International trends in electronic media communication among 11- to 15-year-olds in 30 countries from 2002 to 2010: association with ease of communication with friends of the opposite sex

# Keywords

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## Sample

404 523 students (49% boys; 33% 11-year-olds, 34% 13-year-olds, 33% 15-year-olds) from 30 European and North American regions (Data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) surveys

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Background: Electronic media has become a central part of the lives of adolescents. Therefore, this study examines trends in adolescent electronic media communication (EMC) and its relationship with ease of communication with friends of the opposite sex, from 2002 to 10 in 30 European and North American regions. Methods: Data from the HBSC study were collected using self-report questionnaires from 11-, 13- and 15-year-old participants (N= 404 523). Results: EMC use has grown over the years in most of these regions and increases with age. Even though Internet usage is often blamed for its negative effects on teenagers’ social interactions in the physical world, in this study EMC was found to predict ease of communication with friends. Especially, the more they use EMC, the easier they
find it to talk with friends of the opposite sex. Although these findings suggest that EMC reinforces communication, the interaction between year (2002–2006–2010) and EMC usage was not significant. Conclusion: This finding contradicts research that suggests that EMC contributes to loneliness and isolation, and supports other studies that present electronic media as a powerful tool for helping to connect people.

# Outcome

"Findings indicate that EMC is widely used among adolescents in European and North American regions. EMC is more frequently used among 15-year-olds than 11-year-olds. Growth in EMC between 2002 and 10 was observed in the majority of regions…It was found that the more teenagers use EMC, the easier it is for them to talk to friends of the opposite sex….The general model showed no influence of year on the interaction between EMC and ease of communication with friends of the opposite sex, except for the years 2002–06.... Meaning that, despite the growth in EMC, communication with friends appears to remain stable over the years with no apparent negative influence
of EMC." (Boniel-Nissim et al., 2015, p. 44)