The background features a dark grey field with a pattern of small, multi-colored dots (blue, green, purple) that create a sense of depth. In the top-left and bottom-left corners, there are stylized, 3D-looking geometric shapes in white and light green. The title text is centered in a large, white, sans-serif font.

The Impact on Mental Health due to Increased use of Technology during Covid

Lena Jogie, MSc.



What we will cover

- How Covid affected mental health worldwide
- Impacts of COVID-19 in Digital Transformation/technology
- The Impact on Mental Health due to Increased use of Technology during Covid
- How we can minimize the negative impact

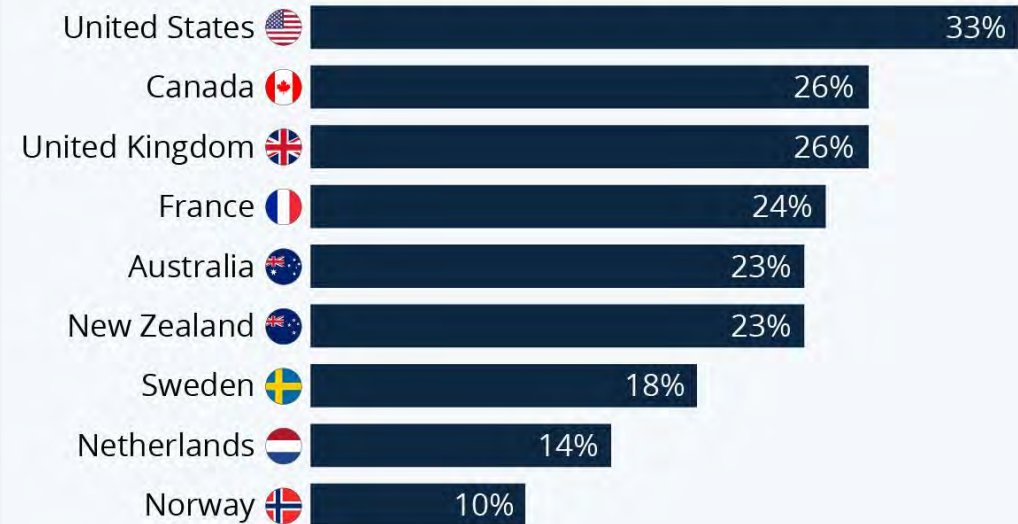
Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health

- Grief - who have lost loved ones
- Unease at losing job and economic security
- Frustration of lockdowns
- Challenges of working from home while taking care of kids
- Fear of contracting the disease

have all taken the toll on mental health

Covid-19's Widespread Impact On Mental Health

Share of adults who experienced stress, anxiety or sadness that was difficult to cope with alone during the pandemic



n=8,259 (February to June 2020)
Source: The Commonwealth Fund



statista

Impacts of COVID-19 in Digital Transformation (2021)

Positive

- 1) COVID-19 was a driver of digital transformation
- 2) Technology, automation, and collaboration (TAC) is the most positive significant factor which enables work from anywhere (WFA) (or work from home) arrangements and also leads to
- 3) Work-life balance (WLB)

Impacts of COVID-19 in Digital Transformation (2021)

