



Treat Gaming as a Disorder: WHO

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The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced a plan to include “gaming disorder” as a mental health condition. The reclassification is part of the WHO’s 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD- 11).

Background

ICD-11 draft defines gaming disorder as “... a pattern of gaming behavior (‘digital-gaming’ or ‘video-gaming’) characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences”.

Should India be concerned?

India has a fast-growing gaming population. A 2017 Google-KPMG study estimated that the Indian online gaming industry was worth \$290 million, and projected it to hit \$1 billion by 2021.

Opposition towards Classification

- The classification is intended to act as a set of guidelines and many countries in determining healthcare policies, diagnosis and treatment options. Hence, the detrimental effect this “premature classification” could have on treatment and policymaking.
- Addiction to gaming as a phenomenon merits further study; hence a classification as a disorder could result in abuse of diagnosis.
- The addiction could also be a symptom of a deeper issue such as depression. The new classification could result in a trend where clinicians treat the symptom instead of the underlying issue

World Health Organisation

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and the WHO's constitution came into force on April 7, 1948.
- The World Health Assembly is the supreme decision-making body in WHO. The assembly meets annually and is attended by delegations from 194 member states.

International Classification of Diseases (ICD)

- The ICD is the foundation for identifying health trends and statistics worldwide and contains around 55000 unique codes for injuries, diseases, and causes of death.
- It provides a common language that allows health professionals to share health information across the globe.
- It helps in understanding what makes people get sick and die, and to take action to prevent suffering and save lives.