

## **OP 05: Internet Gaming Disorder: Prevalence and Associated Gaming Motivations among an Advanced Level Student Population from the Colombo Educational Zone**

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**Introduction:** Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) is on the rise among adolescents owing to increasing technology usage amid the COVID-19 pandemic. It is linked to anxiety, depression, disordered sleep, and poor academic performance. Understanding the motivations that drive gaming addiction can enable early identification of at-risk individuals.

**Objective:** We aimed to identify the gaming motives underpinning IGD among an urban Advanced Level student population.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among 395 students aged 16-18 years, selected via random cluster sampling from four Type-1AB schools in the Colombo Educational Zone. The validated Internet Gaming Disorder Scale Short-Form was used to assess IGD, and cases were diagnosed if  $\geq 5$  items in the scale were scored 4/5 or more. Seven gaming motives, namely Social, Escape, Competition, Coping, Skill Development, Fantasy and Recreation were explored via the Motives for Online Gaming Questionnaire.

**Results:** Most of the students (81.5%,  $n=322$ ) identified themselves as gamers. Among them, the prevalence of IGD was 6.21% (95% CI=3.58–8.85) which was significantly higher ( $p<0.05$ ) among males and those who played games for  $\geq 6$ h daily during weekdays. All the motives correlated significantly ( $p<0.001$ ) with IGD although Escape showed the strongest correlation (Spearman's  $R_s=0.616$ ). Escape and Fantasy were associated with higher odds and Competition was associated with lower odds of having IGD in binary logic regression analysis.

**Conclusion:** IGD is an emerging public health challenge which predominantly affects male gamers. Escapism and Fantasy is higher while competitiveness is lower among disordered gamers. These motivations should be considered in the psychological screening of potential cases.

**Keywords:** Internet gaming disorder, adolescents, COVID-19