

Study of relationship between time spent in cyberspace & visual media and mental health problems of children and adolescents aged 6 to 14 in corona virus period in Ardabil

Abstract:

Background: Children and youth's time spent in front of screens – such as televisions, computers, tablets, gaming consoles, and smartphones – continues to increase . This pervasive sedentary behavior has raised concerns among parents, health care professionals, educators, and researchers about the effects of screen time on young people's well-being.

Aim: The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between the time of using Cyberspace and visual media with the mental health of children and adolescents aged 6 to 14 years during the Corona era. Today, the increase in the use of virtual space and visual media has increased the concerns about children's mental health, and this study has been done in this direction.

Materials and methods: The present study was a cross-sectional study that was conducted descriptively and analytically on the population of children and adolescents aged 4 to 16 in Ardabil city. The sample size was 486 to collect data from 110 questions of questionnaire . This questionnaire was used to evaluate mental and behavioral disorders of children and adolescents based on DSM4. Also, another questionnaire was designed to determine the time spent in cyberspace. These questionnaires were filled by parents. The data was refined in Excel and then analyzed in STATA version 16 software. Correlation and regression tests were used to determine the relationship between the time spent in cyberspace and mental disorders.

Results: A statistically significant difference can be seen between the amount of time spent using various types of visual media before and during the covid-19 pandemic (all $P < 0.0001$). A positive correlation between the duration of "chatting in messenger applications" and "video calling" and "using social networks such as Instagram and Twitter" and "using offline computer games without the need for the Internet" and " Watching video on YouTube and..." is seen with increasing scores of psychiatric disorder ($P < 0.0001$, $P < 0.0001$, $P = 0.001$, $P = 0.041$, and $P = 0.019$) and negative correlation can be seen between the duration of "using SHAD messenger for academic matters" with the increase in psychiatric disorder scores ($P < 0.0001$). Also, there is no correlation between the duration of "using online and group computer games" with the increase in psychiatric disorder scores. ($P = 0.127$).

Conclusion: The results of this research shows a significant increase in the use of visual media and cyberspace in the corona era and the relationship between each type of visual media and cyberspace with anxiety and mood and behavioral disorders and ADHD. The use of visual media and cyberspace can aggravate these disorders.

Keywords: behavioral disorders, visual media, cyberspace, Corona ,ADHD