

Abstract

With the increase of accessibility of the Internet, high prevalence of Internet addiction (IA) among Hong Kong youth was reported. Previous studies found that mindfulness-based interventions may be an effective way to prevent IA. However, little is known about the mechanism behind the effect of mindfulness on IA. The aim of this study is to investigate the mediating effect of impulsivity, a characteristic feature of addiction, on the association between trait mindfulness and IA among young adults in Hong Kong, and thereby to explore whether mindfulness practice can be a potential prevention for IA via reduced impulsivity. 310 Hong Kong young adults aged 18 to 35 were invited to complete an online questionnaire measuring trait mindfulness, trait impulsivity and level of IA. Findings revealed significant negative relationship between mindfulness and IA. Multiple regression analysis and Sobel test demonstrated the full mediating role of impulsivity regarding the effect of mindfulness on IA. Findings from this study improve our understanding of how mindfulness relates to level of IA. Results suggest that a mindful person will be less impulsive and therefore less likely to have IA, supporting that mindfulness practice can be a preventive of IA. Future studies should focus on examining the long-term effects of mindfulness on IA and investigating the optimal intensity of mindfulness exercise for effective IA prevention.

Keywords: mindfulness, Internet addiction, impulsivity, mediation, young adults