



GENERALITAT
VALENCIANA



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JAUME I

DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR THE ONLINE ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT OF ADDICTION TO CYBERSEX

DESCRIPTION OF THE TECHNOLOGY

Researchers at the Universitat Jaume I in Castelló and the Universitat de València have created *Adisex*, the first digital platform for Spanish-speaking users and a ground-breaking innovation for the online assessment and treatment of addiction to cybersex at the international level. *Adisex* enables anybody anywhere around the world to take a preliminary self-assessment test so as to determine whether they have a clinical problem, display a risk profile or use it simply on a recreational basis.

Pathologies related with sex usually have social stigmas attached to them. Bearing this in mind, *Adisex* allows users to obtain a completely anonymous diagnosis of their habits and thus determine whether their use of cybersex is healthy, similar to the consumption of traditional pornography, or can lead to dependence or issues interfering in their daily lives, and even if they require treatment through some psychological intervention.

The platform consists of a battery of questionnaires that aim to gain comprehensive and relevant information from the patient about different aspects related to Internet-mediated sexual behaviour. Thus, the tool includes a questionnaire about addiction to the Internet, a questionnaire about addiction to cybersex, a revised sexual sensation-seeking scale, a sexual compulsivity scale and a self-esteem scale, among others.

Once the results have been obtained the application automatically generates a report showing the user how to interpret the scores he or she has obtained.

This self-assessment is later checked through a

clinical interview conducted by experts from the Sexuality and AIDS Research Unit (Salusex-Unisexida) of the Universitat Jaume I, which has been authorised as a health centre by the Valencian Government. The interview can be conducted either remotely via the digital platform or on-site.

Cybersex is a phenomenon that is on the rise in today's society and with an important incidence among young men and women. The percentage of young people who use the Internet to develop their sexuality is very high – around 60% in the case of boys and 13% in the case of girls. Online sex can offer benefits for sexual health, but can also favour the development of dependences or risk behaviours in the offline setting.

The Salusex-Unisexida researchers have detected that 10% of teenagers who use the Internet for sexual purposes display higher levels of risk of addiction, which can be an important problem. On the one hand this is because such addiction to cybersex and the consumption of pornography on the Internet may interfere with the development of a normal life and the user's social relationships. On the other hand it is due to the fact that these people often tend to break the digital barrier and establish physical links and have sex with people they do not know, frequently engaging in practices that are not very safe in terms of the transmission of AIDS and other undesired effects.

The *Adisex* platform can be accessed via the following website: <http://adiccionalsex.uji.es>.

BUSINESS SECTOR APPLICATIONS

- General population: people affected by an addiction to cybersex or sexual compulsivity.
- Health centres devoted to attending patients with sex addiction disorders and mental health units.
- Clinical trials and clinical psychology research.

TECHNICAL ADVANTAGES AND COMMERCIAL BENEFITS

The use of the platform can be beneficial for the patient, and for public health in general, as an aid in the prevention and treatment of cybersex addiction disorder. The figures for the prevalence of this disorder indicate that there is a need to stress the importance of having access to cost-effective interventions for people who suffer them, and in such cases online self-applied diagnosis platforms are a valuable aid. The main advantages of the tool are:

- Self-applied online programs like *Adisex* offer powerful tools with which to improve access to mental



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health in areas that have few resources or are in remote locations, as they can reach people living in a geographical area in which there are no health centres available to them and offer greater accessibility to those who need such services.

- Being able to access the platform from the patient's own home increases and ensures the level of confidentiality and helps to reduce stigmatisation.
- Self-screening or self-diagnosis by the patient allows the therapist to focus his or her attention on cases that have a pathological or risk profile.
- It is accessible from different devices any time, any place.
- Treatment is directed by a therapist belonging to an authorised health centre and can be administered remotely.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE TECHNOLOGY

The technology has been validated by means of empirical studies and is fully developed and ready for use in computers, tablets or mobiles.

INDUSTRIAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Know how.

COLLABORATION SOUGHT

Psychological assistance services are offered

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