

Research Paper :

Trends of internet use among adolescents: Impact on physical health

NAMITA TOMAR AND J.K. GULATI

Received : December, 2010; Accepted : January, 2011

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to assess the trends of internet use among the adolescents and its impact on their physical health. The sample comprised of 120 adolescents in 14 to 16 years of age range, purposively selected from four private Senior Secondary Schools of Ludhiana city. A self-structured questionnaire was used to assess the trends of internet use among the adolescents and to assess the physical health, a standardised tool was used. Data were scored, tabulated and analysed with the objectives to arrive at meaningful and relevant inferences. Percentages, means, t test, Z test, Chi square, and correlations were used to analyse the data. Results revealed that, frequency and degree of internet use was significantly higher among males as compared to females. Majority of adolescents spent 2-4 hours a day on internet. The prevalence of different types of physical health problems was higher among females as compared to males. The association between internet use and physical health problems was positively significant for urinary problems (such as frequent urination during day and night) and fatigability.

See end of the article for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to:

NAMITA TOMAR
Department of Home
Science, Punjab Agricultural
University
LUDHIANA (PUNJAB)
INDIA
namita1509@gmail.com

Tomar, Namita and Gulati, J.K. (2011). Trends of internet use among adolescents: Impact on physical health. *Asian J. Home Sci.*, 6(1): 16-21.

Key words : Trends of internet use, Physical health, Adolescents

Internet is a network connection between several computers of different types belonging to various networks all over the globe. It is a network of networks (Sethi, 2006). Internet adoption in homes has grown rapidly since 1990s. The internet is quickly and widely diffusing in our society, as both parents and children find themselves e-mailing, web-messaging, and listening to music and reading the news of the worldwide web. Adolescents use it mainly for the purpose of communication through e-mails, orkut and also gaining general information through web sites (Tewari, 2007).

It is the 21st century's gateway to opportunity for the youth. The rate of computer and internet as a means for socialisation, education, information access, entertainment, shopping and communication is increasingly dramatically in the life of youth (Tewari, 2007). It has transformed the contour of daily life by blurring the boundaries between the globes and presenting new channels for communication and interaction, allowing more and more everyday task to be carried out online (Sawyer *et al.*, 2005).

The increasing pervasiveness of the internet in the lives of adolescents is though well established, but there remains a dearth of research on what is the effect of

excess internet use on the health of the children and adolescents. An excessive use of internet is significantly related to health problems (Lenciauskiene and Apolinaras, 2007). There is a systematic research on physical effects of children's internet use is lacking, thus far, but insight can be gained from several sources. According to Granovetter (1986) research focussing on the physical risks of playing computer games is important, given that games remains the most frequent home computer activity for children across most age group. Subrahmanyam *et al.* (2001) have revealed that more and more kids are becoming victims of stress and this negative stress manifests itself in physical problems like vomiting, breathlessness, headache, abdominal pain, dry cough and tiredness, unmanaged negative stress, obesity and lack of physical activity are the major risk factors responsible for heart attack in later life.

There are several websites on internet which are not only exposing the youngsters to an alarming problems, it also has both physical and mental impact. Internet addicted persons succumb to depression very easily. Since they lack interaction within the society, they can't discuss their problems with anyone else (Kraut and Attewell, 1998). Keeping in view, the above discussion the present