



THE EXCESSIVE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND THE INCREASE IN MENTAL DISORDERS IN ADOLESCENTS: AN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The excessive use of electronic devices by adolescents has been increasingly frequent, being associated with a variety of negative effects on mental health. The objective of this study is to review the current literature on the relationship between screen time and the increase in mental disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms among adolescents. As a methodology instrument, a bibliographic review is carried out, based on articles published on the digital platforms Scielo and PubMed; containing the terms: "screen time", "mental health", "adolescence". This study resulted in prolonged time in activities such as social networks, online games and videos is correlated with worse indicators of psychological well-being, especially when use exceeds the two to three hours a day recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) for this age group. A cross-sectional survey of 3,826 adolescents conducted in the United States indicated that those who spent more than five hours a day on electronic devices were 71% more likely to develop severe depressive symptoms compared to those who used devices for less than two hours. In addition, a meta-analysis of global studies demonstrated a dose-response relationship, where adolescents with longer exposure time to digital screens exhibited a higher prevalence of anxiety and sleep disorders. The mechanism of this association may be related to sleep deprivation, decreased face-to-face social interactions, and the negative psychological impact of consumed content, such as cyberbullying, and the pressure to achieve unrealistic living standards propagated on social media. It is concluded that the data suggest that awareness strategies about the healthy use of electronic devices and early interventions are necessary to reduce the risks to the mental health of adolescents.

Keywords: Mental health, Screen time, Adolescence, Epidemiology.

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