



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE REVIEW

*Treat Addiction. Save Lives.*

<b>Contact:</b>	Robert Dekker Vice President, Communications Wolters Kluwer Health	Connie Hughes Director, Marketing Communications Wolters Kluwer Health Medical Research
	+1 (215) 521-8928	+1 (646) 674-6348
	<a href="mailto:Robert.Dekker@wolterskluwer.com">Robert.Dekker@wolterskluwer.com</a>	<a href="mailto:Connie.Hughes@wolterskluwer.com">Connie.Hughes@wolterskluwer.com</a>

## Internet Addiction Could Be Warning Sign of Substance Use in Teens, Reports *Journal of Addiction Medicine*

*Heavy Internet Users Could Be Targeted for Prevention or Early Detection of Substance Abuse*

Philadelphia, Pa. (February 13, 2012) – Adolescents who have internet addictions may also be at increased risk of substance abuse, suggests a study in the March issue of [Journal of Addiction Medicine](#), the official journal of the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#). The journal is published by [Lippincott Williams & Wilkins](#), a part of [Wolters Kluwer Health](#).

Teens with "pathologic Internet use" are more likely to have past or recent use of illicit substances, according to the study by Dr. Georgios D. Floros of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and colleagues. The new research also points toward "some common personality characteristics" among adolescents who are abusing the Internet and have a history of substance use.

### Heavy Internet Users More Likely to Report Substance Use

The researchers surveyed the entire adolescent population (aged 14 to 19) of the Greek island of Kos regarding Internet use, substance use, and personality factors. Internet addiction means not just heavy Internet use, but also consequences such as losing track of time spent online, neglecting other activities, and having difficulty cutting down on Internet use.

Of the 1,221 teens who responded to the survey, about fifteen percent were heavy Internet users while five percent had signs of Internet addiction. Thirteen percent reported past substance abuse, including a seven percent rate of substance abuse within the past month. The researchers looked for possible links between Internet use and substance use, along with potential related factors.

As the severity of excessive Internet use increased, so did the likelihood of substance abuse.

Males had higher rates of substance abuse than females. Seeking online pornography was the only specific type of Internet activity that was more frequent among teens with recent substance use.

### **Evidence of Common Personality Factors**

Both substance use and heavy Internet use were associated with "distinct personality profiles," including higher scores for characteristics classified under the label of "psychoticism." According to a well-known personality theory (the Eysenck model), psychoticism includes traits such as nonconformity, aggressiveness, and impulsiveness.

Previous studies have linked other addictive disorders to high psychoticism scores, consistent with an "addictive personality." The relationship between Internet addiction and substance use remained significant, even after controlling for sex, age, ethnicity, and personality factors.

Internet addiction has not been formally accepted as a psychiatric diagnosis. However, it has many features in common with other addictive diseases, such as "a compulsive need for Internet use with lack of related control and disregard over the obvious adverse consequences." Some common biological factors—perhaps involving the dysfunction of dopamine and "reward pathway" of the brain—are possible as well.

Especially since excessive Internet use that interferes with daily activities is readily observable at home, the results have implications for the early identification of teens at risk of substance abuse, Dr. Floros and coauthors believe. They write, "Those adolescents eager to try any illicit substance are a prime target for early intervention programs." They even raise the possibility of promoting abuse prevention and early detection programs in the typical online venues where Internet overuse occurs—for example, online gaming sites, social networking sites, and hacking communities.

###

### **About *Journal of Addiction Medicine***

The mission of [\*Journal of Addiction Medicine\*](#), the official journal of the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#), is to promote excellence in the practice of addiction medicine and in clinical research as well as to support Addiction Medicine as a mainstream medical specialty. Published quarterly, the Journal is designed for all physicians and other mental health professionals who need to keep up-to-date with the treatment of addiction disorders. Under the guidance of an esteemed Editorial Board, peer-reviewed articles published in the Journal focus on developments in addiction medicine as well as on treatment innovations and ethical, economic, forensic, and social topics.

### **About the American Society of Addiction Medicine**

The American Society for Addiction Medicine is a professional society representing close to 3,000

physicians dedicated to increasing access and improving quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addictions.

**About Lippincott Williams & Wilkins**

Lippincott Williams & Wilkins (LWW) is a leading international publisher for healthcare professionals and students with nearly 300 periodicals and 1,500 books in more than 100 disciplines publishing under the [LWW](#) brand, as well as content-based sites and online corporate and customer services.

LWW is part of [Wolters Kluwer Health](#), a leading global provider of information, business intelligence and point-of-care solutions for the healthcare industry. Wolters Kluwer Health is part of [Wolters Kluwer](#), a market-leading global information services company with 2010 annual revenues of €3.6 billion (\$4.7 billion).