

Everyone,

We want to wish you all a fulfilling Thanksgiving.

The media has picked up on the theme that cell phone use has been associated with an increase in suicides. Cell phone use crossed the 50% mark in this country in late 2012 and has continued to climb. The suicide rate has also continued to climb at about the same rate. Tying the two together based only on a similar rise in the curves will not please the more scientific among you.

Further, one of the County's more esteemed clinicians has asked, can we use "abuse" or "dependence" with behaviors that are expected of us by important others, such as family or bosses? If your boss expects an immediate response to an email or text any time of the day or night -- an expectation that deprives you of sleep, and has other untoward effects that reach the level of DSM-5's clinical significance -- does that mean you have a mental illness?

If, despite the above caveats, you think the concept of Electronic Device Use Disorder [EDUD] should be added to the DSM, we have a suggestion as to what it would look like in the DSM infra. We chose "Electronic Device Use Disorder" even though DSM-5 editors decided that "use" was good enough for addictions; that's because without the "Disorder," one might think the problem is with the cell phone.

Furthermore, the untoward impact might not be a quantitative issue but an improper use that causes an unfortunate distraction. The frequent example is of crossing a street against the red light while focused on the phone. Another notorious example occurred at this year's Academy Awards when staff who were focused on their phones mixed up the winning envelope for the Best Picture Award.

Electronic Device Use Disorder

Code: 98.8. Use "electronic device use disorder," not "other."

Diagnostic Criteria

A pattern of using electronic devices leading to ***clinically significant*** impairment or distress, as manifested by one of the following:

Use of electronic devices to where the time spent on a device is causing significant distress in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Use of electronic devices in situations where it is dangerous to self or others to do so, such as when crossing a street. Also, when the distraction can lead to important social or occupational goals not being achieved.

Specify if:

Quantitative misuse: The person's use takes away from time needed for other tasks.

Qualitative misuse: The person's use is inappropriate for the situation.

Diagnostic Features

Smartphones are a major part of many people's lives. The average user checks their smartphone 166 times a day. There is currently no number of times that makes the practice of checking one's phone pathological. Only significant negative consequences that directly result from use of an electronic device make this a "Disorder."

Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

Person may have reduced ability to think critically since they are easily able to access the Internet whenever they have challenging cognitive issue.

Safety for the person can be compromised due to electronic device usage in transportation jobs, the medical field and in construction, where environmental awareness is imperative.

Person may be in a social or occupational setting where they are stressed by attempting to respond to messages many hours each day. Thus, employees may experience a sense that they are never truly "off-work."

Person may be less responsible as a parent, worker, and so forth because of the extensive time spent on an electronic device.

Prevalence

While 95 percent of Americans have a cell phone and 77 percent have a smart phone, that does not indicate the prevalence of EDUD.

Smartphone use is slightly more common in men, whites, 18-29 year olds, college graduates, suburbanites, and those whose income is higher than \$75,000. Again, this does not answer the question of in whom it becomes a Disorder.

One study suggests that people with the following characteristics are more vulnerable:

- 1] Materialistic
- 2] Emotionally Labile
- 3] Impulsive
- 4] Extroverted

Development and Course

Use of devices can begin at an early age, even among babies, but data on when it reaches the level of being a Disorder is not yet known.

More common in children where families and care-givers encourage its use.

Hypothetically, the increased use of mobile devices (such as smartphones) to entertain children as a soothing technique may predispose children to depend on such electronic devices for emotional security as an adult, but there is no such evidence now.

Risk and Prognostic Factors

While specific data is lacking, EDUD is probably more common in families, schools, work settings where smartphone use is encouraged.

Suicide Risk

The rate of suicides has increased with the increased use of cellphones, but that does not establish cause.

Differential Diagnosis

Internet Gaming Disorder focus may involve use of smartphones, and Internet Gaming Disorder has a priority over EDUD. If the person is using their mobile device for the purpose of gaming, then EDUD should be a subtype of Internet Gaming Disorder.

Comorbidity

Hypothetically, EDUD may increase morbidity when it comes to the occupations that require complete focus for safety purposes (i.e. bus drivers, police officers, pilots, ship captains, etc.).

While not a “morbid” association, there is some evidence that this Disorder **decreases** the occurrence of substance-related addictions.

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