

# Outpatient Clinic for Behavioral Addiction in Linz

Who are we and what do we do?

Mag. Sylvia Hintersteiner, MA  
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## Team



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## Addictions



### Substance-Related Addictions

- alcohol & tranquilizer addiction
- illegal drug addiction
- prescription drug abuse
- painkillers
- other substances



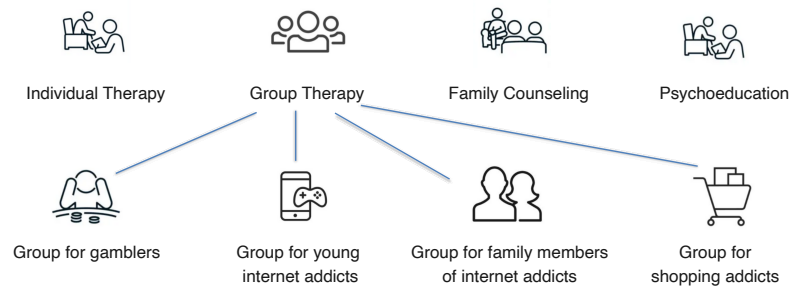
### Non-Substance-Related (Behavioral) Addictions

- gambling disorder
- internet gaming disorder
- compulsive buying disorder
- other behavioral addictions (e.g., Social Media, Pornography Addiction)

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## Our offer

### Treatment program:



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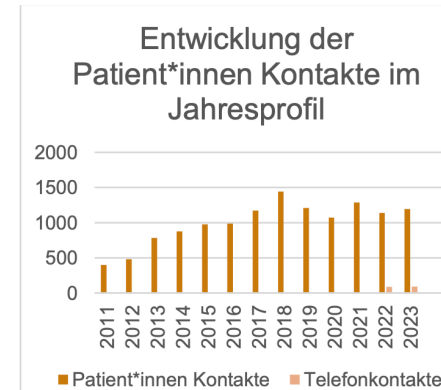
## General case numbers

### According to 2023

- Our clinic operates in a **donation-based model**
- Income: **124.600€** (CA und Lotterien, Admiral, EE, PA AG)
- Expenses: **143.258,11€**
- Total of **1194 patient contacts**
- Averaging approximately **99 contacts** per month
- **92 telephone consultations** documented (averaging 8 per month)

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## Changes in Patient Numbers



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## Aims of outpatient treatment

- **Early detection** of **pathological gambling** and **online addiction behavior**
- Improving the **quality of life** for those affected and their family members
- **Achieving** and **stabilizing abstinence**
- The individual is **not removed from their family environment** through outpatient treatment and can **continue working in their profession**



**ambulanz**  
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Für Beratung und Behandlung von  
Verhaltensstörungen wie Glücksspielsucht,  
Internetsucht und Kaufsucht.

Ein Angebot von **pro mente**

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## Our offer

- **Consultation** regarding the diagnosis and treatment options for behavioral addictions
- Focus on **addictive behaviors** exceed normal levels despite negative consequences
- **Outpatient psychiatric** and **psychotherapeutic treatments**
- Examination of possible **accompanying mental illnesses**
  - (e.g. burnout, depression, other addictive disorders, ...)
- **Regular team meetings** and **supervision sessions** for high-quality treatment
- **Ongoing research** on gambling addiction, internet addiction, and COVID-19's impact on compulsive shopping addiction
- **Research associate** to strengthen scientific contributions since 2020

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## Our offer

### Specific Therapy Services

- **Initial consultations:** Diagnostics, goal definition, treatment plan
- Therapy group for **gamblers:** 9 weekly sessions, 1.5 hours each
- Therapy group for **internet addicts:** 10 weekly sessions, 1.5 hours each
- Therapy group for **family members of internet addicts:** open group, bi-weekly
- Therapy group for **shopping addicts:** 8 weekly sessions, 1.5 hours each
- **Aftercare:** individualized as needed in one-on-one sessions

### Other Activities

- Accompanying **evaluation and research** (clinical research and basic research)
- Trainings, lectures, publications, conferences, etc.

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## Diagnostic criteria according to DSM-5

### Gambling Disorder

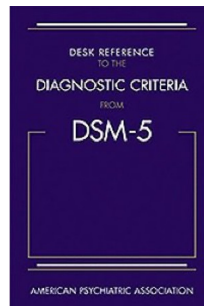
1. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
2. Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
3. Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling.
4. Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
5. Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
6. After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses).
7. Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
8. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
9. Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.

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## Severity as a Continuum?

