

Gaming addiction doesn't appear to foreshadow psychiatric problems

A gaming disorder is characterized by causing a variety of problems in a person's personal and work life. It can have an impact on school, work or friendships, and the gamer may continue to play even though he or she knows it is causing problems. Other symptoms of IGD are that the gamer is unable to stop or reduce the activity, and that the person may lose interest in other activities and lie about how much he or she plays.

Previous findings show that [excessive screen use among young children can lead to them becoming less able to recognize emotions](#). But some children also experience valuable mastery through gaming, and many find friendship and other social togetherness.

A research group at NTNU has looked at possible connections between children with symptoms of IGD and mental health problems. The results may reassure parents who might have been more permissive with digital gaming as they themselves try to work at home during the coronavirus pandemic.

"We've found no connection between IGD and psychiatric problems, other than that 10- and 12-year-olds who had more symptoms of gaming addiction developed fewer symptoms of anxiety two years later, when they were 12 and 14 years old," says Beate Wold Hygen.

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"We looked at anxiety, depression, ADHD and oppositional defiant disorder. But children who had more symptoms of these mental disorders were not more susceptible to gaming addiction," says Hygen.

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