

Second Edition



PRACTICAL RESOURCES
for the Mental Health
PROFESSIONAL



Adolescent Addiction

**Epidemiology, Assessment, and
Treatment**

Edited by
Cecilia A. Essau
Paul H. Delfabbro



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Professional

ADOLESCENT ADDICTION

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Assessment, and
Treatment

SECOND EDITION

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ACADEMIC PRESS

An imprint of Elsevier

Academic Press is an imprint of Elsevier
125 London Wall, London EC2Y 5AS, United Kingdom
525 B Street, Suite 1650, San Diego, CA 92101, United States
50 Hampshire Street, 5th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02139, United States
The Boulevard, Langford Lane, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 1GB, United Kingdom

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-12-818626-8

For information on all Academic Press publications
visit our website at <https://www.elsevier.com/books-and-journals>

Publisher: Nikki Levy

Editorial Project Manager: Barbara Makinster

Production Project Manager: Punithavathy Govindaradjane

Cover Designer: Miles Hitchen

Typeset by SPI Global, India



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Smartphone addiction

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8.1 Introduction

Smartphones are becoming indispensable for everyday life and it is estimated that there were 2 billion users across the world in 2012 (Miller, 2012). Almost all adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 own a smartphone (Ofcom, 2016). Smartphones are typically touch-screen devices with numerous applications (apps). Smartphones offer quick access to the Internet and social media, which facilitates message transmissions or communication. Smartphone technology is an innovative invention in that it combines the functions of conventional phone and computer in a single smaller device. It allows access not only to sophisticated communication networks, but also to a wide range of amusements such as games, multimedia players, photo albums, and electronic books. Smartphones also provide essential tools including Global Positioning System (GPS), camera, recorders, translator, clock, radio, remote control of electrical appliances, torchlight, calculator, e-wallet, and even health trackers. Owing to the convenience and multiple functions of smartphones, users tend to become overattached and preoccupied with their devices.

Excessive or problematic smartphone use is twice as prevalent among teenagers as among adults (Park & Park, 2014). Previous studies have reported a prevalence of problematic smartphone use among children and adolescents as high as 10% in countries such as the United Kingdom (Lopez-Fernandez, Honrubia-Serrano, Freixa-Blanxart, & Gibson, 2014), 16.7% in Taiwan (Yen et al., 2009), 16.9% in Switzerland (Haug et al., 2015), 30.9% in Korea (Cha & Seo, 2018), and 31% in India (Nikhita, Jadhav, & Ajinkya, 2015). In a recent study in the United Kingdom, approximately 90% of teenagers between the ages of 16 and 24 years old have a smartphone, and approximately half of them would check their phones within 5 minutes of waking up (Ofcom, 2016). In Korea, 80.4% of elementary