

Impact of Mobile Phone of The School Age Children- An Overview

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Abstract

Increase use of mobiles phones and other wireless electronic devices has serious concerns about their possible effects on school going children wellbeing. Understanding whether these technologies affect children's mental health in positive or harmful ways has become more urgent following further increase in use since the COVID-19 outbreak. To review the experiential evidence on associations between use of mobile phones and mental health in children. A systematic review of literature was carried out on Medline, Embase and PsycINFO for studies published prior to July 15th 2019. 25 observational studies published between January 1st 2011 and 2019 were reviewed (ten were cohort studies, 15 were cross-sectional). Overall estimated participant mean age and proportion female were 14.6 years and 47%, respectively. Substantial between-study heterogeneity in design and measurement of MP/WD usage and mental health outcomes limited our ability to infer general conclusions. Observed effects differed depending on time and type of mobile usage. 1

Keywords: Impact, School age children, Mental health

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Introduction

Screen time denotes to the time an individual spends using electronic or digital media devices such as televisions, smart phones, tablets or computers or any gazettes. Children are depiction to electronic products at a younger age and their screen time is increasing. Too much screen time can have negative effects on children's physical mental and social health. First, the negative effect of screen time on eyesight has been confirmed in many countries' studies. For example, the study by Hu Jia et al. showed that screen time ≥ 3 h per day (OR = 2.026, 95%CI: 1.235 ~ 3.325) was a myopia risk factor for primary and middle school students [4]. Second, excessive screen time will also bring obesity, depression, sleep disorders and other health problems to children and adolescents.

The COVID-19 pandemic is still spreading across the world wide, affecting the lives of millions of people

around the world. Various institutions, including schools, have adopted a range of lockdown measures. More primary and middle schools have conducted online teaching, and the time for school-aged children to use electronic products for online learning has further increased. Diane Seguin et al. found that during the pandemic, the average daily screen time of Canadian children increased from over 2 h (2.6 h on average) to nearly 6 h (5.9 h on average) ($t(73) = 9.04, p = 0.001$). Screen time increased by a total of more than 3 h, and children's screen time increased further during the pandemic compared to pre-pandemic. Due to the physical development stage of school-aged children, the effect of prolonged screen time on their physical and mental health is more obvious and irreversible than that of adults.²

How do smartphones affect the brain

It may not surprise you that 95% of families with children under age 8 had at least one smartphone in the house, according to an independent research company, Common Sense. And 42% of children had access to their own personal devices. The general belief, though, is that screen time should be limited for very young children.

A warning

The World Health Organization Trusted Source has emphasized the importance of minimizing screen time because of its relationship to ongoing sedentary states. We all know how important physical activity, proper sleep, and playtime are for developing children (and anyone, really). Excessive screen time can mess with sleep hygiene and leave young children sitting still instead of getting up to play or move. "Having a smart phone is a status symbol to many elementary school children," explains Lazar. Even a parent with the best intentions might struggle with their child's social pressure to have their own phone to talk with their friends. The ability to track children in family finder apps is also an appeal to caregivers. A 2018 study Trusted Source of elementary school children found a correlation between increased screen time use and behavioural issues — like conduct problems, hyperactivity, and inattention.³

This blog highlights 10 harmful effects of using mobile phones on children.

1. Subject to harmful radiation
2. Effect on eyesight (sleep deprivation)
3. Numbs brain development
4. Sedentary lifestyle
5. Poor academic
6. Reduced social interactions
7. Digital Fatigue
8. Diminishing command of language
9. Threats of cyber crimes
10. Subject to inappropriate content.⁴

Strategies to Ensure Smartphone Responsibility

As parents tap into their own behaviours to reflect a positive relationship with their phone or tablet, they'll have a much easier time teaching their children how to approach the world of smartphones healthily. Finally, PBS offered four guidelines on how parents can best introduce their children to smartphones. They advised that parents should:

Introduce smartphone technology after preschool: In the context of the WHO designation, it makes sense that parents would be best suited to introduce smartphone technology to their children after they've begun preschool. At any earlier stage, children could run the risk of developing adverse tendencies and behaviours.

Activate parental guidance screening measures: Many electronic devices come packaged with parental guidance options, and PBS recommended parents take advantage of these. Because tablet and smartphone technology could expose children to inappropriate content, parents must be proactive in protecting their children in digital spaces.

Apply screen time boundaries: As children use smartphone technology, screen time limits can help reduce their likelihood of developing an unhealthy dependency. Parents can get creative about when children can and cannot use their smartphones.

Screen the content their children consume: Before children use a new smart technology, parents should be mindful about the content their children will consume.⁵

Do mobile phones affect children's mental health?

A qualitative study was conducted in India using in-depth interviews to investigate parents' opinions regarding their children's use of mobile phones and how it affects their mental health. The findings suggested that the unsupervised overuse of mobile phones among children could lead to mental changes, including stress.⁶

Parents' Attitudes Toward School Students' Overuse of Smartphones

Parents' awareness of the risks of the overuse of smartphones (SPs) among their children and parents' attitudes toward this societal phenomenon are crucial factors to consider when investigating the causes and effects of, as well as interventions to control, this public health issue.⁷

Conclusion

More uses of smartphones can lead to disturbed thought process in growing children's.^{8,9}

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