Daily internet time: towards an evidence-based recommendation?

# Details

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2942 adolescents

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Other

## Other Stakeholder Implication

Family and Children welfares, Public and private digital literacy initiatives

# Abstract

Background: Since 2001, a recommendation of no more than 2 h per day of screen time for children 2 years of age
or older was adopted in many countries. However, this recommendation was rarely examined empirically. The
goal of the present study was to question this recommendation in today’s connected world. Methods: We used
data from the ado@internet.ch survey (spring 2012), a representative sample of 8th graders in the Canton of Vaud,
Switzerland (n = 2942, 50.6% female). Internet use, health outcomes, substance use, well-being and sociodemographic
characteristics were considered. Bi-variate statistical analyses were performed. Results: All
outcomes were significantly associated with the time spent on internet, more time being associated with a
higher prevalence of adverse consequences. Youth spending on average one more hour on Internet per day
than the reference category (1.5–2.5 h) did not differ in terms of adverse health outcomes. Differences began
to appear on sleeping problems, tobacco use, alcohol misuse, cannabis use and sport inactivity with youth
spending between 3.5 h and 4.5 h per day on internet. Conclusions: This study demonstrates the absence of
justification for setting a limit to only 2 h of screen time per day. Significant effects on health seem to appear
only beyond 4 h per day and there may be benefits for those who spend less than an hour and a half on internet.

# Outcome

This study demonstrates the absence of justification for setting a limit to only 2 h of screen time per day. Significant effects on health seem to appear only beyond 4 h per day and there may be benefits for those who spend less than an hour and a half on internet.