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CHANGES OF INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG THE ADULT POPULATION OF JAPAN IN FIVE YEARS: RESULTS OF TWO MAJOR SURVEYS

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Background. The number of people with Internet addiction (IA) in Japan is assumed to have rapidly increased, but the actual conditions have not been unknown. Below we report the changes of estimated prevalence of IA among the adult population of Japan based on the results of the two nationwide surveys we conducted leave five years interval.

Methods. Our first survey was conducted in 2008, and the subjects were 7,500 men and women. Our second survey was conducted in 2013, and the subjects were 7,052 people. Both of the two survey, the subjects were selected from the entire adult population of Japan by stratified two-stage random sampling. In addition to the Japanese version of the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), tests to assess other addictions and questions on socio-familial background were included in the survey.

Results. In the first survey, 51% of the replied that they used the Internet, and 20% scored 40 or higher on the IAT. We estimated the number of adults with IA tendency was 2.7million in Japan. Problem users were more prevalent in the younger generation and tended to have a higher education level. The second survey revealed a much higher prevalence of IA than the first survey. We estimated the number of adults with IA tendency was 4.21million in Japan.

Conclusion. The results of our two surveys of IA in Japan suggested that problems associated with IA have already become serious, and the development and implementation of strategies to prevent and control problems associated with IA is an urgent task.