

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN “SCREEN TIME” AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG URBAN AND RURAL STUDENTS.

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND :

With rapid technological advancement worldwide, media is playing a central role in the day to day life of children. Accessibility to screens and time spent with these devices are increasing. Several international studies have found correlation between duration of screen time and behavioral problems in children. However there are only few studies in Indian set up. Hence this study has been undertaken.

Aim and objectives-

1. To estimate the screen time among rural and urban school going early and mid-adolescent age groups.
2. To determine the association of screen time and behavioral health problems among urban and rural students in early and mid adolescent age group.

Methods-

This analytic cross sectional study was performed between January 2017 and May 2017. 200 students of class 8th and 9th were studied. Four schools were selected randomly: 2 from corporation limits (urban) and 2 from villages (rural) in Thanjavur, Tamilnadu.

Student's questionnaires' to quantify screen time and behavioral health problem were identified by using strength and difficulty questionnaire which was completed by the student, teacher and parents.

Result

- Average screen time was 6.59 ± 1.24 hours in urban boys
- In rural boys the average screen time was 3.28 ± 0.17 hours.
- In urban girls the average screen time was 4.28 ± 0.49 hours.
- In rural girls the average screen time was 4.07 ± 0.44 hours.
- When usage of screen time exceeded 2 hours the urban boys have 13.24 times higher conduct problems than that of rural boy, 9.01 time higher hyper activity and peer problems, 4.86 time higher pro-social problems.
- Among the rural boys, when the usage of screen time was more than 2 hours, there was 13.57 times increased association between screen time and emotional problems while only a weak association with other parameters was observed.
- When screen time exceeded two hours in rural girls, there was **8.64 times increased association with conduct problems.**
- Whereas in urban girls, there was increased association with conduct problems, hyperactivity and peer problems.
- **77.5% of children use screens while having food.**

- 54.5% of children use screens in bedroom.
- 68% of family did not have a screen time policy.
- Urban children were found to have **significantly less sleep duration** than rural.

Conclusion

1. The average screen time in early and mid-adolescent exceeds the currently recommended duration of 2 hours / day.
2. The excess screen time is associated with increased behavioral problems.

Key words screen time, strengths and difficulty questionnaire, behavioral problems.