Internet Addiction - YOUR child is at risk

Recent research confirms parents' fears that anywhere between 6-10% of younger high school students are at risk of Internet addiction. Research into Internet use has been underway since the year 2000, there is even a questionnaire that was developed in 2002 called “Internet Use and Addiction”. In the most recent research more males preferred online gaming than females, but both sexes overly used the internet to “become better acquainted with new people”.

Risk factors - more than 21 hours of Internet use per week

Internet addiction is considered a technological and behavioural addiction (likened to gambling). Typically addicts feel disturbed when they are unable to check their inbox, lie to their relatives about the time spent on the Internet, dream of being on the Internet, become estranged from their families and friends due to the Internet, do not care about their studies. According to research as time is increased on the computer young people become more isolated and depressed.

Effects of Internet addiction - self-reported interpersonal communication problems, academic difficulties, headache, eyestrain & shoulder ache, less time spent socialising in person

What parents can do to help -

* limit the time your child is allowed to use the Internet
* use parental control software to limit sites that your child has access to
* teach your child the ethical rules for communicating on the Internet
* guide/encourage your child to have other interests to distract them from the Internet
* encourage interpersonal communication - turn off the TV, eat at the table, sit together as a family, go for walks together or go on outings together, leave phones at home, play board games or card games
* seek face to face counselling support for your child

(From research by Ozcinar, North Cyprus, 2011)