

Hypnosis and Virtual Addictions

Gerard FITOUSSI¹

¹Private practice, Fontainebleau, France,
drgerardfitoussi@yahoo.fr

Abstract: *Virtual addictions are more and more frequent and affect various audiences who are no longer limited to adolescents. This review will discuss the various points to be taken into account in the management of these addictions as well as the interest and place of hypnosis in this pathology. It will be based on the similarities between the hypnotic phenomenon and virtual addiction.*

Keywords: *Addiction, hypnosis, attention, virtual games, adolescents.*

How to cite: Fitoussi, G. (2021). Hypnosis and Virtual Addictions. *BRAIN. Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience*, 12(2), 322-325.
<https://doi.org/10.18662/brain/12.2/209>

Addictions and virtual addictions in particular are the subject of multiple forms of management. The approaches used are varied, supportive therapy, motivational interviewing, cognitive and behavioral therapy (Griffiths, 2008). Is there a place for hypnosis and if so, which one?

1. Hypnosis definition

The first step in clinical and therapeutic approach requires defining the words used as precisely as possible. The definition of hypnosis has been the subject of many debates in the research world (Elkins et al., 2015), the definition adopted to date is the definition of the American Psychological Association, division 30: « A state of consciousness with a focus of attention, a reduction in the peripheral field of consciousness, and characterized by an increase in the capacity to respond to suggestions ».

2. Hypnotic state and cyberaddiction

One of the elements behind the use of hypnosis in cyber addiction is the similarity of this addiction with the hypnotic phenomenon. In both conditions, we find a focus of attention and an increase of absorption of the subject in the activity undertaken, with as a corollary a time distortion during the state of hypnosis and the addiction situation -. The subjects do not recognize how much time they spent in front of their screen and are led, also in both conditions, to have an automatic behavior.

It should be noted that the absorptive capacity to immerse oneself in the action is predictive of the addictive behavior, as it is predictive of the capacity to enter in hypnotic trance. It follows that the most hypnotizable subjects are also those who have the most problematic behavior with their screens, in particular with their smartphones (Olson et al., 2020) allow.

3. Clinical and therapeutic features

The banality of the symptoms, until they take on worrying proportions, led to the fact that very often, parents, practitioners are not concerned with the appearance of this addiction until it is advanced (Dell'Osso et al., 2006). It can be added another misleading trait, patients whose profile is not the usual one, mostly adolescents, but also in recent years, a significant number of adult women rising to more than half of cyber-gamers.

Whether hypnosis or another method is used, the treatment requires that the practitioner know the universe of cyber addictions and the different games, some being more problematic than others. It is also required to

identify underlying pathologies like phobias, depression, or family conflicts making addiction to screens a refuge.

One of the first step will be to install trust and therapeutic alliance, which will allow to establish a contract and set goals.

4. Hypnosis and addiction

According to various authors, the method that have demonstrated their significance in gambling addictions and addiction treatment is Cognitive- Behavior Therapy (Griffiths, 2008). However, the approaches (s) used are diverse.

Considering hypnosis, the first point is the absence of contraindication for hypnosis in its use in addictions (Rago, 2020)

Several studies confirmed the usefulness of hypnosis in relieving pain and reducing anxiety (Rago, 2020) symptoms found also in addictions.

In addition, numerous studies have shown the benefit of using hypnosis in combination with other methods in several fields of intervention, particularly with CBT, in a “new vision”, cognitive hypnotherapy (Alladin, 2012).

Multidisciplinary interventions, varying according to the severity of the case and the phase of treatment, are particularly indicated. (Rago, 2020)

Conclusion

Virtual addictions fall within the field of addictions with their specificities. In this context, therapeutic alliance is essential. Hypnosis has its place within the framework of a multidisciplinary approach.

More research on the utilization of hypnosis in cyberaddiction is needed

References

- Alladin, A. (2012). Cognitive hypnotherapy: A new vision and strategy for research and practice. *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, 54(4), 249–262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00029157.2012.654528>
- Dell'Osso, B., Altamura, A. C., Allen, A., Marazziti, D., & Hollander, E. (2006). Epidemiologic and clinical updates on impulse control disorders: a critical review. *European archives of psychiatry and clinical neuroscience*, 256(8), 464–475. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00406-006-0668-0>
- Elkins, G., Barabasz, A. F., Council, J. R., & Spiegel, D. (2015). Advancing research and practice: the revised APA division 30, Definition of hypnosis.

International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, 63(1), 1-9.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00207144.2014.961870>

- Griffiths, M. D. (2008). Diagnosis and management of video game addiction. *New Directions in Addiction Treatment and Prevention*, 12(3), 27-41.
<http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/23070>
- Olson, J. A., Stendel, M., & Veissière, S. (2020). Hypnotised by your phone? Smartphone addiction correlates with hypnotisability. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 11, 578. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2020.00578>
- Rago, N. (2020) « Usage/Abus de substances: troubles liés aux substances et troubles addictifs », in *Le Livre Bleu de l'hypnose*, , pp. 195-203, Anfortas Ed 2020. <https://livre.fnac.com/a15109701/Giuseppe-De-Benedittis-Le-Livre-Bleu-de-l-hypnose>