

Relationships between Screen Time, Internet Addiction and Other Lifestyle Behaviors with Obesity among Secondary School Students in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

Authors : Ozen Asut, Gulifeiya Abuduxike, Imge Begendi, Mustafa O. Canatan, Merve Colak, Gizem Ozturk, Lara Tasan, Ahmed Waraiet, Songul A. Vaizoglu, Sanda Cali

Abstract : Obesity among children and adolescents is one of the critical public health problems worldwide. Internet addiction is one of the sedentary behaviors that cause obesity due to the excessive screen time and reduced physical activities. We aimed to examine the relationships between the screen time, internet addiction and other lifestyle behaviors with obesity among high school students in the Near East College in Nicosia, Northern Cyprus. A cross-sectional study conducted among 469 secondary school students, mean age 11.95 (SD, 0.81) years. A self-administrated questionnaire was applied to assess the screen time and lifestyle behaviors. The Turkish adopted version of short-form of internet addiction test was used to assess internet addiction problems. Height and weight were measured to calculate BMI and classified based on the BMI percentiles for sex and age. Descriptive analysis, Chi-Square test, and multivariate regression analysis were done. Of all, 17.2% of the participants were overweight and obese, and 18.1% had internet addictions, while 40.7% of them reported having screen time more than two hours. After adjusting the analysis for age and sex, eating snacks while watching television (OR, 3.04; 95% CI, 1.28-7.21), self-perceived body weight (OR, 24.9; 95% CI, 9.64-64.25) and having a play station in the room (OR, 4.6; 95% CI, 1.85 - 11.42) were significantly associated with obesity. Screen time (OR, 4.68; 95% CI, 2.61-8.38; p=0.000) and having a computer in bedroom (OR, 1.7; 95% CI, 1.01- 2.87; p=0.046) were significantly associated with internet addiction, whereas parent's compliant regarding the lengthy technology use (OR, 0.23; 95% CI, 0.11-0.46; p=0.000) was found to be a protective factor against internet addiction. Prolonged screen time, internet addiction, sedentary lifestyles, and reduced physical and social activities are interrelated, multi-dimensional factors that lead to obesity among children and adolescents. A family - school-based integrated approach should be implemented to tackle obesity problems.

Keywords : adolescents, internet addiction, lifestyle, Northern Cyprus, obesity, screen time

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