

Did you know that we forget about 80% of the medical information a doctor might give us? This fascinating piece of information came to light as a result of a study carried out by Utrecht University. What is even more interesting is that almost half of what we think we remember is wrong. Why do you think this is? Well, going to the doctor can make most people nervous and when we are stressed we are more inclined to focus on the diagnosis rather than on the treatment. Therefore, we know what is wrong with us but have no idea what to do about it.

Here are some good tips to have in mind when seeing a doctor. Always bring along a notepad to jot down important pieces of information such as how to take prescribed medication or how to prepare for any medical tests you might need. What would be even better is if your doctor agreed to having your consultation recorded. In this way, you can replay his advice at home, where you are more likely to be able to absorb it. Should you believe the situation is serious or you're really worried, get a family member or close friend to accompany you to listen in.

The Partnership for Clear Communication recommends you ask these three questions every time you talk to a health care professional: "What is my main problem?", "What do I need to do?" and "Why is it important for me to do this?". It's also very important to get any written information that is available on your condition.

1. According to the passage, the information doctors give us _____.
 - A. is not enough
 - B. is only 80% correct
 - C. is mostly forgotten
 - D. should be studied carefully
2. Research carried out by Utrecht University _____.
 - A. brought new medical information to light.
 - B. showed that fifty per cent of what we hear from doctors is misunderstood.
 - C. showed that fifty per cent of doctors give us misinformation.
 - D. was seen as not very accurate.
3. The author says that when people consult a doctor _____.
 - A. they only want to know what is wrong with them.
 - B. they are only interested in knowing what they should do.
 - C. they believe their situation is serious.
 - D. they usually have a family member or close friend with them.
4. Why is it good to have a notepad with you?
 - A. to show your notes to a health care professional
 - B. to write down any important details
 - C. to let the doctor write down his suggestions
 - D. to keep track of how much money you pay the doctor

5. The word "prescribed" in paragraph 3 means _____.
 A. usual B. ordered C. used D. permitted
6. The author suggests recording the consultation in order to _____.
 A. listen to it when you have calmed down.
 B. play to your family and friends to get their opinion.
 C. refer to it later to better understand your condition.
 D. use against the doctor if necessary.
7. Who should you ask three particular questions?
 A. Anyone you consult with regards to your health
 B. The Partnership for Clear Health Communication
 C. Either a family member or a friend
 D. Researchers with knowledge of your particular condition



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For millions of people, the internet has opened up a whole new world. From their personal computers they are ordering books, sending greetings cards and finding out about literally anything on Earth. For students it is invaluable for homework, for travellers it makes planning and booking astonishingly easy, while for many others it is a great way of keeping in touch with family and friends or, indeed, making new friends. It is, in short, a wonderful resource for obtaining information, getting things done and communicating with others. And yet it is also creating one of the fastest-growing social problems of our time: Internet addiction.

A recent study involving Internet users from all over the world found that 50 per cent of them claimed to be addicted, spending an average of over 60 hours per week on-line. Some of these reported routinely logging on as soon as they arrived home from work, university or school, often remaining on-line until the small hours. "Sometimes I'm feeling absolutely exhausted, dying to go to bed," said one respondent "but then I think to myself I'll just try one more page, it might be really good. And then I think the same about the next page. And the next. And so on."

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The study showed no difference in the rate of addiction between men and women and revealed that many heavy users simply lost track of time. In extreme cases, they began to neglect themselves, their families and their friends, apparently preferring the company of their computer to that of other people. They were also found to be more likely to be depressed than moderate users, although it is as yet unclear whether this is brought about by the excessive time spent on-line, or whether already depressed individuals have a greater tendency to stay at home and engage in what is, essentially, a solitary activity.

The researchers compared it with other addictions such as gambling, which, they say, shares with it the element of intermittent rewards: in the case of the Internet, the occasional discovery of an exciting web page. In addition, both activities tend to take place against a background of darkness. Net surfing often takes place at night; casinos deliberately keep the lights turned down low so that the punters, too, lose all sense of time. Television addiction, however, appears to be different, as TV watching tends to be more passive, merely filling the available free time.

Many Internet users, of course, would say the same of going on-line. So when does "normal" extensive Net surfing become an addiction? In some cases the indications are clear: skipped meals, lack of sleep, strained relationships, etc., but in others the symptoms are more subtle. Obsessive users may check and re-check their e-mail boxes unnecessarily. They may deceive themselves, and others, about how long they actually spend on-line, and spend their off-line time looking forward to their next on-line session. They might even rush to their PCs the minute they have the house to themselves, relieved that others are not there to pass judgement.

What, though, can those who recognise they have a problem actually do about it? The first thing is not to panic. One expert points out that many people spend an enormous amount of time reading, say, or talking on the telephone, sometimes to the detriment of family relationships. Yet nobody talks about "book addiction", or "phone addiction" as if they were in some way akin to chronic alcoholism or heavy smoking. If they are cutting themselves off, so this theory goes, it is because of a weak relationship. Going on-line is merely one way, like turning on the TV or going out for a drink, of avoiding conversation with those at home. The problem is the relationship, not the computer.

