Prevention and Control of Health Problems associated with Excessive Use of Internet and Related Products
Thailand Experience

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Overview of the Situation in Thailand

Internet usage of Thai youths

Percentage of Internet Users, Classified by the number of hours spent on the Internet per week

Source: National Statistical Office, Thailand 2015

Source: Thailand Internet User Profile 2015, Ministry of Information and Communication, Thailand
Devices used to access the Internet, classified by average number of hours used per day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Average Hours/Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smartphone</td>
<td>5.7 hrs/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop Computer</td>
<td>5.4 hrs/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop Computer</td>
<td>5.0 hrs/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablet Computer</td>
<td>3.8 hrs/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart TV</td>
<td>3.0 hrs/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5.0 hrs/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Thailand Internet User Profile 2015, Ministry of Information and Communication (Thailand)

Devices used to access the Internet, classified by gender and generation

Source: Thailand Internet User Profile 2015, Ministry of Information and Communication (Thailand)

Internet used, classified by Internet usage site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home/Accommodation</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Places</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Institutions</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Cafes</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Thailand Internet User Profile 2015, Ministry of Information and Communication (Thailand)

Internet users' Regularly used social media sites

- Facebook: 92.1%
- LINE: 85.1%
- Google+: 67.0%
- Twitter: 21.0%
- WhatsApp: 2.8%

Source: Thailand Internet User Profile 2015, Ministry of Information and Communication (Thailand)
Internet addiction prevalence

- Varied results across studies due to...
  - Definition
  - Study design
  - Demographic data of participants
  - Measurement – GAST, PVP, Game Addiction Protection Scale (GAME-P), Social Media Addiction Test (S-MAT), internet addiction scale (IA), Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire (IADQ)

- Internet addiction prevalence in Thailand: 2-30%
- Game addiction prevalence in Thailand: 15-50%

National school survey on health-risk behaviours of adolescents

- 50,000 Thai students who are studying in grade 7, 9 and 11 or equivalent.
- Stratified random sampling from all over Thailand.
- 200 Schools from 40 provinces.
- Game addiction screening test (GAST)
  - Self-report
  - 24 items about preoccupation with game, loss of control and functional impairment.
  - 4-point Likert scale
  - No problem, started having problems and problematic played.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N = 38,160</th>
<th>No problem N = 34,889 (91.45%)</th>
<th>Started having problems N = 2,210 (5.79%)</th>
<th>Problematic played N = 1,051 (2.76%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational year 2</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had been suspended from school</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online game</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offline game</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Played time in last 30 days</th>
<th>N = 38,160</th>
<th>No problem N = 34,889 (91.45%)</th>
<th>Started having problems N = 2,210 (5.79%)</th>
<th>Problematic played N = 1,051 (2.76%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 hour</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 hours</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;4 hours</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Money spent for online game played (Baht/month)</th>
<th>N = 38,160</th>
<th>No problem N = 34,889 (91.45%)</th>
<th>Started having problems N = 2,210 (5.79%)</th>
<th>Problematic played N = 1,051 (2.76%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-300</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-500</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-700</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 700</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linkages with gambling problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gambling Problem</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct2014 – Sep2015 [12 months]</td>
<td>56,333</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct2015 – July2016 [10 months]</td>
<td>45,280</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hotline 1323 from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Rajanagarindra Institute

Major problems/challenges that Thailand facing

Impacts of game/internet addiction

- **Health:** visual impairment, back pain, eating problem
- **Study:** poor school performance, absenteeism
- **Emotion/behaviours:** irritability, aggression, homicide, suicide
- **Relationship:** family, friends
- **Social:** economic (spending 260 HKD/month for game)

Source: www.healthygamer.net, Situational analysis of game addiction among youths 2014

What Thailand is doing to tackle these problems/challenges
Policy responses
- Safe and Creative Media Development Act 2015
- The National Assembly on Child and Youth Development 2015
- Child Protection Act 2013
- National Health Assembly 2012
- Regulation of The Prime Minister with The Development of Creative Media and National Security 2008
- Promotion and Development of Child and Youth Act 2007

Policy responses
- 2015: Single Gateway
- 2009:
  - Limiting internet playing time for youths
  - Internet game shop licensing act
- 2008: Rating Game
- 2007: White Game Shops for Youths Project
  - Supported by Ministry of Culture
  - Corporate social responsibility of the game shops
  - Making game shop as a self-learning venue, safe, constructive

Rating Game
- Age: 3, 6, 13, 15, 18 and 20 years old
- Theme
- Language
- Blood
- Sex
- Violence
- Etc.: Alcohol, Cigarette, Drugs, Gambling

Source: Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
Ministry of Culture
Ministry of Culture

• Age under 15 years: 2PM – 8PM and 10AM – 8PM at end of semester
• Age 15-18 years: 2PM – 10PM and 10AM – 10PM at end of semester
• No Alcohol, Cigarette and Drugs
• No Gambling
• No Pornography

