

SCIENCE NEWS

BIOLOGY: HEALTH & DISEASE

Too Much Fortnite?

Millions of people play *Fortnite*, an online game where players battle to be the last character standing. The game is so popular that some parents worry their kids are spending an unhealthy amount of time playing—and they might be right.

The World Health Organization recently added *gaming disorder* to its list of internationally recognized diseases. People with the disorder can't stop playing video games even if they want to. Their playing may cause them to lose friends, fall behind in class, and develop other health problems.

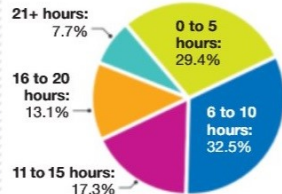
Loving to play video games, or even playing them a lot, doesn't mean you have a disorder, cautions Petros Levounis. He is the head of psychiatry at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. "But if you think that you may be overdoing it, or find yourself unable to cut down, don't be afraid to ask for help." —*Jacob Batchelor*



LATEST CRAZE: More than 80 million users play *Fortnite* each month.

HOURS SPENT PLAYING FORTNITE

This graph shows how many hours per week 1,000 *Fortnite* players say they spend on the game. What percent of players report playing between 11 and 15 hours per week?



SOURCE: STATISTA (2018)

BIOLOGY: ADAPTATIONS

Spider Face Paint

At the University of Florida, scientists have been giving male jumping spiders a makeover. The reason: to determine how their appearance helps them attract a mate.

Female jumping spiders of the species *Habronattus pyrithrix* sometimes eat their own kind. Because of this, potential mates need a way to attract their attention without getting gobbled up. Scientists think the key might lie in the male's brilliant red faces.

To find out, they presented females with both regular red-faced males and ones whose faces they had painted black. The females were less likely to eat males with red faces.

Lisa Anne Taylor, a behavioral ecologist who led the study, says that red coloration often signals that an animal is toxic. She thinks red faces help male *H. pyrithrix* look less appealing to eat and more appealing as mates.

—*Kosoko Jackson*

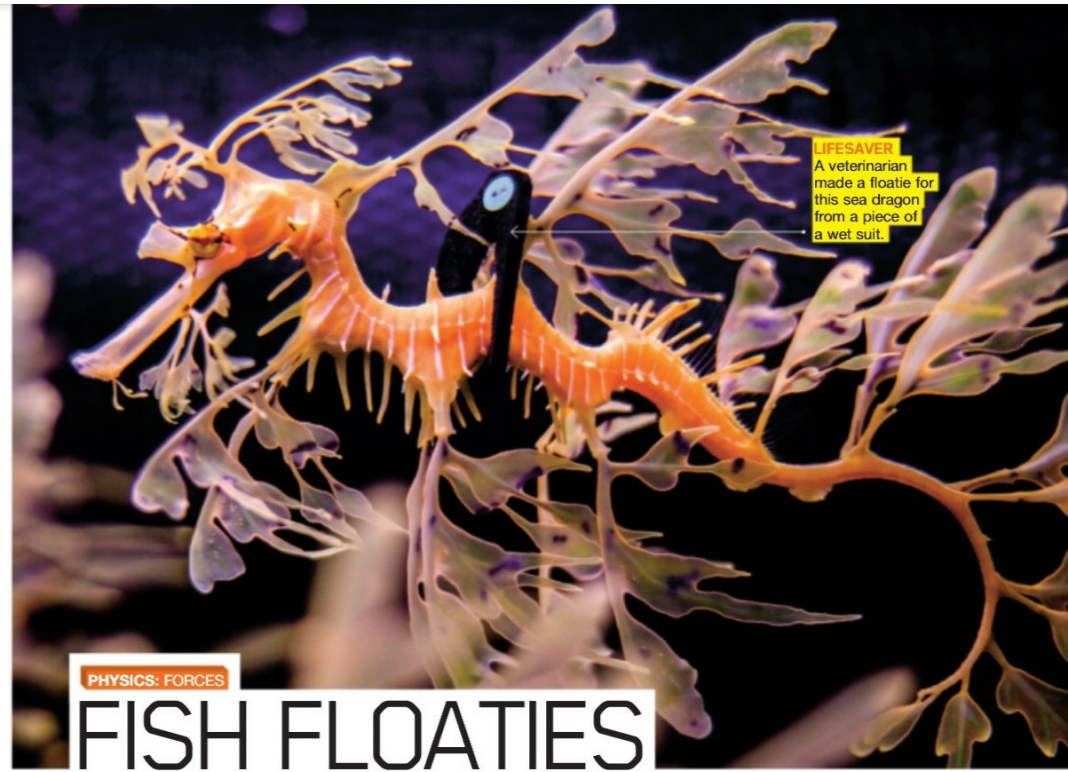


NATURAL RED
A male *H. pyrithrix* in its natural state

PAINTED OVER
The spider's red face is covered in black eyeliner.

FRANK (MAY/PICTURE-ALLIANCE/PAF IMAGES (FORTNITE); COURTESY OF LISANNE TAYLOR (BLACK PAINTED SPIDER); COURTESY OF COLIN HUTTON (RED FACE SPIDER)

BRONTE WITTEBORN/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM (SEA DRAGON); FLYING CHILLI LTD. (DIAGRAM)



LIFESAVER
A veterinarian made a floatie for this sea dragon from a piece of a wet suit.

PHYSICS: FORCES

FISH FLOATIES

When three baby sea dragons arrived at the Florida Aquarium last April, workers there quickly noticed something was wrong. Although the small fish usually float effortlessly in the water, these youngsters were sinking to the bottom of their tank. If they didn't get help soon, the sea dragons would be unable to gather food and would eventually starve.

A veterinarian at the aquarium soon discovered that the baby fish were born without *swim bladders*. Normally, these internal organs fill with carbon dioxide, a by-product created when fish remove oxygen from the surrounding water as they breathe. The gas-filled sacs make the sea dragons less dense than the surrounding water, producing a *buoyant force* that helps them float.

The veterinarian, Ari Fustukjian, decided to make miniature floaties to help the sea dragons survive. Using buoyant material from a wet suit, he created tiny rings to fit around the animals. The rings allow the fish to swim and feed.

"They've adjusted pretty well!" he says.

—*Alessandra Potenza*

HOW SEA DRAGONS FLOAT

A sea dragon inflates a specialized organ, called a swim bladder, to increase its buoyancy and move up in the water. To move down, it deflates the swim bladder.

