

Risk associated with internet among adolescents

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Abstract

Internet has become very important medium for information, education, communication and social life. Adolescence is a period from of considered a phase of; Internet has both positive and negative aspects. Excessive uses of internet have more negative influences on the life of adolescents and is risky for them. Adolescents who spend more and more time on internet, lack interest in physical activities face many health problems like obesity, underweight, headache, eye dryness, laziness and also certain psychological problems like anxiety, stress and depression. Thus to annul the adverse influences of internet in this highly productive and potential stage of life. Supervised and controlled use of internet should be ensured.

Introduction

In the present era, Internet has become an important medium for education, communication, information sharing, and personal growth of every individual including adolescents. Especially, among adolescents, Internet communication applications have become popular and important context for their development. Along with its uses, these platforms are leading to many risk-taking behaviors among adolescents.

The term adolescent has a broader meaning. It includes mental, emotional, and social maturity as well as physical maturity. According to Peterson adolescence starts from the age of 12-18 years, or from completion of primary school up to graduation level. In this study, adolescents are defined from 12 to 18 years age group. Many biological changes take place during the adolescent years. Physical changes such as increase in height, weight, body proportions, and the development of secondary sexual characteristics are common. Along with these physical changes wide spectrum of endocrine changes (gonadarche and adrenarche), including hormones that affect gonadal maturation and the production of gonadal sex steroids also takes place. The growth spurt during early and mid-adolescence is regulated by the complex, inter-related production of a number of hormones. Traditionally, adolescence has been thought of as a period of “storm and stress”-a time of heightened emotional tension resulting from the physical and glandular changes that are taking place.

Positive and negative impact of internet

Internet has developed dramatically and its use has spread to all the fields and age groups. Adolescents are not exceptional from the use of Internet. The rapid growth of Internet communication and its potential to change the way one could communicate and gather information has brought both positive and negative impact. So the positive impact of internet uses involve any information reaching very fast to any part of the world; individuals worldwide could communicate without distinctions of nationality, race, gender, class; variety of information is available on the internet helps other fields' research effectively. On the negative side, one can access information that can be distracting, faulty and risky, which may lead to self and social harm. In the Internet has been defined as “one goes beyond the normal use of the Internet and takes risk which may threaten one's personal growth, safety and interpersonal relationships.” There is no doubt that the growing popularity of Internet communication applications among adolescents has become an important social context for their development. Though wealth of information is available on the Internet, the misuse of this is becoming more evident among adolescents. Studies report that adolescents access pornography, hate and terrorism related sites, and they are vulnerable to sexual solicitation and predation, cyber-bullying, and harassment.

A number of studies report that internet use will have an impact on adolescent's sexual activities. A study reported that it is common for adolescents to get inadvertently exposed to sexual content on using internet especially while surfing the net, or on opening e-mails or clicking on links in e-mail and most of these occur while surfing at home. Exposure to sexually implicit content on the internet is likely to lead to early initiation of sexual activity among adolescents, which may influence their academic performance greatly.

Serious health issues

The increasing use and importance of the Internet among teens, has gradually lead those who deal with the health in professional level, to address the serious health effects possibly related to this activity. Recently, it has proven a close link between mental and physical health problems and excessive Internet use by teenagers. Anxiety disorders, depression, suicidal ideation are some of the symptoms experienced by teenagers who use too much the Internet. Teenagers who spend a significant amount of time at internet online, it is known that often experience physical problems such as headaches and musculoskeletal pain. All these are the results of lack of muscle contractions, lack of physical activity, exercise, and training. Another problem reported by internet users is the reduction of sleep time, because young people use the internet quite often late and sometimes overnight. Moreover, as it is well known that obesity is a critical risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, longitudinal studies have shown that there is an increased Body Mass Index (BMI) among teenagers who spend many hours online daily online. Therefore, they do not have time to deal with the physical activity and sport. The studies that have been published, however, tend to focus only on the

excessive use of the internet by young people, and some of them have no correlations with negative results in the short or normal use of the Internet.

Lower school grades

Problematic internet use has been suggested to be related to lower school grades. In an earlier prospective study, internet overuse and school burnout were shown to reciprocally affect each other. In addition to the distraction from schoolwork and the relative shortage of time for academic activities caused by internet overuse, socioeconomic factors such as income, parental education level, and region of residence; psychological factors including stress; and physical factors such as medication use, smoking and alcohol use may mediate the effects of internet use on school performance. These potential confounding factors should therefore be considered when exploring the associations between internet use and school performance. Therefore, there have been attempts to assess the problematic internet use considering social and emotional factors in adolescents.

Many studies focused on extreme cases of internet use, identifying adverse psychological and behavioral outcomes due to problematic internet use. However, internet provides easy accessible diverse contents, it was predicted that appropriate use of internet, in aspects of its purpose as well as using time could assist education in adolescents.

Internet use and adolescents health

According to Beranger et al a U-shaped relationship was found between intensity of internet use and poorer mental health of adolescents. In a study by Long and Chen on the internet usage had shown an impact on four dimensions of Identity development (avoidance decision-making, identity formation, self-reflection, and ego strength or fidelity). Research by Moreno and Kolb has shown that approximately half of all adolescents' social networking site profiles contain references to risky health behaviors such as violence, sexual activity, and substance abuse. Owens et al., in their research review paper, discussed that early exposure to pornography and antisocial behavior resulted in a distorted view of sexuality and the glorification of promiscuity and several other psychological problems. Wolak et al.'s survey reflected similar results. Li et al. reveal that excessive internet use leads to interrupted sleep and sleep disturbances. Bedtime resistance and sleep anxiety were most affected by the presence of internet in the bedroom. The centers for disease control and prevention defines electronic aggression as any type of harassment or bullying (teasing, telling lies, spreading rumors, making rude and mean comments, making threatening, or aggressive comments) that occurs through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, blogs, text messaging or videos, and photos posted on website or sent via cell phone. According to a recent article in Times of India, a study conducted among 1422 children and adolescents across seven states of India revealed that one in three Indian children and adolescents had experienced the pain of being bullied online, while half had come across peers who have faced cyber bullying.

Conclusion

The study shows the risk associated with internet it also discuss and effect of internet.

- Internet is beneficial for everyone but excessive use can create risk in adolescents. Many health problems like gaining weight, low body weight, headaches, back pain, eye dryness, and tingling in finger found in adolescents.
- Excessive use of internet creates poorer mental health of adolescents and showed some symptoms like forgetting things, over dependency of internet.
- Adolescents showed risky health behaviors such as violence, sexual activity and substance abuse.
- Routine pattern, sleeping pattern was disturbed because excessive use of internet.
- Excessive internet use has been showed that lower school grade.

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