Prevalence and Determinants of Pathological Internet Use among Undergraduate Students in a Public University in Malaysia

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Pathological Internet Use (PIU) affects one’s physical and mental health, and university students are at risk as they are more likely to develop PIU. This study determines the prevalence of PIU and its associated factors among students in a public university in Malaysia. This cross-sectional study was conducted among 1023 undergraduate students in 2015. The questionnaire comprised of items from the Young’s Diagnostic Questionnaire to assess PIU and items related to socio-demography, psychosocial, lifestyle and co-morbidities. Anonymous paper-based data collection method was adopted. Mean age of the respondents was 20.73 ± 1.49 years old. The prevalence of pathological Internet user was 28.9% mostly Chinese (31%), 22 years old and above (31.0%), in Year 1 (31.5%), and those who perceived themselves to be from family with higher socio-economic status (32.5%). The factors found statistically significant (p<0.05) with PIU were Internet use for three or more hours for recreational purpose (OR: 3.89; 95% CI:1.33 – 11.36), past week of Internet use for pornography purpose (OR: 2.52; 95% CI:1.02 – 5.93), having gambling problem (OR: 2.65;