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Introduction

The Internet provides adolescents the chance to experience autonomy through the collection of information and contact with peers with whom to share experiences, emotions and thoughts. A misuse of the Internet can occur if a teenager avoids real relationships and surfing the web turns into a psychological defense, in contrast with a healthy mental development.

Objectives and Aims

The research investigates forms and motivations of misuse of the internet among a group of Italian teenagers. Objective of the work is the hypothesis of a correlation between massive use of internet and behaviours of social retreat.

Methods

The research used a questionnaire. The areas of investigation were: school performance, hours of internet surfing, activity on the Internet (social networks, games, information research, gambling online), psychological reasons of the Internet use, behaviours of social retreat. 583 adolescents (45% males and 54% females, mean age 17 years) responded to the questionnaire.

Results

The 6% of adolescents sample responded to always think the Internet even when not on the computer or gets irritated and reacts impulsively if someone bothers him while it is connected. The 5% prefer surfing rather than going out with friends. Hours of internet surfing and responses of social retreat were correlated.

Conclusions

The social retreat can be one of consequences of the Internet misuse, with difficulties in socializing and use of the Internet as a psychological defense.