

NOTE the following colour coding:

- Video gaming and related pronouns
- Video game addicts and related pronouns
- Video games and related pronouns
- Video gamers and related pronouns

The effects of video gaming

Video gaming is often demonized because of its detrimental effects on school-going children. The attractive design features of 3D video games draw children into a highly stimulating world. It is this constant visual stimulation that makes video games highly addictive. This compulsion to keep playing for long hours inevitably disrupts sleep. Video gamers often have trouble stopping to rest and tend to play long into the night. As a result, they often suffer from insomnia and are often sleep deprived (Croft, 2017; Tibbetts, 2019; Westgate, 2015). The lack of sleep that video game addicts suffer has been linked to an inability to focus in school. Apart from the negative physical and academic problems, Kuhn and Gallinat (2014) believe that school-goers tend to show a reduction in empathy and pro-social behaviour after prolonged periods of playing video games. In particular, because action and role-playing video games create realistic and violent virtual worlds, they desensitize players to real-life violence. Over time, this insensitivity develops into aggressive behaviour. In addition, the desire to keep playing compels video game addicts to avoid interacting with the people around them. Gamers invariably become socially isolated. In the long run, they are either likely to lose social communication skills or may even develop a fear of humans (Green, 2019).

Despite the possible social, physical and psychological effects of prolonged video gaming, some studies indicate that gaming improves attention spans and cognitive functions. As video games involve interactive visual tasks, they enhance visuo-spatial skills (Kühn et al., 2013; Kühn and Gallinat, 2014). Evidence demonstrates that while long term gamers have improved visuomotor coordination and navigational skills, their abilities to perceive, recognize, and manipulate visual stimuli are also significantly enhanced. Furthermore, Kuhn and Gallinat's (2014) study highlights the positive effects of long-term gaming on brain functions such as multitasking, decision-making, problem-solving and deductive reasoning.

Finally, the focus required to solve complex problems in the virtual world helps gamers improve attention (Palau, 2017). In short, there is a proven correlation between video gaming and enhancements in brain function (Beddison, 2017).