Title: Examining the mental-health antecedents and consequences of video gaming among clinical and sub-clinical samples

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Abstract: Video-game play, though popular, has been linked to indicators of poor mental health. However, existing research has not established with clarity whether individuals with existing mental health challenges seek out gaming as a coping mechanism, whether gaming has a harmful effect on mental health, or whether there is an interplay between these processes. Further, there is a need to look at the motivations for gaming, and the types of video games that are especially central to the link between gaming and mental illness in order to yield more directed interventions. The proposed study will aim to address these research gaps through a qualitative exploratory design using focus groups comprising adolescents and emerging adults, given that this cohort comprises avid but also vulnerable users of video games. Specifically, focus-group participants will be patients seeking treatment through CAMH for technology overuse, as well as individuals who engage in recreational gaming. The goal of these focus groups will be to identify: (a) the video game types that may facilitate problematic gaming behaviors, (b) the motivations for gaming, and (c) the immediate and long-term mental health consequences of gaming. The findings obtained through the proposed study will provide preliminary information regarding the role of gaming in mental health across both sub-clinical and clinical populations. It will further act as a springboard for the development of measures of motivation and mental health in gaming that can be administered through wearable technology and incorporated into causally informative empirical studies.