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Two Spanish kids treated for phone addiction

Both admitted to mental health institute

by Katie Scott published on 13 June 2008

Two Spanish children who had become so dependent on their mobile phones that their lives were suffering have been admitted to a mental health clinic.

The parents of the 12- and 13-year-old were forced to take action after their childrens' school results plummeted.

In fact, according to Spanish news reports, the parents claim that their kids are so addicted to their phones that they stopped being able to carry out normal activities; and were also lying to relatives to get money for their phone bills.

Dr Maite Utges, who runs the Child and Youth Mental Health Centre in Lleida, near Barcelona in north-eastern Spain, told the BBC that it was the first time the clinic had treated children who were dependent on their mobile phones.

"They both showed disturbed behaviour and this exhibited itself in failure at school. They both had serious difficulties leading normal lives", she was quoted in Spanish papers as saying.

The children had owned their phones for 18 months, but had slowly become irritable, withdrawn and antisocial, and their school performance deteriorated.

The doctor warned these cases could be the "tip of the iceberg", and that mobile phone addiction "could definitely be a danger in the future".

