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Children start playing video games at a very early age nowadays
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[Game Addiction Similar to Drug Addiction](#)

Drugs and video games share the same neuro-biological mechanisms

A new scientific study proves that video gamers who crave to play their favorite game exhibit about the same symptoms, neurologically speaking, as drug addicts looking to score their next dose. The same areas of the brain lit up, when MRI imaging was used on a few "game addicts," whereas in the control group, those areas remained unaffected. The mechanisms that trigger the activation of these areas are still largely unknown, and researchers are working hard to determine what it is exactly that keeps people locked in front of a computer for hours.

The research was prompted by the fact that nearly ten or more million people are engaged in the on-line game World of Warcraft (WoW), with many players spending an insane amount of time playing on-line. Some people even play for 16 to 20 hours a day, which leaves them with virtually no personal life to speak of. Thus, the only satisfaction they get in life is doing the same actions over and over again, while their families and friends are lost, as is their health.

Chih-Hung Ko, a neurobiologist at the Kaohsiung Medical University Hospital in Taiwan, and colleagues placed 10 WoW fans in the MRI machine, alongside 10 non-addicts, and followed their brain images while the test subjects were shown pictures of the game. While in the ten people in the control group there was little reaction, in the "addicts" several portions of their brain lit up "like a Christmas tree."

Such areas and regions of the brain as the right orbitofrontal cortex, the right nucleus accumbens, the bilateral anterior cingulate and medial frontal cortex, the right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, and the right caudate nucleus were all noticed to be activated by the pictures. These are the same portions of the cortex that activate when a drug addict fails to take his dose on time and starts withdrawal.

There are numerous controversies worldwide today about the effects that video games have on kids, especially very young ones. They seem hooked up to their computers, and rarely get to spend time with their families or friends. Some even voiced support for a ban on addictive computer games, but their opinions were harshly criticized by the game industry.