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Video Game Addiction Can Pose A Health Risk

(KAIR)--The holiday break gives many young people the chance to relax and spend some time catching up with friends and family. However, with so much potential free time, some may become bored and turn to video games to pass the time.

Kansas State University recently completed a health needs assessment for Kansas teens. K-State Research and Extension youth development specialist Elaine Johannes, who directed the study, says that the project looked at data collected from 2007-2013 by the Kansas Department of Health. She says there is a definite increase in video game use. In 2011, approximately 25 percent of teens played video games for three or more hours a day, and in 2013, it went up to 34 percent.

Johannes adds that teens who spend too much time playing video games are at risk for significant problems concerning their overall quality of life. She says that "If we have teenagers who spend five hours or more of their waking hours every day in video gaming, their satisfaction with life is lower, their satisfactions with relationships is lower, and probably the most concerning...is that their suicidal thoughts are higher".

There is a growing national concern about addiction to video gaming, especially among teens and young adults. Johannes says there are warning signs that can help identify the addiction. These include them downplaying their computer use, losing track of time, and the video game affecting other parts of their life.

More information on adolescent health issues is available at county and district Extension offices, or by going to ksre.ksu.edu.

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