



# Application Of Loving-Kindness Meditation Among Patients with Internet Gaming Disorder

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**Abstract:** Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) is a mental health condition characterized by a pattern of compulsive and excessive engagement with online video games. The primary aspect of IGD, according to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), is long hours of gaming (8–10 hours or more per day or 30 hours per week), which leads to a decrease and abandonment of regular tasks. The prevalence of IGD is higher among adolescents and young adults, who are often more engaged in online gaming. There were limited comprehensive studies specifically focused on the prevalence of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) in India. Adolescents are more vulnerable to IGD since they had more free time during the Covid-19 lockdown. Excessive gaming may interfere with a child's ability to focus on schoolwork and extracurricular activities, potentially leading to a decline in academic performance. Loving-Kindness Meditation (LKM), has been studied extensively and used as a coping technique for various mental health conditions, including addiction and impulse control disorders. It facilitates top-down regulation of the cognitive process, thereby proving conscious cognitive control over the automatic addictive impulses. Based on purposive sampling technique a sample consisting of 20 (10 for LKM (experimental) and the other 10 for TAU (control) group adolescents under treatment as usual were selected from schools in Bilaspur District, C.G. The intervention took place in two stages. The first stage was assessment phase and informative. The second stage was the modification of patient's maladaptive thinking. There was no significant difference found between LKM and TAU group regarding age (Mann Whitney value=41.50; p value =0.515). There was no significant difference found between LKM and TAU group regarding education (U value= 46.00; p value = 0.744). Results were indicating that, intervention group showed significant improvement in gaming addiction, sensation seeking tendency, psychological well beings and self-esteem level by developing better emotional regulatory and coping skills and distress tolerance level. Improvements were observed in self-kindness domain, spiritual growth and emotional regulation as well. The post intervention results indicate that, intervention group (LKM+TAU) shows significant improvement in mindfulness levels and significant facets contributing towards the growth in mindfulness post intervention were: observing; describing; acting with awareness; and non-judging of inner experience. A major limitation to the current study was the small sample size. With larger samples, more subtle changes in mean scores could be detected over time. Long term effects of LKM could not be assessed. Thus, it cannot be commented whether the beneficial effects of MBCBT are maintained.

**IndexTerms - Internet Gaming Disorder, Loving-Kindness Meditation, Emotional Regulation**

## I.INTRODUCTION

Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) is a mental health condition characterized by a pattern of compulsive and excessive engagement with online video games. It involves a loss of control over gaming behaviours, leading to significant impairment or distress in various areas of a person's life. The primary aspect of IGD, according to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), is long hours of gaming (8–10 hrs or more per day or 30 hrs per week), which leads to a decrease and abandonment of regular tasks (Kuriyala, & Reyes, 2023).

1. Preoccupation with Gaming: A predominant focus on gaming activities, often to the detriment of other important aspects of life such as work, education, relationships, and self-care.

2. Loss of Control: Difficulty in controlling the frequency, duration, and intensity of gaming sessions, often resulting in spending more time gaming than originally intended.

3. Continuation Despite Negative Consequence: Persisting with gaming even in the face of adverse consequences, such as declining academic or work performance, strained relationships, or neglect of responsibilities.

4. Escaping Real-world problem: Using gaming as a means of escape from real-world problems, stress, anxiety, or negative emotions. It can serve as a way to cope with or numb difficult emotions.

5. Neglecting of other Activity: Disregarding or neglecting other activities that were once enjoyed or considered important, such as socializing, physical activities, and hobbies, in favor of gaming.

6. Conflict with others: Experiencing conflicts with family members, friends, or colleagues due to excessive gaming. This can be a result of neglecting social responsibilities or becoming irritable when unable to game.

7. Withdrawal Symptoms: Displaying signs of distress, irritability, or restlessness when attempts are made to reduce or stop gaming. This can be indicative of a psychological dependence on gaming.

8. Tolerance: Needing to spend increasing amounts of time gaming in order to achieve the desired level of satisfaction or to experience the same level of excitement.

9. Continued use despite Awareness of Harm: Being aware of the negative consequences associated with gaming, but still being unable to stop or significantly reduce gaming behaviour.

