

Is the Growing Use of Technology Having a Positive or Negative Effect on the Health of Children and Adolescents? Current Research, Evidence and Future Directions

Abstract

This research paper sought to analyse the growing use of technology by children and adolescents in order to identify any correlations between negative impacts on health and positive impacts on health. In order to answer the main research question, the term 'health' was dissected into three themed chapters each exploring the effects both positive and negative on physical health, mental health and social wellbeing. These three chapters were drawn from the definition of health as stated within the research papers introduction chapter. Each of these themed chapters were explored in order to aid in answering the main research question of the paper.

In order to answer the research question as well as the questions presented within the themed chapters, this research paper focused on pre-existing material and previous studies which were peer-reviewed and relevant towards this paper. The data was collected via databases using key terms which were related towards topics such as technology, health, children and adolescents. The relevant information was then extracted and analysed within each themed chapter. The extraction considered literature published on or after 2016 in order to ensure reliability within the paper, as well as excluding those over-18 in order to fit the research question.

The research conducted showed that, with regards to physical health, increased screen-time was linked to high rates of sedentary lifestyle behaviours which can ultimately lead to weight gain and an increased risk of developing metabolic syndrome. The research gathered shows that technology through the means of mHealth (mobile health) can aid in physical activity, yet the field of mHealth is still developing and such devices just be tailored more towards children and adolescents in order to see more usage which in turn could lead to increased physical activity. The research also showed that negative mental health and wellbeing implications were also linked to increased screen time, yet the usage of social media can have more of a positive effect on children and adolescents through entertainment and humour. Connections with family and friends proved to be beneficial towards social wellbeing and mental health, yet increased gaming was seen to be linked to family withdrawals and education withdrawals which affected social wellbeing negatively. Those who gamed frequently were shown to prioritise gaming over family activities as well as self-care.

The research identified that, whilst technology can indeed have a positive effect on the social wellbeing, physical health and mental health of children and adolescents

thus aiding in their overall health, more negatives were identified which were linked to high usage of such devices. Thus meaning that technology itself is not the catalyst of the negative implications, but the amount of time spent using it. The implications of the study could be used to further explore mHealth in relation to children and adolescents, as well as exploring screen-time limits or recommendations which are more presented and clear for parents and adolescents. In relation to mHealth, gamification can be explored further as research showed it could have benefits in this field.

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		
	15	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		
	30	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
	30	
4. Practical Application Skills		
	10	
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		
	15	

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		%
	Up to 1 week late (40% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		