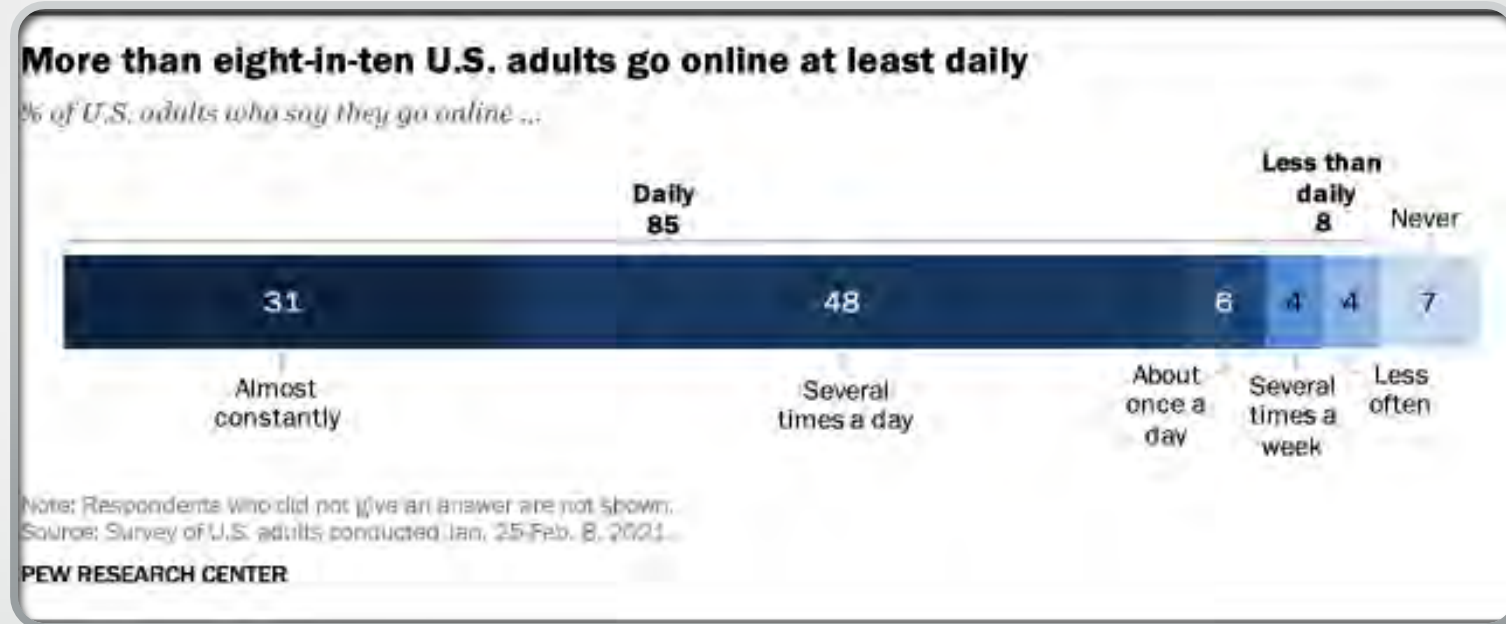
Negative

- 1) No work-life balance (NWL)
- 2) Social employment issues (SEI), and
- 3) Data security and technology issues (DST)



Increased use of Technology

- According to a 2019 survey, 28% of American adults said they were “almost constantly” online, up from 21% in 2015.
- About three-in-ten U.S. adults say they are ‘almost constantly’ online
- About half of young adults ages 18 to 29 said they go online “almost constantly.” This is 9 percentage points higher than it was in 2018.



THE HEALTH COST

+++++++ of ++++++

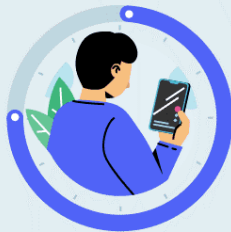
SCREEN TIME

Millions of social media and TikTok obsessed millennials spend endless hours a day scrolling on their devices across the world - but what are the long term effects of the internet on our health? Lenstore has analysed the health costs of spending time online and how to reduce it.

HOW COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED OUR SCREEN TIME

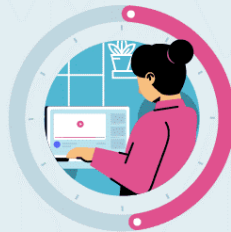
Spending more time on devices has drastically increased on a global scale

**Based on a survey to 16-24 years olds in April 2020 by We Are Social and Hootsuite*



76%

of people spend more time on mobile phones



45%

of people spend more time on laptops



34%

of people spend more time watching TV



22%

of people spend more time on tablets

<https://startups magazine.co.uk>

The Impact on Mental Health due to Increased use of Technology during Covid

- During Covid, digital technology provided avenues to connect.
- In a 2019 study, Michigan State researchers found adults who used social media were less likely to experience psychosocial distress, (related to depression and anxiety).

<https://www.frontiersin.org/>
<https://www.healthline.com/>

The Impact on Mental Health due to Increased use of Technology during Covid

- However - over indulgence or overuse of digital devices can be harmful in the long-term.
- Looking at screens for several hours per day can worsen a person's mood.
- Researchers in a 2019 study found that adults who watched TV or used a computer for more than 6 hours per day were more likely to experience moderate to severe depression.

