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Characteristics of the Internet use in relation to the sense of coherence and demographic factors among students of lower secondary schools in the Capital City of Warsaw in Poland.

Introduction

Internet use by adolescents and Problematic Internet Use (PUI) are the subject of extensive research. Problematic Internet Use, as by Poprawa, is an 'excessive use of certain internet applications, with clear signs of addictive behavior, leading to psychological, social and health issues. There is not enough research to identify the factors that protect adolescents from PUI.

Scientific evidence suggests that a high sense of coherence (SOC) positively affects human health and functioning. The sense of coherence develops in the course of socialization that covers the entire human life, while the childhood and adolescence periods are of exceptional importance. SOC is shaped, inter alia, by relationships with parents, family strengths and experiencing support from significant people (Karski, 2008, p. 19).

The family is the fundamental social and educational environment for a person. Parents or legal guardians are obliged to take care of their children's health. In the context of PUI, their responsibilities include, inter alia, monitoring the time the child spends on the Internet and the activities they undertake in it. There are many family factors that increase the risk of PUI among young people. These include: the occurrence of conflicts with parents and between parents, youth dissatisfaction with the functioning of the family, negative parental attitudes and the lack of acceptance by the mother or father (Potembska, 2011). There is insufficient data on protective factors in this regard.

Purpose of the study

The main objective of the study is to characterize the use of the Internet, as well as to assess the relationship between the sense of coherence and family structure and the occurrence of PUI among students of lower secondary schools in the Capital City of Warsaw in Poland.

Material and methods

The research group consisted of 1078 students from 9 randomly selected lower secondary schools in Warsaw. A self-administered questionnaire was applied, consisting of the original questionnaire, Internet Use Test (TKI23) and the SOC11-M Questionnaire.

Results

Over 86% of young people declare that they use the Internet with a mobile phone, and nearly 52% with their own laptop. The surveyed youth most often use the Internet at home, in their own room (82%). It was found that nearly 10.9% of the examined adolescents showed a high degree of PUI, and 0.7% - very high. Satisfaction with family relationships and ease of talking to parents correlate positively with SOC. Higher SOC correlates positively with better health and negatively with PUI and its components.

Conclusions

The conducted own research and the analysis of the literature provide scientific evidence that a sense of coherence, a positive atmosphere at home and good communication in the family can play an important role in supporting the well-being of young people. They also provide useful areas for identifying adolescents at risk of mental health problems, especially problematic internet use.