Guideline for the Advisor

1. Individual Identification
2. Screening
   - Normal student
   - High-risk and behavior problem student
3. Promotion
4. Prevention and intervention
   - yes: Improve
   - no: Refer to the Counseling Teacher (Internal referral)

Guideline for the Counselling Teacher

Receive the student from Advisor

Counseling and intervention
   - yes
   - Refer to Advisor
   - no

Case conference
   - yes
   - Improve
   - no

Refer to specialist (external referral)
Professional Action

- [www.healthygamer.net](http://www.healthygamer.net)
- [www.thaihotline.org](http://www.thaihotline.org)
- Cyber Scout
- Hotline 1756 (Ministry of Culture)
- Hotline 1323 (Department of Mental Health)
- Knowledge for parents, youths, teacher and community

Gamer guard Program

- Positive game and internet use for Youths
- Surveillance and early warning programme
- For parents, game shop owners to prevent kids from
  - Overuse of internet
  - Using inappropriate games/websites
Public awareness campaigns and prevention responses
Pokemon started on 6 Aug 2016

- Developed by Faculty of Medicine Siriraj hospital, Mahidol University in 2011, supported by the ministry of Culture
- Website aiming for public education and prevention of internet game addiction among youths
- Self-administered screening tests - children and guardian versions

Series on TV for Education and Change Attitude
Clinical Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Internet and Game Addiction

- One of the Prevalence of internet/game addiction in Thailand was 15% (2 million people)
- National Commission Office of Thailand and Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Society of Thailand
- Committee which comprised of Pornnopadol C, Hongsanguansri S, TuntaSood B, Kiaturong K, Sinrachatanan A, Pavanuthpipat C and Ratthaapha W
- Review literatures related to internet/game addiction and compose the clinical practice guideline for pediatricians and child and adolescent psychiatrists to...
  - Assessment
  - Diagnosis
  - Management and counselling with parent

Clinical Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Internet and Game Addiction

- The CPG comprise of 10 recommendations as following
  - Recommendation 1: Internet/game addiction is one of the major national problems which has an impact on health, academic achievement, working and social interaction. Organizations which involve with child and adolescent health should place an important to this issue and find the way to promote protective factors, reduce the risks and take care of a person who diagnosed as internet/game addiction.
  - Recommendation 2: Prevalence of internet/game addiction in Thailand is 15%, which reflects how big of this problem in Thai youth.
  - Recommendation 3: The found etiologies of internet/game addiction comprise of abnormal brain structure/functioning, temperament, mental health, discipline, self-control, family environment, parenting and social.
  - Recommendation 4: The risk factors associated with internet/game addiction can be categorized into child, family and social factors. The examiners should get information about internet/game addiction symptoms and assess about these risk factors.
  - Recommendation 5:
    5.1: Person who were diagnosed as an internet/game addiction have brain abnormality as well as person with substance use disorder. However, there is no indication to investigate with neuroimaging.
    5.2: Person who were diagnosed as an internet/game addiction have a risk to develop many physical health problems. The examiners should assess related problems such as obesity, accidental risks, sleep problems, visual problems and musculoskeletal problems.
    5.3: Person who were diagnosed as an internet/game addiction have a risk to develop attention, mood and behavioral problems such as depression, inattention, substance usage, eating problems, sexual problems, cyberbullying.
Clinical Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Internet and Game Addiction

- Recommendation 6: Person who were diagnosed as an internet/game addiction have co-morbid with multiple mental health problems. The examiners should screen mental health problems such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders and obsessive/compulsive disorder.
- Recommendation 7:
  - 7.1: To make an internet/game addiction diagnosis, the examiners should take history from both children/adolescents and their parent.
  - 7.2: The examiners should screen for internet/game addictions at 4th grade students and above children/adolescents who access to service.
- Recommendation 8:
  - 8.1: Prevention of internet/game addiction should be started at preschool age.
  - 8.2: School-based activities which promote life-skill, emotional regulation skills and psychoeducation about media usages in children and adolescents for parent can prevent internet/game addiction.
- Recommendation 9: Psychosocial intervention should be first line management for internet/game addiction. Pharmacological management can be used to treat other psychiatric comorbidities.
- Recommendation 10: Internet/game addiction is the chronic condition. A person who diagnosed with this condition should be followed-up for many years. Many individual, family and social factors impact on course and prognosis of this condition. The examiners should assess these factors to individually plan for treatment and management.

Conclusions

- Internet addiction problems are severe especially among youths in Thailand.
- “Youths Awareness” is the important thing.
  - Thai youths have smart skill in internet use.
  - Family have knowledge about update in internet use and can help their child to protect themselves from internet misuse.
  - Educational Institute have smart internet use in school.
  - Government policy provide appropriate control.
  - Appropriated mass media presentation.
  - NGO support created activity for youths and mass media monitoring.
  - Private sectors realize about appropriated internet use.

Thank you for your attention!