Impact on Physical and Mental Health

Excessive screen time has adverse health effects in long run such as:

- physical health symptoms - eye strain, sleep disturbance, carpal tunnel syndrome, neck pain
- mental health problems - difficulties in concentration, to diagnosable mental illness such as anxiety, depression and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder

Impact of Increased Screen Time on Mental Health

- The constant connectivity may actually be making us feel disconnected.
- Screens are taking us away from the real relationships in our lives.

<https://www.healthline.com/>

Impact of Increased Screen Time on Young Persons' Health

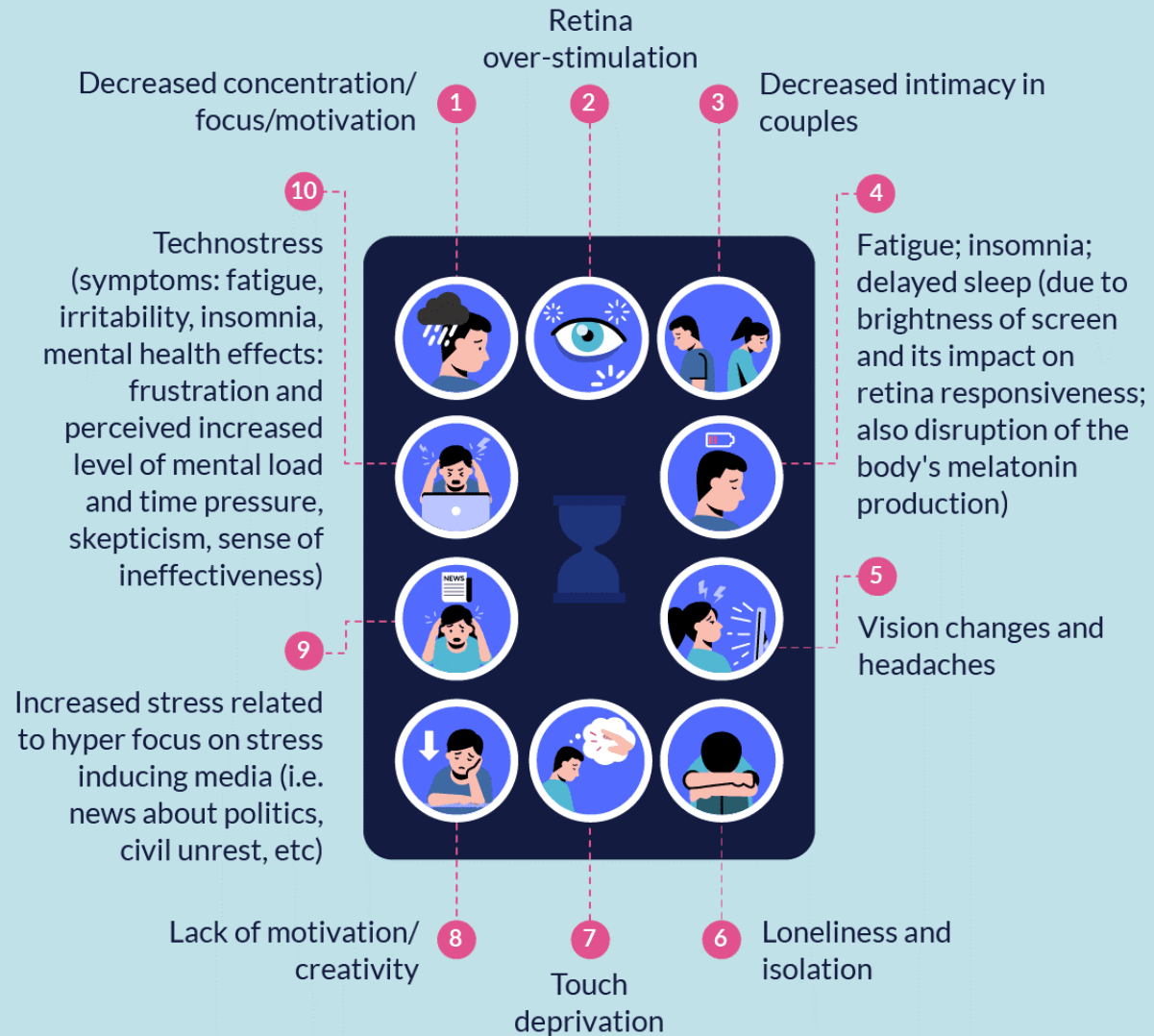
- As of 25 April 2020, around 1.5 billion children were out of school.
- Children and youth showed lowered physical activity levels, less outdoor time, higher sedentary behaviour that included leisure screen time and more sleep during the coronavirus outbreak.
- The two crucial negative impacts of screen time on the physical health of children & adolescents
 - sleep problems
 - increased risk of myopia

