

## Correspondence

# Binge-watching as one of the new emerging behaviors in the COVID-19 era: Is it dangerous?

### Dear Editor,

In response to the latest article on the topic of ‘Exposure to tobacco, alcohol and “junk food” content in reality TV programmes broadcast in the UK between August 2019–2020’.<sup>1</sup> This topic is very relevant to what is happening worldwide. The development of technology, especially in the TV field, is overgrowing. The ease of accessing the internet can be used for work, communication or just looking for entertainment. One of the entertainment activities that can be accessed easily is watching streaming services. Internet usage increased in access to streaming services during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Plus, in this pandemic era, it forces the people to stay at home, which makes them consistently access the internet to get rid of the feeling of loneliness.<sup>3</sup>

Then, why are streaming services becoming popular? In ancient times, people could only watch television with a predetermined broadcast schedule.<sup>4</sup> However, at the present time, it can be done easily through smartphones and laptops.<sup>5</sup> In addition, related to the television shows, video streaming services also provide various types of films, documentaries and web series. Due to its advancements, the online streaming services have become the easiest way for people to watch television. As a result, this wave creates a new behavior known as binge-watching.<sup>6</sup> Binge-watching is a new behavior that many people do at least once a week.<sup>6</sup> People can watch it by playing, pausing and continuing to watch again without any commercial breaks.<sup>7</sup>

Most researchers define binge-watching as watching a marathon in one sitting.<sup>8,9</sup> By any means, it is a relatively new behavior pattern. Its popularity has increased since 2013, and it has become one of the popular ways to spend time.<sup>10,11</sup> The increasing popularity of streaming services has made binge-watching familiar.<sup>10,12</sup>

In recent years, binge-watching has become a concern for research.<sup>13</sup> The results show that binge-watching can be an entertaining behavior, but it can also potentially cause problems.<sup>11,14</sup> Excessive use and lack of self-control can lead to addictive behavior that spirals out of control.<sup>3,4,15–17</sup> This thing impacts the psychological and mental health of the individuals.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, the results of other studies show that binge-watching has negative impacts such as loss of control, desire, social problems and neglect of duties.<sup>19</sup> Excessive behavior in binge-watching also makes individuals sleep-deprived which can cause fatigue and loss of concentration.<sup>18</sup> Due to the fear of missing out (FOMO), it creates watching marathons. To emphasize, based on the research, there is a significant relationship between FOMO and binge-watching.<sup>20</sup>

People who spend more time binge-watching show higher levels of stress and anxiety.<sup>5,9,21</sup> Furthermore, binge-watching can be a sort of escape for individuals who feel lonely and have problems.<sup>3,17</sup> Other studies also point out a correlation between binge-watching and unstable emotional behavior.<sup>22</sup> When viewed from the impact caused by binge-watching, attention needs to be paid so that it does not become a pathology that arises due to an unfavorable situation.<sup>21,23</sup>

This binge-watching research is classified as a new thing that is still developing.<sup>10</sup> Many things can still be explored related to these things.<sup>11,19</sup> Furthermore, the research related to interventions on excessive binge-watching behavior is no less critical.<sup>3,24</sup> This is very useful for reducing the negative impact caused by extreme binge-watching behavior as well. In addition, binge-watching should also receive special attention in Indonesia, a developing country whose internet usage increases every year.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this paper.

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