10. Functional Impairment: Experiencing significant impairment in various areas of life, including academic or work performance, social relationships, physical health, and emotional well-being.

It is important to note that the diagnosis of IGD is typically made by qualified mental health professionals based on specific criteria outlined in diagnostic manuals like the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition) or the ICD-11 (International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision). To add to the harmful consequences of IGD, it has been linked to self-harming behaviors due to an obsessive fascination with gaming (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012).

## II. PREVALENCE OF IGD

Generally, estimates suggest that the prevalence of IGD is higher among adolescents and young adults, who are often more engaged in online gaming. Some studies have suggested prevalence rates ranging from 1% to 10% among adolescents and young adults, with higher rates reported in certain Asian countries where online gaming is particularly popular. There were limited comprehensive studies specifically focused on the prevalence of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) in India.

“The internet is the only place I am appreciated,” “Nobody loves me offline,” “People treat me nothing offline,” and “The internet is my sole buddy,” say people with cognitive biases about the world (Davis, 2001). Research on Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) among Indian adolescents has gained attention in recent years as digital technology becomes more widespread in the country. The prevalence of gaming disorder is higher among the adolescent age group, especially in the male population (Thakur, et al., 2023). The prevalence of games like PUBG Mobile (Player Unknown’s Battlegrounds), Free Fire, and other multiplayer online games is notable. Excessive gaming among Indian adolescents may have implications for academic performance, with potential negative effects on study habits, focus, and time management.

Adolescent are more vulnerable to IGD since they had more free time during the Covid-19 lockdown. A cross-national representative survey has recorded a steep increase in Internet gaming disorder (IGD) cases over the last decade in young adults as they have easy access and spend an excessive amount of time on Internet activities (Sharma, M. K., et al., 2021). We cannot ignore the impact on their emotional regulations. Individuals with IGD also report more difficulties in emotional regulation (ER) along with higher impulsivity (Sharma, et al., 2021). Excessive gaming may interfere with a child’s ability to focus on schoolwork and extracurricular activities, potentially leading to a decline in academic performance.

## III. IMPACT ON THE MENTAL HEALTH

Excessive gaming can lead to or exacerbate symptoms of depression and anxiety, especially if it interferes with other aspects of life. Another impact is social isolation. Spending excessive time gaming can lead to social isolation, which can contribute to feelings of loneliness and exacerbate mental health issues and so on. Therapists and counselors can provide support, guidance, and strategies for managing gaming behavior and addressing underlying mental health issues. This effort is very beneficial if it is community based. This should be done through community-based mental health care, which is more accessible and acceptable than institutional care, helps prevent human rights violations and delivers better recovery outcomes for people with mental health conditions (WHO, 2022). IGD can lead to social withdrawal, strained relationships, and disruptions in academic or occupational functioning.

## IV. LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION:

Loving Kindness Meditation (LKM) is a Buddhist practice designed to cultivate unconditional love, compassion, and goodwill toward oneself and all beings. It is also known as Metta Meditation. The purpose of the meditation is to cultivate positive emotions such as compassion, empathy, warmth, and improving interpersonal relationships. The practice promotes psychological balance and enhances a sense of connectedness.

A common progression for practicing Loving Kindness Meditation involves directing your wishes in a graded way:

- Yourself: You begin by offering loving-kindness to yourself. Phrases often include: ‘May I be safe.’, ‘May I be happy’, ‘May I be healthy.’, ‘May I live with ease.’
- A Benefactor: Next, you direct your loving-kindness towards someone who has genuinely loved, supported, or cared for you unconditionally. You adapt the phrases: ‘May you be safe.’, ‘May you be happy.’, ‘May you be healthy.’, ‘May you live with ease.’
- A Friend/Loved One: After the benefactor, you extend the wishes to a close friend or someone you feel a strong positive connection with.
- A Neutral Person: This stage involves directing loving-kindness towards someone you don't have strong positive or negative feelings about. This could be a cashier, a delivery person, or a distant acquaintance. This helps to expand your capacity for kindness beyond your immediate circle.
- A Difficult Person: This is often the most challenging but also the most transformative stage. You extend loving-kindness to someone with whom you have conflict, someone who has caused you difficulty, or even someone you actively dislike. This doesn't mean condoning their actions but rather recognizing their shared humanity and wishing them well, which can release you from the burden of anger or resentment.
- All Beings: Finally, you broaden your wishes to encompass all living beings everywhere – seen and unseen, near and far. This can be a powerful experience of universal connection and compassion.