Impact of Increased Screen Time on Young Persons' Health

- ADHD symptoms
- Impaired Emotional and Social Intelligence
- Social Isolation
- Phantom Vibration syndrome
- Depression, Anxiety
- Gaming Disorder, Gambling

<https://www.frontiersin.org/>

THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS YOUR DEVICES ARE HAVING ON YOUR HEALTH



How We Can Minimize The Negative Impact



‘Zoom Fatigue’ -4 Primary reasons why video chats fatigue us

1. Excessive amounts of close-up eye contact is highly intense.

Solution:

Take Zoom out of the full-screen option and reducing the size of the Zoom window relative to the monitor to minimize face size, and to use an external keyboard to allow an increase in the personal space bubble between oneself and the grid.

‘Zoom Fatigue’ -4 Primary reasons why video chats fatigue us

2. Seeing yourself during video chats constantly in real-time is fatiguing.

Solution:

Use the “hide self-view” button, which one can access by right-clicking their own photo, once they see their face is framed properly in the video.

‘Zoom Fatigue’ -4 Primary reasons why video chats fatigue us

3. Video chats dramatically reduce our usual mobility.

Solution:

Use the room to help create distance or flexibility.

Turning one’s video off periodically during meetings is a good ground rule to set for groups, just to give oneself a brief nonverbal rest.

‘Zoom Fatigue’ -4 Primary reasons why video chats fatigue us

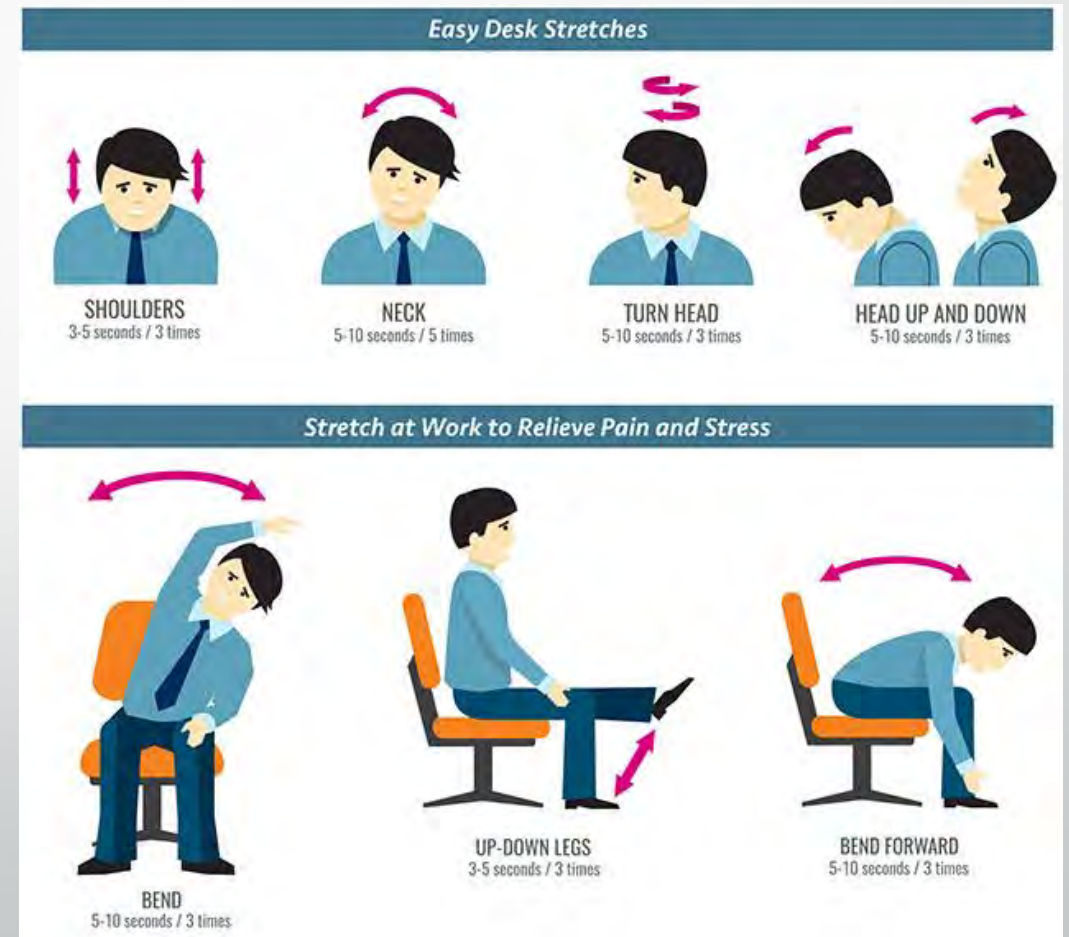
4. The cognitive load is much higher in video chats.

