

Alexander Blaszczynski PhD

Conference on Behavioural Addictions Abstract: Japan June 2019

The concept of behavioural addictions, mooted in the earlier 1990's, has witnessed an exponential growth in academic attention culminating in the successful inclusion of at least one behaviour, gaming disorder in ICD-11 and the inclusion of a new category of non-substance related addictions in DSM-5. Although there is no debate about the extent to which some behaviours carried out to excess have the capacity to generate a range of harms, controversy exists as to whether behavioural addictions constitute a disease, an illness or social construct. As a result, there are a myriad of terminology used to describe the same 'disorder', criteria used for one behaviour adapted for use to diagnose another, investigation of psychosocial, personality and neurobiological variable as etiological explanations, and limited empirical evidence supporting treatment interventions. The risk, as some researchers have highlighted, is in overpathologizing normal behaviours, and trivialising the concept of behavioural addictions. In this presentation, it is argued that attention should be directed towards a cohesive and integrated set of guidelines applied in defining, measuring and treating specific behavioural addictions, and clarifying respective role of product providers, governments, families, communities and welfare providers. Given the complexities of some behaviours, it is necessary to develop a multi-disciplinary framework setting out the relative responsibilities of key stakeholders (e.g., researchers, community groups, governments, policy makers, treatment providers, the industry, families and individuals) that can be used to inform and implement policies for those behaviours that represent important social and public health issues, for example, gaming and gambling.