

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

PLAYERUNKNOWN'S BATTLEGROUNDS: YET ANOTHER INTERNET GAMING ADDICTION

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The overarching goal of video games is to amuse the end-users by means of interactive systems that are now existent across numerous platforms such as personal computer, mobile phones, tablets and game consoles. Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) is a multiplayer online game. The addiction of PUBG is soaring worldwide and it has thick user-base. It is suggested that inhuman attitudes such as lack of empathy and war-related sentiments are likely to emerge among children who play aggressive and violent games like PUBG. In 2018, World Health Organisation (WHO) acknowledged online gaming compulsion as a grave mental health problem. Some of the well-known repercussions of playing PUBG video game are eyes strain, exhaustion, headache, obesity, poor quality of sleep, insomnia, withdrawal symptoms (rage and irritability) and even drug abuse owing to compulsive disorder. This game craze is unfortunately triggering world's young population to invest their valuable time, money and effort in a no-return business, and therefore needs urgent measures.

Keywords: Internet Gaming Disorder; Mental Health; Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG)

Citation: Qahtani AAA, Alenzi AAS, Ali AS. Playerunknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG): Yet another internet gaming addiction. J Ayub Med Coll Abbottabad 2020;32(1):145–6.

To the Editor,

In this letter to the editor, we would like to pull your attention towards a snowballing internet gaming obsession of Playerunknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG). PUBG is a multiplayer online game developed by PUBG Corporation, a subordinate of South Korean video gaming company Bluehole. In PUBG, around 100 players skydive onto a landmass and hunt for arms and ammunitions to assassinate others while simultaneously attempting to escape themselves from execution. The existing safe zone of the game, guided through the map, condenses in size over a period of time, leading living players into more compact areas to drive unavoidable confrontation. The final player or team to withstand all the hurdles throughout the game wins the war of the battlefield.¹

The overarching goal of the video games is to amuse the end-users by means of interactive systems that are now existent across numerous platforms such as personal computer, mobile phones, tablets and game consoles. Presently, a handful of video games offer sophisticated online user-friendliness and have supplementary social platforms, for instance, Origin, Steam and Twitch. While following features: 1) Multiplayer; 2) Extraordinary sociability; 3) Character development and/or virtual identity; and 4) 24/7 gaming duration make video games like PUBG appealing; however, by the same token, it has stemmed the online gaming addiction, also known as Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5). The online gaming brings negative health consequences in the form of mental

health issues and psychiatric disorders, for example, depression, anxiety, social phobia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).^{2,3}

The addiction of PUBG is soaring worldwide and it has thick user-base. It is suggested that inhuman attitudes such as lack of empathy and war-related sentiments are likely to emerge among children who play aggressive and violent games like PUBG. In 2018, World Health Organisation (WHO) acknowledged online gaming compulsion as a grave mental health problem. Some of the well-known repercussions of playing PUBG video game are eyes strain, exhaustion, headache, obesity, poor quality of sleep, insomnia, withdrawal symptoms (rage and irritability) and even drug abuse owing to compulsive disorder.⁴

In the not-too-distant, gruesome reports of murder and suicide have surfaced in the span of just 2 days and the culprit is allegedly an internet sensation PUBG. On 9th of September 2019 (Monday), a 21 years old young Indian boy of Karnataka state apparently killed his 62 years old father with a kitchen knife for not allowing him to renew his mobile phone package to play the PUBG game. The profusely bleeding father was rushed to the hospital but pronounced dead upon arrival by the doctors.⁵ Another very young Indian boy of 14 years of age of Grade 10 took his life by ingesting poison for merely parental scolding on playing PUBG. While on treatment, the boy succumbed to death on 10th of September 2019 (Tuesday).⁶ The news of death must be extremely distressing for their family members and friends. This game craze is unfortunately triggering world's young population to invest their valuable time, money and effort in a no-return business. Like the

Chinese high authority that has banned the PUBG game due to its ferocious nature, other nations should also ponder measures alike.⁴ One course of action could be to restrict the total number of rounds in a single day per player, but this could only be materialized from the game developers end. Earlier, this measure was successfully undertaken for the game Shadow Fight 1, 2 and 3.⁴ In doing so, video gamers are not mugged of the entertainment and they can also manage their time for study, family, friends and other healthy activities. The game developers should also take into account these factors to minimize the mental health consequences associated with binge gaming.

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