Solution:

Audio only break. Turn body away from screen

Managing Screen Time at Work

- Short breaks - Get up, walk around
- Break up screen work with other activities such as telephone work, faxing, filing, photocopying, scanning, making tea, etc.
- Lunch - Avoid eating at your desk
- Stretches – Legs, arms, back
- Eye breaks/exercises - Blink
- Tools to track screen time, timers

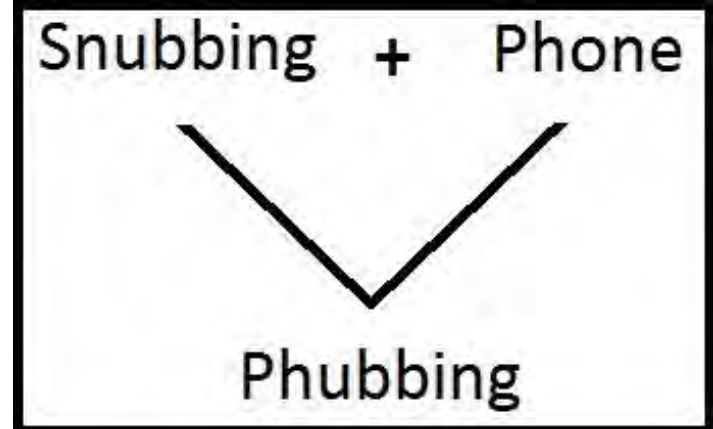


Managing Screen Time at Home

- Stay or get active during screen time e.g. stretch, treadmill, exercise videos
- Digital free family time – indoor games, board games, mealtimes
- Set rules e.g. no screens when having a meal
- Adults model good habits

Managing Screen Time

- Audio calls
- Voice note option
- Give up phone phubbing and connecting with people around
- Proactively be in touch with friends and relatives.
- Mobile applications for promoting digital wellbeing.



HOW TO MINIMIZE YOUR SCREEN TIME

++++ According to Health Experts +++++

4-6 hrs max

1

Set a screen time maximum per day (4-6 hrs max where possible with work schedule).

2

Plan screen free activities a few times a week (even if they are in the house, such as game night).

3

Take media breaks for 1-2 days a week outside of work related hours to reconnect with human contact and relationships.

4

Turn down the brightness of screens or stop screen use to improve readiness for sleep 1-2 hours before bedtime.

5

Use blue light protective glasses while using screens.

6

Remove notifications.

7

Always ask 'why?' when you're about to pick up your phone.

8

Set app limits: screen time feature on iPhone, Google Android – Digital Wellbeing.

9

Use the dark or grey mode settings to limit blue light.

10

Seek professional help if you feel it is a serious problem impacting on your mental health and physical health.

Screens at bedtime

- Sleep deprivation is related to mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression.
- One study from 2014 shows that the use of screens before going to bed can disrupt sleep cycles, in part by suppressing melatonin.
- Smartphones have blue light that is emitting from the screen, which is tricky and damaging if you do that at nighttime, because it may trick your brain into the belief that it is still daytime.

Sleep Hygiene Tips

- Relaxing rituals to wind down– decaf tea, warm bath, light snack, few minutes of reading, calming music
- Avoid screens 1-2 hours before bed, Choose print
- Routine - Get up at the same time every morning
- Regular schedule - Regular times for meals, medications, chores, and other activities help keep the inner body clock running smoothly.
- Avoid caffeine after lunch or late in the day
- Do not go to bed hungry, but don't eat a big meal near bedtime either.
- Bedroom - quiet, dark, and a little bit cool.
- Use your bed for sleeping only. If possible, do your chatting, gaming, work and TV watching elsewhere.

