



THE DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, BIostatISTICS AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, - SEMINAR SERIES IS A SELF-APPROVED GROUP LEARNING ACTIVITY (SECTION 1) AS DEFINED BY THE MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA

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Video Games, Gamification and Mental Health: A new frontier for public health research

MONDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2017 / 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm
McIntyre Medical Building

3655 promenade Sir William Osler – Meakins Rm 521

ALL ARE WELCOME

ABSTRACT

Video games are globally ingrained in today's society. They entertain, inform us and, broadly, shape our culture and ways of being. Gamification is the application of game elements and digital game design techniques to non-game problems, such as health and wellbeing, as well as social impact challenges. Today, the gaming industry is a \$99.3 billion market. More than 1.2 billion people are playing games worldwide and 27% of players are under 18 years old. Researchers are concerned about the impact of video gaming on youth. A vast body of work on the effects of video games focuses on its negative impact, describing potential harm related to aggression, addiction, and depression, as well as the promotion of stereotypes (violence sexism, racism, and ableism). At the same time, possible benefits of playing video games has been identified (promoting better attention, memory, problem solving skills). Evidence suggests gamification can have a positive impact for health and wellbeing related interven-

tions. This talk presents a review of mental illness messages, especially how psychosis is represented, in the video games available on the market; the integration of empirical knowledge into the creation of two new serious mental health related games (a psycho-educational and a commercial video game); and an evaluation of their impact. Serious video games are created to train and educate players, and are recognized as having the potential to change stereotypes and share knowledge.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this presentation, participants will:

1. Increase knowledge on the use of video games and gamification strategies related to the health field, in general, and mental health in particular.
2. Gain critical knowledge on how video games shape health-related messages and benefits as well as ethical issues related to play video

games and the use of gamification strategies.

3. Advance understanding of gamification strategies and evaluation processes –both qualitative and quantitative.
4. Assess the impact, efficacy, and social value of two mental health-related video games.

BIO

Dr. Manuela Ferrari is a Research Associate at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute in Montreal and an Adjunct Professor at School of Health Policy and Management, York University, Toronto. Dr. Ferrari received her doctoral degree in Health and Behavioral Sciences at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. As a Mitacs Post-Doctoral Fellow at McMaster University, Dr Ferrari worked with a video game company, Moonray Studios Inc., to help creating Debris, a commercial video game aimed at overcome mental health stigma.