

JOINT EVENT

24th International Conference on PSYCHIATRY & PSYCHOSOMATIC MEDICINE
&

2nd International Congress on FORENSIC SCIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY

October 12-14, 2017 London, UK

Depression and impulsivity mediating the relationship between social anxiety and internet addiction

Catherine So-Kum Tang

National University of Singapore, Singapore

Background & Aim: Internet addiction refers to excessive or uncontrollable preoccupations, urges, or behaviors regarding computer use or internet access that lead to distress or impairment of daily functioning. Social anxiety refers to the experience of persistent fear and distress of interpersonal situations that often leads to the anticipation of embarrassment or humiliation. A recent meta-analysis has shown a robust significant relationship between social anxiety and internet addiction. Based on the self-regulatory model of social anxiety, we hypothesized that depression and impulsivity would be potential risk factors. These two risk factors would mediate the influence of social anxiety on internet addiction. This study aimed to test this hypothesized multiple mediation model of internet addiction.

Methodology: 1110 participants (420 males and 690 females) aged from 17 to 18 years old were recruited from various Universities in Singapore. All participants were asked to complete a paper-and-pencil questionnaire on standardized psychological scales that assessed social anxiety, depression, impulsivity, and internet addiction.

Findings: About 9.5% of the participants met the cut-off score for a diagnosis of internet addiction. Depression and impulsivity partially mediated the influence of social anxiety on internet addiction. Depression was also found to be a stronger mediator than impulsivity. Higher social anxiety levels were related to higher levels of depression and impulsivity, which were in turn related to higher levels of problematic internet use. The pathways to internet addiction were similar for males and females.

Conclusion & Significance: Internet addiction is widespread and associated with high rates of depression and social anxiety in young adults in the Asia-Pacific region. Prevention and intervening strategies should be designed to address this phenomenon. Assessment and treatment of mood disturbances should also be included in the management of internet addiction.

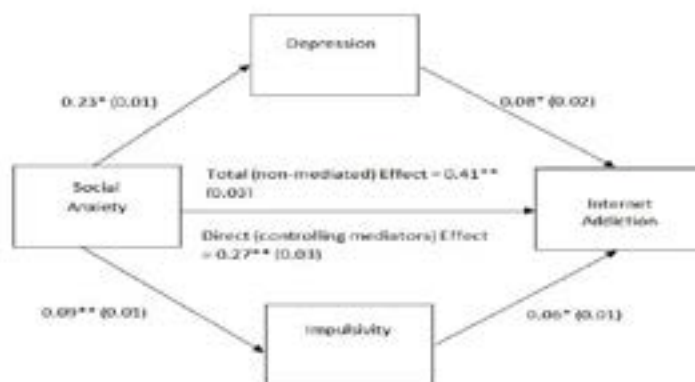


Figure 1. A Multiple Mediation Model of Social Anxiety and Internet Addiction
Note: Values presented are coefficients and standard errors *p < 0.01

Biography

Catherine So-Kum Tang is a Professor in the Department of Psychology and the Deputy Director of the Center for Family and Population Research at the National University of Singapore. She obtained her PhD in Clinical Psychology at the University of North Texas USA and LLB at the University of London UK. She is a member of the Editorial Board for *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*; *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*; *International Perspective in Psychology: Research, Practice, and Consultation*; *International Journal of Stress Management*; and *Asia-Pacific Journal of Counseling*. She has over 300 peer-reviewed academic publications, books, book chapters, and academic conference presentations on addictive behavior, violence against women, trauma psychology, and health psychology.

tang.catherine@nus.edu.sg