Online Shopping Addiction

The advent of the internet has brought with it the convenience of shopping at our leisure in the comfort of our own home. However, for many, the allure of shopping for bargains and treats can turn into an addiction. Experts believe that there is a danger that online shopping can develop into a mental illness. Researchers from the Hanover Medical School in Germany have termed it "Buying Shopping Disorder" (BSD). The researchers say this condition should be recognized by the medical profession as an illness and should not simply be classed as one of the various "impulse control" disorders. Psychotherapist Dr Astrid Muller said: "It really is time to...accumulate further knowledge about BSD on the Internet".

Dr Muller and her colleagues conducted research on data from earlier studies on compulsive shopping. Their research focused on 122 patients who sought treatment for BSD. Dr Muller reported that about five percent of the population may be suffering from BSD. She added that younger people are more prone to developing it and experienced greater levels of anxiety and depression. People with BSD readily exhibit negative behaviors. These include spending excessive amounts of money on things they don't need, hoarding and never using things they order, buying things for the sake of instant gratification, and ending up in debt. BSD can destroy marriages, relationships and mental health.