**V. NEED FOR THE STUDY**

Studying Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) in Chhattisgarh, India is important for several reasons: Understanding the prevalence of Internet Gaming Disorder in India can provide insights into the magnitude of the issue and its impact on individuals and society. Research findings can contribute to public awareness campaigns and educational programs aimed at informing individuals, families, educators, and policymakers about the potential risks associated with excessive gaming. In summary, studying Internet Gaming Disorder in Chhattisgarh,

**VI. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM OF THE STUDY:**

To assess application of interoceptive training-based psychotherapy on cognitive functioning, emotional regulation, psychological wellbeing, and severity of craving among patients with Internet Gaming Disorder.

**6.1. Aim:**

To examine the application of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy in school going adolescents.

**6.2. Objectives:**

- To examine the application of LKM intervention on psychological wellbeing in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder.
- To examine the application of LKM intervention on sensation seeking tendency in patients with Internet Gaming Disorder.
- To examine the application of LKM intervention on severity in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder.
- To examine the application of LKM intervention on self-esteem level in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder.
- To assess the application of LKM intervention on mindfulness awareness level in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder.

**6.3. Hypotheses:**

- There will be no significant difference in psychological wellbeing in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder in “LKM with treatment as usual group”, and “treatment as usual group” in post treatment.
- There will be no significant difference in sensation seeking tendency in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder in “LKM with treatment as usual”, and “treatment as usual group” in post treatment.
- There will be no significant difference on severity in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder in “LKM with treatment as usual”, and “treatment as usual group” in post treatment.
- There will be no significant difference on self-esteem level in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder in “LKM with treatment as usual”, and “treatment as usual group” in post treatment.
- There will be no significant difference on mindfulness awareness level in patient with Internet Gaming Disorder in “LKM with treatment as usual”, and “treatment as usual group” in post treatment.

**VII. STUDY DESIGN:**

This is community-based study with pre and post, control group design (repeated measure).

**7.1. Venue of the Study:**

This study will be carried out at selected schools in Bilaspur District, Chhattisgarh.

**7.2. Sample Size:**

Based on purposive sampling technique a sample consisting of 20 (10 for LKM (experimental) and the other 10 for TAU (control) group adolescents under treatment as usual were selected from schools in Bilaspur District, C.G.

**VIII. REASONS FOR USING PURPOSIVE SAMPLING IN RESEARCH:**

In present research particular clinical characteristics of population are needed, and it is very important to show similar characteristics at baseline level. Therefore, the purposive sampling was used. The main goal behind using purposive sampling was to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable you to answer your research questions.

**IX. TOOLS FOR PRE, POST TEST ASSESSMENT OF THE PARTICIPANTS: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET**

- Socio-demographic data sheet
- Adolescent Well-Being Scale
- Brief Sensation Seeking Scale – Revised
- Social Connectedness Scale (SCS-R)
- The Gaming Motivation Inventory (GMI)
- Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

**9.1. Duration: 20–30 minutes daily for 8 weeks****9.2. Purpose:**

This meditation module helps adolescents develop self-compassion, emotional regulation, healthy relationships, reduced gaming cravings, and a renewed sense of purpose in real life.

**9.3. Introduction**

Many adolescents enter the world of online games searching for excitement, achievement, friendship, or an escape from stress. Over time, however, excessive gaming can create loneliness, anxiety, irritability, academic difficulties, and emotional emptiness.

Loving-Kindness Meditation teaches young people to discover something many games cannot provide: a deep sense of acceptance, peace, and connection with themselves and others.

This practice is not about fighting gaming urges. It is about filling the heart with kindness so that the need to escape gradually loses its power.

