

# Study: People Who Are Constantly Online Can Develop Mental Disorders

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CHARLOTTE (CBS Charlotte) — Get off that computer. A new study finds that constantly being online can affect your mental health.

Researchers at the [University of Gothenburg](#) recently studied more than 4,100 Swedish men and women between the ages of 20 and 24 for a year and found that a majority of them who constantly use a computer and mobile phones can develop stress, sleeping disorders and depression.

Sara Thomee, lead author of the study, said there was a “central link” between computers and mental disorders.

“High quantitative use was a central link between computer use and stress, sleep disturbances, and depression, described by the young adults,” Thomee said in the study. “It was easy to spend more time than planned at the computer (e.g., working, gaming, or chatting), and this tended to lead to time pressure, neglect of other activities and personal needs (such as social interaction, sleep, physical activity), as well as bad ergonomics, and mental overload.”

The study found a correlation between stress and always being available on the phone.

“Demands for availability originated not only from work and the social network, but also from the individual’s own ambitions or desires. This resulted in disturbances when busy or resting, the feeling of never being free, and difficulties separating work and private life,” Thomee explained in the study. “Unreturned calls or messages led to overload and feelings of guilt.”

Even people who played video games online faced a greater risk of suffering from depression.

“Daily computer gaming for 1–2 hours meant an increased risk for symptoms of depression in the women,” the study found. “Often using the computer late at night (and consequently losing sleep) was a prospective risk factor for stress and sleep disturbances, including reduced performance, in both sexes.”

Thomee concluded that people need to set limits on computer and cell phone use and limit their own demands on their availability as to not suffer from these types of mental disorders.