

Non-Substance Related Addictions (Compulsions)

Some forms of dependence are characterized by dependence on behaviour rather than on substances. Non-substance related addictions include pathological gambling, compulsive sexual behaviour, internet addiction, pathological shopping or addiction to work. Although these patients are not addicted to a substance, the biological mechanisms in the brain follow similar patterns to those seen in patients with addictions to some substances. Symptoms of dependency and withdrawal are also comparable. For example, symptoms of non-substance related addiction include difficulties coping with the social environment, aggravation of problems with the family, financial problems, and neglect of all other aspects of life except for the field of interest which is correlated with the addiction. Furthermore, withdrawal symptoms such as nervousness, irritability, dysphoria and sometimes even depressive episodes can occur. Since these forms of dependence are correlated to compulsive behaviour, differences between males and females can be observed: Men are more likely to develop pathological gambling and compulsive sexual behaviour while women are more inclined to pathological shopping. Compulsive work habits have become a mass phenomenon for both, men and women.