studies as well as getting low academic grades. The other dysfunctions seen in the form of decrease self care, disturbance in biological functions, avoiding contact with others and behavioural changes in the form of irritability whenever advised to stop accessing video game. The parents have psychiatric distress on 12 items General Health questionnaire and family burden interview schedule indicate disturbance in leisure activities, family routine, family interaction, physical and mental health. They attributed it to helplessness to manage the users psychosocial dysfunctions. It also start affecting their life style in terms of decrease engagement in pleasurable activities; disturbance in sleep attributable to frequent checking of users activities at night and interpersonal problems.

DISCUSSION

The both cases document the presence of psychiatric distress, and life style changes attributable to dysfunction related to users excessive use of technology. The findings have been corroborated by available literature for substance users. The burden has been seen among caregivers of substance users. Around 95-100% of caregivers reported a moderate or severe burden on family burden scale for users. It was more for disruption of family routine, financial burden, disruption of family interactions and disruption of family leisure. Caregivers tend to report disturb physical health, including insomnia, headache, and weight loss, and are more likely postpone seeking formal consultation. Higher rates of depression and anxiety among caregivers.

CONCLUSIONS

The technology use not only manifesting as addictive among the users but it also has an impact on psychological well being of the caregivers. There is a need to explore the other determinants of care giver burden, its subjective experience, presence of substance use and role of personality. With the unavailability of specialized service, it has implications for building support group and service to handle parents distress and enabling them to handle the dysfunction in users.

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