Excessive Gaming

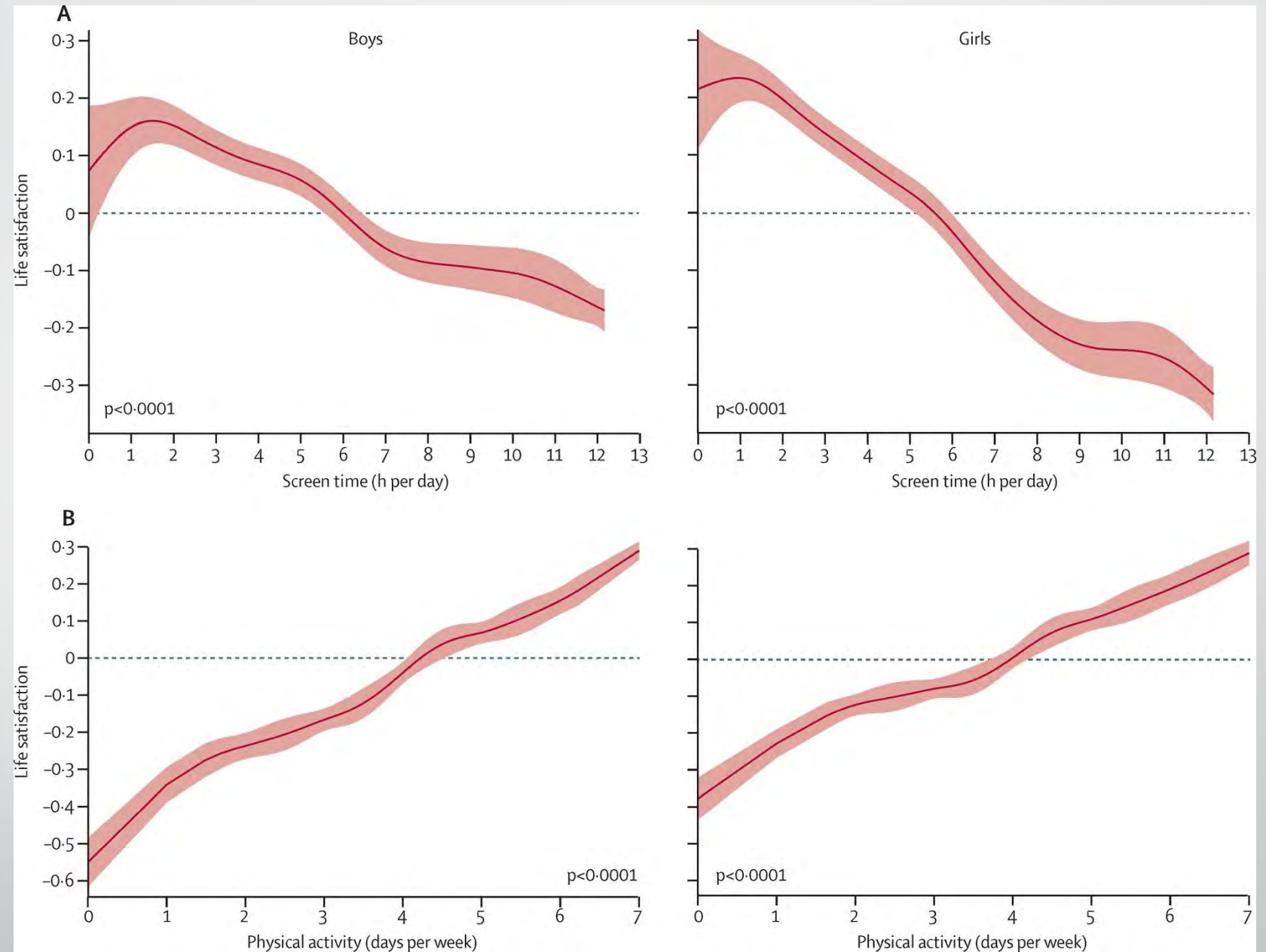
Signs of excessive screen time or gaming

- Affects a person's ability to focus and complete (school) tasks.
- Negatively impacts relationships with family and peers.
- Takes priority over the basic functions such as eating, sleeping, personal hygiene and exercise.
- Causes significant changes in a person's mood or ability to control outbursts (e.g. physical aggression) when asked to stop.
- Can encourage migration to gambling as some games have gambling-like elements.