Where an addiction genuinely does exist, the advice is to seek professional help similar to that for sufferers of other compulsive disorders. This consists of gradually reducing the time spent on line, as well as dealing with any personal difficulties that may underlie the condition. Other experts advise the addict to talk to support groups

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specifically formed to help people with the problem of Internet overuse. Ironically, these groups can currently only be contacted via the Internet.

1. What did the study discover?
 - A. Half of all users always go on-line when they get home.
 - B. Many people use the Internet all night.
 - C. Some keep hoping to find something interesting on-line.
 - D. The heaviest users are usually male.
2. According to the text, depression _____
 - A. is common among all Internet users.
 - B. is associated with heavy Internet use.
 - C. is caused by Internet addiction.
 - D. leads to overuse of the Internet.
3. In the fourth paragraph, the writer implies that _____
 - A. gamblers rarely win.
 - B. gambling is less harmful than Internet addiction.
 - C. Internet addicts are often also gamblers.
 - D. people prefer to gamble in darkened places.
4. Which of these is an example of a less obvious sign of addiction?
 - A. not eating at proper times because of excessive surfing
 - B. being shocked to discover how long they have been on-line
 - C. telling other people how long they have spent on-line
 - D. being afraid that other people will criticise them
5. In the sixth paragraph, the author likens heavy Internet use to _____
 - A. having long telephone conversations.
 - B. drinking too much alcohol.
 - C. smoking a lot of cigarettes.
 - D. talking to relatives for many hours.
6. Which, according to the author, could have the opposite result from what is intended?
 - A. obtaining the same treatment as for other conditions
 - B. attempting to spend less time on-line
 - C. treating the possible causes of the addiction
 - D. discussing the addiction with specialist organisations
7. What is the author's aim in writing this text?
 - A. to call for more controls on the content of Internet pages
 - B. to describe Internet addiction and suggest remedies
 - C. to discourage people from using the Internet
 - D. to dismiss claims that the Internet is addictive

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THE eBay ADDICTS

Katie is sitting at her computer, eyes glued to the screen. It's 2 am and the eBay auction is about to end. Within minutes the 25-year-old events manager from London will know if she has won another pair of Gucci shoes to add to her collection.

The scene may sound familiar. Indeed, eBay – the Internet auction site – has become a modern phenomenon, with 10 million British users, 135 million worldwide and up to 600,000 joining every month.

The other side-effects of her self-confessed addiction are far more alarming. Katie has spent so much of her substantial £50,000-a-year salary on eBay since discovering it in November that she is already £10,000 in debt.

It is not just her finances which are feeling the strain. Her health is also deteriorating under the stress of owing so much, and she has been to see her GP. What horrifies Katie even more is the fact that she can see her personality changing as a result of her addiction: she admits she is now prepared to lie to cover the extent of her problem.

Natalie, 27, from London, who works for a casting agency, also finds taking part in the eBay auctions and hunting for bargains addictive.

"I admit that I am an addict and I probably do need professional help," she says. "Every day I wake up and say that today I am not going on eBay. But I can't stop myself. It started as my stress-buster from

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work and now it's the cause of my stress. The thrill of the auction is like a gambling rush."

These young women are not isolated cases. David Nott, Addictions Programme Manager, is seeing an increasing number of patients with eBay addiction, which he says is a very real condition.

While shopaholism has been recognized as a problem for years, he believes eBay addiction is different because of the combination of shopping and gambling which makes it so compelling and potentially more addictive.

"While a lot of people claim that the possibility of picking up a bargain is what attracts them to eBay, the single biggest thing that tends to keep them coming back is not what they buy, but how they buy it," he says. "The whole thing is geared around anticipation, winning and losing – it's a very emotive process."

He says eBay addiction should be treated as seriously as any other.

"It is potentially life-destroying. While it doesn't have the immediate health implications, it can lead to disrupted sleep, the same types of adrenaline highs and lows and obviously the overspending and consequent financial problems that this entails."

1. Why does the author in the second paragraph say that "the scene may sound familiar"? Because people taking part in the eBay auctions are _____.
A. a rare case B. ordinary buyers
C. spread all over the world D. decreasing in number
2. People visiting eBay auctions are _____.
A. gamblers B. addicts C. shopaholics D. lonely people
3. According to the author what attracts people in eBay auctions?
A. the rush of excitement
B. anticipation, winning and losing
C. the need to buy things
D. the possibility to pick up a bargain
4. eBay addiction is different from shopaholism because _____.
A. there is no human interaction
B. it is a combination of shopping and gambling
C. it is more addictive
D. you buy things online
5. David Nott says that the side effects of eBay addiction are _____.
A. destroyed relationship and stress
B. financial problems

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- C. deteriorating health and change of personality
D. adrenaline rush, disrupted sleep and financial problems
6. EBay addiction according to David Nott should be treated seriously because _____
A. you get hooked
B. it has immediate health implications
C. bidding is exciting
D. it may destroy your life
7. Natalie thinks that her addiction _____
A. is self-destructing
B. influences her relationship with parents
C. is the cause of her stress
D. is just a hobby