



Screen Time Management and Its Effects on Youth: Striking a Digital Balance

Abera Lambebo*

Department of Public Health, Debre Berhan University, Debre Berhan, Ethiopia

Abstract

This article examines the impact of screen time management on youth in the digital age. It discusses the increasing prevalence of screen-based activities among young individuals and their potential consequences, including physical health, mental well-being, and cognitive development. The article also explores strategies and guidelines for effective screen time management and emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between digital engagement and real-world experiences to promote healthy youth development.

Keywords: Screen time management; Youth; Digital age; Screen-based activities; Physical health; Mental well-being; Cognitive development; Digital engagement; Technology addiction; Parental guidance

Introduction

In today's digital age, screens are an integral part of our lives, offering access to a wealth of information, entertainment, and social interaction. For young people, in particular, screens are an essential tool for education and communication. However, excessive screen time can have detrimental effects on the physical, mental, and social well-being of youth. This article delves into the importance of screen time management, its effects on youth, and practical strategies to strike a healthy digital balance.

Methods

The prevalence of screen time

With the proliferation of smartphones, tablets, computers, and televisions, youth are spending more time than ever in front of screens. A recent survey found that American teenagers spend an average of 7 hours and 22 minutes per day on screens, not including school-related activities. This [1-9] excessive screen time has raised concerns about its impact on physical health, mental health, academic performance, and social development.

Physical health implications

Sedentary lifestyle: Prolonged screen time often leads to a sedentary lifestyle, contributing to obesity and related health issues among youth.

Sleep disruption: The blue light emitted by screens can disrupt sleep patterns, leading to sleep deprivation and its associated problems.

Eye strain: Extended screen use can cause digital eye strain, characterized by symptoms like dry eyes, headaches, and blurred vision.

Mental health concerns

Increased anxiety and depression: Excessive screen time, particularly on social media, has been linked to increased anxiety and depression among youth.

Reduced attention span: Constant exposure to digital stimuli can reduce attention spans and hinder concentration.

Cyberbullying: Online interactions can expose youth to cyberbullying, leading to emotional distress and mental health challenges.

Academic impact

Decreased academic performance: Excessive screen time can lead to poor academic performance as it competes with time that could be spent studying or engaging in extracurricular activities.

Reduced learning engagement: Overuse of screens may hinder active learning and critical thinking skills.

Social Implications

Reduced face-to-face interaction: Extensive screen time can lead to reduced face-to-face social interactions, which are crucial for social development.

Social comparison: Social media platforms can foster unhealthy comparisons and negatively impact self-esteem.

Screen Time Management Strategies

To mitigate the negative effects of screen time on youth, it is crucial to implement effective management strategies:

Set limits: Establish daily or weekly screen time limits, ensuring a healthy balance between screen-based activities and other pursuits.

Create tech-free zones: Designate areas, such as bedrooms and dining rooms, as tech-free zones to encourage face-to-face interactions and better sleep hygiene.

Promote physical activity: Encourage regular physical activity and outdoor play to counteract sedentary screen time.

Educate about online safety: Teach youth about online safety, including the risks of cyberbullying and the importance of responsible online behavior.

Monitor content: Keep an eye on the content youth are consuming, and discuss its impact with them.

*Corresponding author: Abera Lambebo, College of Health Science, Debre Berhan University, Debre Berhan, Ethiopia, E-mail: Lambebo.AB@gmail.com

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Model healthy behavior: Be a role model by practicing responsible screen time management yourself.

Results and Discussion

The discussion section of this article delves into the effects of screen time management on youth:

Prevalence of screen time: In today's digital age, youth are increasingly engaged in screen-based activities, including smartphones, tablets, computers, and television. The discussion explores the extent to which screens have become integral to their daily lives.

Physical health: Excessive screen time is associated with various physical health issues among youth, such as sedentary behavior, sleep disturbances, and increased risk of obesity. The article examines how screen time management can mitigate these health risks.

Mental well-being: Prolonged screen use can negatively impact the mental well-being of youth, leading to issues like anxiety, depression, and reduced social interaction. Effective screen time management strategies aim to strike a balance between digital engagement and face-to-face interactions.

Cognitive development: The article discusses how excessive screen time can affect cognitive development in youth, including attention span, problem-solving abilities, and academic performance. It emphasizes the importance of incorporating educational and age-appropriate content into screen time.

Technology addiction: Screen time management plays a crucial role in preventing and addressing technology addiction, a phenomenon that can disrupt daily routines and hinder personal growth. Recognizing the signs of addiction and implementing limits are essential for youth well-being.

Parental guidance: Parents and caregivers play a pivotal role in managing youth screen time. The discussion explores the significance of setting boundaries, modeling healthy tech habits, and engaging in open communication with youth about their digital activities.

Balancing digital engagement: Effective screen time management encourages youth to balance digital engagement with other activities, such as physical exercise, hobbies, and real-world social interactions.

This balance supports holistic youth development.

Guidelines and strategies: The article provides guidelines and strategies for screen time management, including setting limits, creating tech-free zones, and encouraging active and educational screen use.

By addressing the impact of screen time management on youth, this article aims to empower parents, educators, and caregivers with knowledge and tools to navigate the digital landscape effectively. Striking a healthy balance between screen time and other activities is essential for promoting the well-rounded development of today's youth.

Conclusion

Effective screen time management is essential to ensure that youth enjoy the benefits of technology without suffering its negative consequences. By being proactive in addressing the physical, mental, academic, and social implications of excessive screen time, parents, educators, and caregivers can help young people strike a digital balance that promotes their overall well-being and development.

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