Comparative study shows differences in screen exposure, sleep patterns and sleep disturbances between Jewish and Muslim children in Israel

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## Authors

Tzischinsky O.;Haimov I.

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## Sample

The participants were 1049 third and fourth graders – aged 7.5 to 11 – with a mean age of 9.2± 0.7 years. Of those, 550 were Jewish children, whose main language was Hebrew, and 499 were Muslim, whose main language was Arabic.

# Abstract

This study determined the differences in screen exposure, sleep patterns and sleep disturbances, and the associations between these factors, among Jewish and Muslim children in Israel.
The participants were 1049 school children – 499 Jewish and 550 Muslim – with a mean age of 9.2 ± 0.7 years, who attended public schools in both urban and rural residential settings in 2014. They all completed the Sleep Self‐Report questionnaire and the Screen Exposure Questionnaire.
Muslim children reported increased screen time, despite having fewer televisions and computers in their bedroom than Jewish children. Muslim children also reported earlier bedtimes and longer sleep duration, but greater sleep disturbances. Having screens in bedrooms and non‐school days were related to later bedtimes and later wake‐up times for all children. Children who spent four or more hours watching television or using a computer on school days reported significantly more sleep disturbances than children with lower usage.
Muslim children with a mean age of nine years reported longer screen exposure, earlier bedtimes and longer sleep duration, but more sleep disturbances than Jewish children. Cultural sleep practices may contribute to the differences in sleep patterns and sleep disturbances of Jewish and Muslim children in Israel.

# Outcome

The study findings (Tzischinsky Haimov, 2017) indicate that with regard to screen exposure among Jewish and Muslim school-aged children, our results revealed that nearly all of the Jewish and Muslim children had TVs and computers at home. There was a statistically significant difference in those with a TV or computer in their bedroom. Although Muslim children exhibited a lower percentage of TVs and computers in their bedrooms than Jewish children, they were exposed twice as much to the screen than were Jewish children. With regard to sleep patterns among Jewish and Muslim school-aged children, comparison between them
revealed significant differences in bedtime and sleep duration on school and non-school days, with Muslim
children reporting earlier bedtimes and longer sleep nonschool days duration. The current study revealed that screen exposure in children’s bedrooms negatively affected their sleep. The results showed that all children with a TV and, or, computer in their bedroom reported significantly later bedtimes and
later wake-up times on school days and non-school days. Likewise, on school days’ children with a TV in their bedroom reported shorter sleep duration than children without a TV in their bedroom.Computer use correlated significantly with sleep bedtime and negatively
correlated with sleep duration during non-school days. Among Muslim children, TV and computer exposure
during school days had a significant correlation with sleep bedtime. With regard to sleep disturbances, analysis of the self-report sleep questionnaire revealed that Muslim children scored significantly higher on the sleep disturbance index. In addition, children who watched TV or computer more than four hours on school days reported significantly more sleep disturbances than children who watched less than
four hours.