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SOCOMUN XXXIII

WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
TOPIC: VIDEO GAME ADDICTION



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World Health Assembly (WHA) Video Game Addiction

Hi delegates, my name is Peri Feldman, and I am so excited to be your committee chair! Over my four years in MUN, I have built up confidence in using my voice to speak up for change, improved my research skills, broadened my understanding of current events, and most importantly, acquired a group of amazing friends. At school, you can catch me writing articles for the school's newspaper, attending MUN meetings, and laughing at the lunch tables with my friends. Outside of school, you can catch me practicing for the next ballet at my studio, setting up picnics on the beach, buying an overpriced smoothie, and watching *Pride and Prejudice*. This conference is a learning experience in which we guide you through committee procedures so you can be better prepared to take on more MUN conferences in the future. I highly advise you to thoroughly research this topic before the conference and arrive prepared with background knowledge, a firm understanding of your country's policy, and creative and feasible solutions. Remember that MUN isn't always about the final product or award, but the process. Each conference allows for another opportunity to perfect the process, in hopes of doing better or scoring higher than the last time. I am so stoked to meet you all and hear your intelligent ideas!

Hi, my name is Patrick Trotter, and I am a senior at Santa Margarita. I have been doing MUN for 4 years and am looking forward to being your co-chair in committee. Some things I enjoy outside of MUN include surfing, skateboarding, and being with my friends. I cannot wait to see you in committee!

My name is Elena Murray. I am a sophomore at Santa Margarita, and I am so excited to be your Rapporteur. I have been doing MUN since my freshman year and participated at SOCOMUN last year as a delegate. Besides MUN, I do mock trials, act for television, and voiceover, and I am also in Chamber's Choir here at Santa Margarita. MUN has helped me to improve my public speaking skills and has given me the opportunity to learn more about the world.

After opening ceremonies, delegates will discuss the issue raised in accordance with national policies, work together in informal consultations to develop viable solutions for the resolution papers, deliver the resolution papers, and respond to inquiries regarding the resolutions. Please come prepared to discuss and debate the topic of video game addiction. Your participation is highly encouraged as it will enhance your experience and prepare you for conferences in the future. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, do not hesitate to email us at socomunwha@gmail.com



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Background

The popularity of arcade games in the early 1980s sparked the emergence of video game addiction. Players were consumed in games such as Pac-Man and Space Invaders for extensive periods, which set the stage for subsequent issues with gaming addiction. Arcades then morphed into desktop PCs and home gaming consoles in the 1990s. This made gaming more widely available and studies conducted showed a pattern of possible drawbacks from the habit of gaming. In 1981, 19-year-old Jeff Daily died of a heart attack after playing the arcade game Berzerk for more than twenty-four hours. Cases resembling Daily's became more prevalent, prompting more research into the topic of video game addiction and highlighting worries about how addictive these games may be.

Addiction to video games is a result of multiple things, though the immersive qualities of contemporary video games are one of the main motivators. Currently, games are updated with strikingly realistic graphics, interesting plots, and multiplayer options that provide gamers with an immersive experience. Due to these enhancements, game players are finding it increasingly challenging to cease playing video games once they reach this degree of immersion, resulting in overindulging and abandoning other obligations. The dependency on video games is also greatly influenced by the social component of gaming. Players can interact with individuals from nearly every corner of the globe, which can encourage a feeling of belonging and community through the screen. In addition, psychological elements including reward systems and escape also play a role in addiction. According to the Entertainment Software Association, 59% of the American population uses gaming as an escape from boredom, stress, or anxiety (ESA, 2014). Dopamine production in the brain is a result of gaming-related rewards and feelings of accomplishment, such as ranking higher, finding rare items, or overcoming challenges and side quests.

