

VIRTUAL REALITY AS A CONDITION OF DEVELOPMENT OF ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR

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The phenomenon of the virtual reality and dependence on it is considered in the work. Also, the theoretical relationship between the mechanism of occurrence of other addictions is considered.

Keywords: virtual reality, addiction, mechanism.

In the psychological literature, addictive (dependent) behavior is considered as behavior associated with psychological or physical dependence on the use of a substance or on specific activity in order to change the mental state [1]. Among its signs, the formation of an addictive attitude – the totality of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral peculiarities causing an addictive attitude toward life has a paramount importance. Externally, it is expressed in the appearance of an overvalued emotional relationship to the object of addiction and the strengthening of such psychological defense mechanisms as: rationalization – the intellectual justification of addiction; partial perception, denial – the reluctance of the addict to recognize its dependence. Addictive behavior is a protective mechanism for avoiding reality, which frees an individual for some time from emotional tension and anxiety.

One of the last significant evidence of the dependence of dependence on virtual reality with dependence on psychoactive substances was the research, which showed that using the Internet can cause physiological changes in the human body. The study involved 144 men and women aged 18 to 33 years. On average, the participants, according to them, spent about five hours a day on the network, while in 20% of them the duration of a day's stay on the Internet exceeded six hours. Over 40% of the participants admitted that they have some degree of Internet addiction, they spend too much time online during the day and it's difficult for them to stop doing it. To test how the network affects the participants' condition, the researchers measured their heart rate and blood pressure level before and after short Internet sessions. In addition, participants underwent psychological testing for anxiety levels.

It appears that those who called themselves Internet addicts, experienced immediately after the session was over, increased anxiety and, as a result, physiological arousal. They have 3-4%, and in some cases, the pulse rate increased by 6-8% and the pressure increased in comparison with the indicators measured before the session. Those participants who did not experience problems with the Internet, such changes were not observed. Although the observed effect is relatively weak and does not threaten life and health, it is based on a hormonal imbalance that can weaken the immune system [2].

It was noted that the physiological and mental reactions of Internet addicts are very similar to the "withdrawal syndrome" observed in drug addicts and alcoholics. To relieve stress and calm down, Internet addicts need to rejoin the subject of their obsessive passion – with their smartphone or laptop [3].

Based on the above, we can draw the following conclusions. Dependence on virtual reality risks becoming a rather serious psychological illness at the present time due to the multiple determination of its development. In some European countries, people with the diagnosed diagnosis of dependence on virtual reality - Internet addiction disorder, are not allowed to work, and they also prescribe a specialized course of treatment. The question of dependence on computer technology and virtual reality is now extremely acute, since most people who fall under its influence are teenagers and young people.

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