#### 9.4. Session 1: Loving Myself

- **Duration: 5–7 minutes**
- Ask participants to sit comfortably and close their eyes.
- Guide them slowly:
- "Take a deep breath.
- Feel your feet touching the ground.
- Notice that you are safe in this moment.
- You are more than your scores, rankings, or achievements in any game.
- You are a valuable human being."
- Repeat silently:
  - May I be safe.
  - May I be healthy.
  - May I be peaceful.
  - May I be free from harmful addictions.
  - May I discover my true strengths.
  - May I learn to love myself.
- Pause between each sentence.

#### 9.5. Session 2: Loving My Body

- Many adolescents neglect sleep, exercise, and nutrition because of gaming.
- Guide them:
- "Thank your eyes that work tirelessly.
- Thank your hands that play, write, create, and help others.
- Thank your brain for learning and growing."
- Repeat:
  - May my body be healthy.
  - May I care for my body with respect.
  - May I rest when I need rest.
  - May I grow stronger every day.

#### 9.6. Session 3: Loving My Parents and Family

- Invite participants to imagine their parents or caregivers.
- Say gently:
- "Think of the people who worry about you, support you, and hope for your future."
- Repeat:
  - May my family be happy.
  - May my family be healthy.
  - May my family live in peace.
  - May I appreciate their love.
- Allow moments of silence.

#### 9.7. Session 4: Loving My Friends

- Imagine friends and classmates.
- Repeat:
  - May my friends be safe.
  - May they be joyful.
  - May they succeed in life.
  - May we support one another.

#### 9.8. Session 5: Loving Difficult People

- This session builds emotional maturity.
- Guide:
  - "Think of someone who annoys or upsets you.
  - Remember that they too experience struggles and pain."
- Repeat:
  - May you be peaceful.
  - May you be healthy.
  - May you be free from suffering.
  - May you find happiness.

#### 9.9. Session 6: Loving My Future Self

- Ask participants to imagine themselves five years from now.
- "See a confident, healthy, successful young adult standing before you."
- Repeat:

- May my future be bright.
- May I make wise choices.
- May I use technology responsibly.
- May I live a meaningful life.

#### 9.10. Session 7: Releasing Gaming Cravings

- When urges arise:
- Take three slow breaths.
- Repeat:
  - This feeling will pass.
  - I am stronger than this craving.
  - I choose what is best for me.
  - Peace is available right now.
- Visualize the craving as a cloud slowly drifting across the sky.

#### 9.11. Session 8: Extending Kindness to the World

- Imagine your kindness spreading outward.
- Repeat:
  - May all children be safe.
  - May all students find hope.
  - May those struggling with addiction find healing.
  - May all people live with peace and compassion.

#### 9.12. Reflection Journal

- After each session, write:
  - What emotions did I notice today?
  - How strong was my gaming urge (1–10)?
  - What am I grateful for today?
  - One act of kindness I can do tomorrow.

#### 9.13. Closing Affirmation

- Ask participants to place a hand over their heart and repeat:
  - "I am not defined by my addiction.
  - I am not defined by my mistakes.
  - I am growing stronger each day.
  - I choose real relationships over isolation.
  - I choose purpose over escape.
  - I choose kindness over self-criticism.
  - I am worthy of love, healing, and hope."

#### 9.14. Expected Outcomes

- After regular practice, adolescents may experience:
  - Reduced gaming cravings
  - Better emotional regulation
  - Increased self-esteem
  - Improved family relationships
  - Greater concentration in studies
  - Better sleep quality
  - Enhanced resilience and psychological well-being

The journey from addiction to freedom begins not with punishment, but with compassion. When adolescents learn to treat themselves with loving kindness, they discover that the deepest victory is not won on a screen—it is won within the heart.

## X. RESULTS

There was no significant difference found between LKM and TAU group regarding age (Mann Whitney value=41.50; p value =0.515). There was no significant difference found between LKM and TAU group regarding education (U value= 46.00; p value = 0.744). Results are indicating that, intervention group shows significant improvement in gaming addiction, sensation seeking tendency, psychological well beings and self esteem level by developing better emotional regulatory and coping skills and distress tolerance level.