Despite the increase in dopamine levels, addiction to video games can have a serious negative impact on a person's social, mental, and physical health. Playing video games for extensive periods makes individuals sedentary, which raises their risk of obesity, heart disease, and orthopedic issues. Frequent and prolonged gaming sessions can also interfere with sleep cycles, which can cause exhaustion and poor cognitive performance. Addiction to video games can also result in social isolation, anxiety, and despair. Gaming too much can affect one's ability to succeed in school or at work. This can lead to low marks, losing one's job, or even experiencing financial troubles. Furthermore, extensive research was conducted to observe the connection between several mental health outcomes and video game addiction in a meta-analysis. Significant correlations between symptoms of anxiety, depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and social anxiety disorders were discovered by the investigation of gaming addiction. These results underline the necessity of early detection and intervention to stop gaming-related issues from getting worse. Lastly, the financial toll that gaming addiction takes has a significant worldwide impact. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates in a 2019 research report that the yearly global economic cost of mental health issues, including gaming addiction, surpasses \$2.5 trillion. This covers the direct costs of medical care as well as lost wages and other indirect expenditures related to mental health issues.

Research is still needed to fully comprehend the intricate interactions that exist within gaming, psychological wellness, and societal concerns as technology and gaming develop. Despite having a modest factual base in the present, gaming addiction is becoming a more common topic for psychology and psychiatric study, and considering how common gaming is, its importance and influence on society are bound to increase.



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Potential Solutions

Addiction to video games has become a major global phenomenon that affects people of every demographic and age. Video game addiction is becoming a more common problem as technology develops and immersive gameplay grows. Nonetheless, there is a chance to create and put solutions into practice to address this problem.

Education and awareness efforts are vital in the fight against video game addiction. Advertisements that educate about the warning signs and dangers of addiction as well as appropriate gaming techniques can be directed towards gamers and their families. By increasing awareness, people are better able to decide how they want to play games and get help when they need it.

Furthermore, putting strong parental controls on gaming platforms and gadgets is another practical remedy for adolescent gamers. With the use of specific settings, parents can keep an eye on and restrict their kids' gaming time in addition to preventing them from accessing inappropriate content. Moreover, teaching parents the value of establishing limits and keeping an eye on their kids' gaming behaviors can enable them to take preventative action against addiction.

Next, having access to services and help is essential for people who are addicted to video games. Those in need can receive aid through specialized hotlines, support groups, and counseling programs. These sites can help people gain control over their gaming habits by providing emotional support, direction, and addiction management techniques. Giving people the chance to explore various interests and hobbies can also help them discover a life away from the screen.

Lastly, regulating organizations and game producers is also important in the fight against video game addiction. Addiction risk can be reduced by putting responsible game design techniques into practice. These can be things such as including built-in breaks, capping in-game prizes, and marking how much time is spent playing. A safer gaming environment can also be achieved by implementing laws governing the promotion and sale of games, especially those that target youth.

It is crucial to understand that while the above-mentioned solutions offer a starting point for treating video game addiction, they are not the final product. When creating your solutions, do more research into a specific field, use more imagination, modify ideas to fit following your country's policy, think of the five W's, and how it will happen. The bureau stresses implementation and creativity in your solutions as well as focusing on several perspectives and facets of the issue. Though implementation is important, delegates are not required to worry about financing their solutions. It is expected that the United Nations Fifth Budgetary Committee will provide the funds.



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Questions to Consider

Here are some questions concerning video game addiction to think about as you plan and conduct your research. These inquiries will benefit you in committee by assisting you in developing solutions that are both practical and compliant with national policy. Please be aware that the purpose of these questions is to provide you with guidance and support as you consider the problem in the process leading up to the committee. Delegates are not required to formally answer these before or during committee.

1. What regional differences exist in cultural views towards video games, and how do these differences affect government policies and interventions regarding video game addiction?
2. What nations now have the strongest legal and regulatory frameworks controlling the gaming industry? How do these laws and regulations handle problems like age limitations, in-app purchases, and addictive game mechanics?
3. What part do global institutions like the UN and WHO play in combating video game addiction? What programs have been suggested or put into action globally?
4. What effects do socioeconomic variables have on the prevalence and care of video game addiction around the globe?
5. What methods or practices for treating and preventing video game addiction have been found in other nations or areas? How can these tactics be modified or applied in different settings to be more effective?



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