Parents and Caregivers to manage excessive screen time or gaming

- Empower children with information about how to use internet safely.
- Set clear rules and boundaries about screen time and how, when and where they can use the Internet.
- Create a balance between online and offline activities.
- Watching television and doing online activities vs cooking together, reading, board games, arts and crafts, dancing, and exercising.
- Install the latest software updates and antivirus programmes on device(s), set the privacy settings to “high” and activate parental control features especially for younger children.
- Maintain regular sleep routines for children and encourage healthy eating.

Screen time and Physical Activity



Go outside!



Ideas to Get Children Outdoors

choose your favorite



BLOW
BUBBLES



PLAY BALL



DECORATE
ROCKS



FLY KITES



MAKE A BIRD
FEEDER



RIDE BIKES OR
SCOOTERS



DO MESSY ARTS
AND CRAFTS



PLANT
FLOWERS



PREPARE A
PICNIC LUNCH



BUILD CARDBOARD
FORTS



HAVE A WATER
BALLOON FIGHT



FORM A
FAMILY BAND



BIRD WATCH OR GO
ON A BUG HUNT



GO ON A
SCAVENGER HUNT



MAKE AN
OBSTACLE COURSE



DRAW WITH
SIDEWALK CHALK

@biglifejournal

Thank you!



References

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- Excessive screen use and gaming considerations during #COVID19 <http://www.emro.who.int/mnh/news/considerations-for-young-people-on-excessive-screen-use-during-covid19.html>
- Dose-dependent and joint associations between screen time, physical activity, and mental wellbeing in adolescents: an international observational study (2021) [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642\(21\)00200-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(21)00200-5/fulltext)

| Recommendations | Description | Reference |
|--|--|--|
| Digital detox or digital well-being | It entails taking in between breaks and adopting healthier digital practices to curtain digital toxicity | Stavridou et al. (2021) |
| Intermittent social fasting | Avoiding using social media while working so that one gets the break for extra screen time eventually contributing to a good balance of work-life | Qin et al. (2020) |
| Promoting physical activities | In times where screen time is unavoidable, one can be digitally online and engage in physical activities through platforms such as online physical activity classes, online yoga, exercise mobile applications, or video games that have a physical activity component | Colley et al. (2020), Qin et al. (2020), Rolland et al. (2020), World Health Organization, (2020), Stavridou et al. (2021) |
| Staying active during screen time | Have an active time in front of the screen time where one could stretch or do exercises while sitting or standing to cut the stagnancy of long screen time | World Health Organization (2020) |
| Family digital detox or Digital free family time | Ensuring free time off digital devices as a family can not only reinforce staying away from digital technology but can also build healthier spaces for family members to interact. Making meal times with family is one of the easier ways to practice this | American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2020), Winther and Byrne (2020) |

| Recommendations | Description | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Modelled digital well- being | There is a need for responsible adults to model digital well-being for the younger pupil so that it can be inculcated as a habit. Observational learning is impactful | American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2020) |
| Set screen time limits | Fix a total number of hours of screen time and consciously try to reduce this by cutting down half-an-hour each day. Alternatively, track your time spent online, the activities you indulge in as well as your feelings after a few hours of screen-time | Ramirez et al. (2011), Amin et al. (2020), Colley et al. (2020) |
| Dumb phones | Using phones that enable voice calls only and do not allow the extra distractions of the smartphones. This can help reduce social anxiety and better engagement with people around | Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare (2021) |
| Use alternatives to screen | Choose activities such as walking, cycling, dancing, reading print books, magazines, etc that can be done without a digital screen | Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare (2021) |
| Active listening while screen use | Work on attentive listening skills by becoming aware of real-life surroundings while you are interacting virtually | Wiederhold (2020) |
| Indoor games | Indoor games can be promoted to engage a family across ages | Gupta (2020) |
| Use of digital platforms for promoting healthy lifestyles and seeking mental health care services | Digital platforms can be used to promote healthy habits and learning opportunities such as learning dance, language, attending yoga sessions and educational webinars (avoiding the rather pandemic of a webinar). There is also access to mental health information as well as consultation (reliable resources like that by the government, medical bodies, UN or WHO should be considered) | Lodha and De Sousa (2020), World Health Organization (2020) |