NON-EDUCATIONAL VIDEOGAMES IN EMOTIONAL, COGNITIVE AND ANTI-STRESS TRAINING
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It is not certain whether spontaneous videogaming supports or harms the therapy plan of patients with emotional deficits, cognitive impairment or low stress-coping skills. Therefore, exploratory research on the effects of gaming on cognition, emotions and coping with stress are needed. We decided to investigate the general effect of games on users' emotional personality adjustment, cognitive functioning and coping with stress in 'natural', spontaneous videogamers. We assumed that spontaneous use of commercial games is bonded with higher extroversion and less neuroticism, better performance in cognitive task solving and more frequent choosing of task-oriented style of coping with stress. We examined thirty users (F/M - 3/27; age range 20-25 years) of the video game Counter Strike (simulates modern battlefield) and thirty non-users (declared never to play any games, F/M - 4/26; age range 20-25 years). Eysenck's EPQ-R was used to assess personality, selected tests of Dr. Schufried's Vienna Test System, Hasomed's RehaCom and Wechsler's WAIS-R to assess cognitive functioning and Endler's and Parker's Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations to assess coping with stress. As predicted, gamers were better emotionally adjusted: more extrovert and less neurotic; performed better in all cognitive tasks, especially associated with perception of details (16.4 ±0.8 vs. 10.6 ±1.0 points) and the perceptive processing (55.2 ±1.5 vs. 38.0 ±2.2 points) (P<0.001 for all comparisons) and more willing to choose task-oriented style of coping with stress. In conclusion, there is a connection between videogaming and emotional functioning, cognitive performance and style of coping in stress and it is in favor of gamers. The present study opens the field of research on gaming effects on therapy and rehabilitation of patients with various disorders which involve impairment in emotions, cognition and coping with stress.