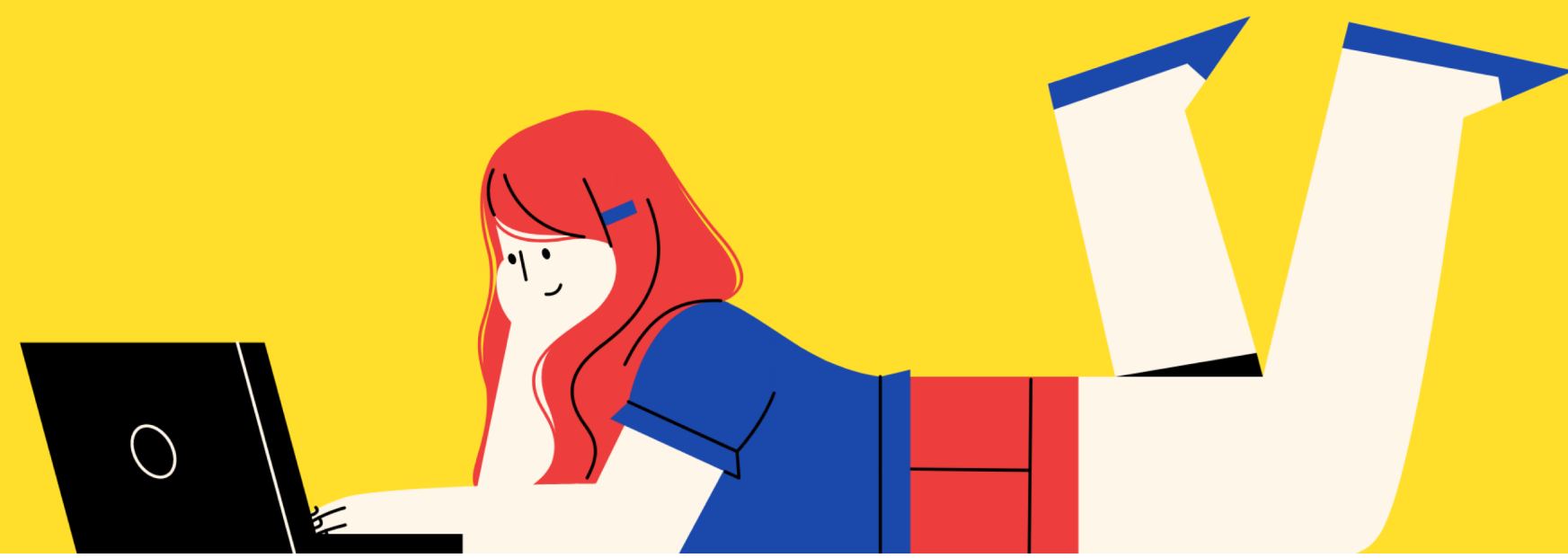


Online interventions for online addictions: A systematic review

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Increased accessibility to the internet has enabled various addictive behaviours in:

Online gaming
Online gambling
Online shopping
Online pornography / Cybersex
Social media

The development and assessment of online interventions for these behaviours have not reflected:

- 1) The exponential growth in consumption¹ and harms².
- 2) Preferences towards online interventions³.

Background

Describe the **type** of online interventions for online addictions.

Determine the **effectiveness** of online interventions for reducing online addictions.

Aims

Eligibility criteria: Randomised controlled trials and pre-post studies that assess online interventions for online addictions. Post-intervention evaluation on the severity, frequency, or duration of online behaviour.

Study selection: Five databases were searched in February 2021. Titles and abstracts were initially screened before full-text screening.

Data extraction and analysis: Study design, sample characteristics, outcome measures, intervention type and effectiveness.

Methods

Results

A total of **14 studies** were included, including **9 randomised controlled trials** and **5 pre-post** studies. **8 intervention types** were identified:

iCBT

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Online support and resources for independent use.

Effective

CBM

Cognitive Bias Modification: Training to avoid gaming cues and approach non-gaming cues.

Effective

Exposure therapy

Repeated online exposure to exciting gaming scenes paired with a loud noise to extinguish urges.

Ineffective

Self-monitoring

Online tracking of behaviour (e.g., duration of social media use) and emotions.

Effective

Self-exclusion

Request made to an online gambling operator to stop access for a brief period of time.

Ineffective

e-Therapy

Therapy, resources, and support delivered by a professional online.

Effective

Bibliotherapy

Internet-delivered facts and guidance about addictive online behaviours.

Ineffective

EMI

Ecological Momentary Intervention: Providing online self-assessments of behaviour in real-time.

Effective

Conclusion

Summary of findings

Most interventions were of **similar type**.
Interventions were delivered via a range of technology, from mobile apps to virtual reality gear.
Online interventions were **generally effective**.

Limitations

Varying study quality (e.g., participant selection bias). No meta-analysis (varying study designs and limited data).

Implications

There is not a vast amount of research in this area.
However, the current literature **provides insight into potential areas for expansion and support** from healthcare providers, policymakers, and users of online platforms.

References

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2. King et al. (2018). *J Beh. Add.*, 7, 562-564.
3. Park et al. (2021). *BMC Pub. Health*, 21, 1-12.