### Degree of dependence based on the number of symptoms:

- 4 – 5 symptoms: mild disorder
- 6 – 7 symptoms: moderate disorder
- 8 – 9 or more symptoms: severe disorder



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## Diagnostic criteria according to DSM-5

### Internet Gaming Disorder

1. Preoccupation with Internet games. (The individual thinks about previous gaming activity or anticipates playing the next game; Internet gaming becomes the dominant activity in daily life.)
  - a. Note: This disorder is distinct from Internet gambling, which is included under gambling disorder.
2. Withdrawal symptoms when Internet gaming is taken away. (These symptoms are typically described as irritability, anxiety, or sadness, but there are no physical signs of pharmacological withdrawal.)
3. Tolerance—the need to spend increasing amounts of time engaged in Internet games.
4. Unsuccessful attempts to control the participation in Internet games.
5. Loss of interests in previous hobbies and entertainment as a result of, and with the exception of, Internet games.
6. Continued excessive use of Internet games despite knowledge of psychosocial problem.
7. Has deceived family members, therapists, or others regarding the amount of Internet gaming.
8. Use of Internet games to escape or relieve a negative mood (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety).
9. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of participation in Internet games.

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## What is new regarding addiction in the ICD-11?

### Disorders due to addictive behaviours:

6C50 Gambling disorder

- a. predominantly online
- b. predominantly offline

6C51 Gaming disorder

- a. predominantly online
- b. predominantly offline

6V5Y Other specified disorders due to addictive behaviours

- Previously suggested:
  - Shopping addiction, pornography addiction, and social media addiction
  - (Brand M. et al.; Journal of Behavioral Addictions; 2020)

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## Behavioral Addictions in ICD-11?

**Diagnostic criteria:** The same for all behavioral addictions, with a time criterion of generally 12 months (but it can be shorter if all criteria are met and symptoms are severe).

### 6C50 Gambling disorder

1. impaired control over gambling
2. increasing priority given to gaming
3. continuation or escalation of gaming despite negative consequences

### 6C51 Gaming disorder

1. impaired control over gaming
2. increasing priority given to gaming
3. continuation or escalation of gaming despite negative consequences

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## Research on Behavioral Addictions

### Key insights from 2023

#### Research Focus & Support:

- Behavioral addiction research alongside patient care
- External funding & voluntary staff contributions
- Scientific associate since mid-2020 (study design, data collection, publication)

#### Key Research Projects:

- Neuroimaging Study on Gambling Addiction:
  - fMRI study on brain activity in gambling addicts vs. healthy participants
  - Collaboration with Kepler University Hospital
  - Data collected, thesis in progress, publications upcoming

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## Research on Behavioral Addictions

### Key insights from 2023

#### Prevalence of Gambling Addiction in Austria:

- Focus on online gambling & COVID-19 impact
- Data collected, master's thesis completed, article in prep

#### Impact of COVID-19 on Shopping Addiction:

- Study on pandemic effects on depression, anxiety, stress
- Offline vs. online shopping addiction shift
- Data complete, thesis in progress

#### Online Gaming Disorder (IGD):

- Investigating IGD, quality of life, & loneliness
- Data collection ongoing (2 master's theses)

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**Thank you for your  
attention!**

Mag. Sylvia Hintersteiner, MA  
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## **Addictive Potential Of Online-Gambling. A Prevalence Study From Austria**

Kurosch Yazdi & Christian Katzian

### **Higher Addiction Risk in Online Gambling:**

- Greater availability, anonymity, cashless transactions, and weaker regulations

### **Study Objective:**

- Assess prevalence & sociodemographic differences between online and offline gamblers
- Measured problematic gambling behavior using Johnson's Lie-and-Bet Questionnaire

### **Key Findings:**

- Demographic Differences:
  - Online gamblers were younger, more often male, better educated, and more active online

### **Problematic Gambling Behavior:**

- 31% of online gamblers showed problematic behavior vs. 18% of offline gamblers
- Problematic online gamblers were even younger, more often single, and predominantly male

### **Other Factors:**

- No significant differences in migration background, income, or occupation

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## **Addictive Potential Of Online-Gambling. A Prevalence Study From Austria**

Kurosch Yazdi & Christian Katzian

### **Conclusion & Implications:**

- Online gambling attracts a younger demographic & has a stronger link to problematic gambling
- **Need for stronger regulation & player protection:**
  - Age restrictions, alert systems, self-exclusion options
- **Public awareness campaigns targeting youth & young adults**

Yazdi, K., & Katzian, C. (2017). Addictive potential of online-gambling. A prevalence study from Austria. *Psychiatria Danubina*, 29(3), 367-378.

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