The post intervention results are indicating that, intervention group (LKM +TAU) shows significant improvement in mindfulness levels and significant facets contributing towards the growth in mindfulness post intervention were: observing; describing; acting with awareness; and non judging of inner experience. Improvements were observed in self kindness domain, spiritual growth and emotional regulation as well. Since the computed value of p is significant, the difference in the two groups is significant. It means that the difference is genuine and it has not occurred by chance only.

**This study revealed that:**

1. At baseline level, no statistically significant difference found between LKM and TAU group in all outcome variables.
2. At post intervention there were significant difference found between LKM and TAU group in all outcome variables. Therefore, it can clearly conclude that, LKM intervention is a kind of practice of cultivating an un-manipulated perception of the present moment towards all living beings.
3. The mindfulness training program had a positive effect on decreasing gaming addictive behavior among university students in intervention group. Recommendations: Dissemination of this mindfulness training program to other students in different faculties.

No research is free from the limitations; this investigation is also not an exception to this. Source of the shortcomings noted in the present research could not however be eliminated primarily because of the purposive sampling that was adopted in the present study.

- A major limitation to the current study was the small sample size. With larger samples, more subtle changes in mean scores can be detected over time.
- Subjects were not randomly assigned to the groups.
- Long term effects of LKM could not be assessed. Thus, it cannot be commented whether the beneficial effects of LKM are maintained.

**XI. PROPOSED POLICIES.**

Addressing Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) among Indian adolescents requires a multifaceted approach involving education, regulation, support systems, and clinical intervention. Here are some proposed policies:

**1. Education and Awareness Campaigns:**

School Programs: Introduce mandatory modules on digital wellness, emphasizing the risks of excessive gaming and strategies for balanced internet use. Public Awareness: Launch national campaigns through media channels to educate parents, teachers, and adolescents about the signs, symptoms, and consequences of IGD.

**2. Regulation and Policy Frameworks:**

Age Restrictions: Implement and enforce strict age restrictions for online gaming platforms and enforce existing regulations more rigorously. Content Ratings: Enforce clear and standardized content ratings for games, similar to those used in other countries, to guide parents and guardians.

**3. Support and Counseling Services:**

School-Based Counselling: Establish dedicated counseling services in schools to provide support for adolescents struggling with IGD. Helplines and Support Groups: Create national helplines and online support groups staffed by mental health professionals trained in dealing with gaming addiction.

**4. Parental and Community Involvement:**

Parental Education: Offer workshops and resources for parents to recognize and manage IGD in their children, emphasizing positive parenting strategies and setting healthy boundaries. Community Centers: Utilize community centers to provide safe spaces for adolescents to engage in offline activities and socialize outside of gaming.

**5. Clinical Interventions and Treatment:**

Specialized Clinics: Establish clinics specializing in digital addiction treatment across major cities, offering comprehensive assessments and evidence-based treatments. Research Funding: Allocate resources for research into effective interventions and treatment modalities for IGD tailored to Indian cultural contexts.

**6. Industry Collaboration:**

Gaming Industry Responsibility: Encourage gaming companies to implement features that promote responsible gaming, such as session timers, parental controls, and periodic reminders. Corporate Social Responsibility: Encourage gaming companies to contribute to public health initiatives addressing gaming addiction through CSR programs.

**7. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

Data Collection: Establish a national database to monitor prevalence rates, trends, and effectiveness of interventions related to IGD. Evaluation Framework: Develop an evaluation framework to assess the impact of policies and interventions, adjusting strategies based on findings. Implementing these policies requires collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, healthcare providers, industry stakeholders, and communities to create a comprehensive response to Internet Gaming Disorder among Indian adolescents.

**XII. CONCLUSION**

In spite of the small sample size, statistically significant changes were observed in the present study. These are important findings that justify the need for replication and more work on LKM with outcome variables in present study. The mindfulness training program had a positive effect on decreasing gaming addictive behaviour among university students in intervention group. More diverse groups could be involved in which effect of other factors such as psychological mindedness, homework practice to be assessed.