Children’s Experiences and Awareness about Impact of Digital Media on Health

# Details

## Year

2018

## DOI

10.1080/10410236.2017.1298197

## Issued

2017

## Language

English

## Volume

33

## Issue

6

## Start Page

## End Page

## Authors

Cernikova M.;Smahel D.;Wright M.

## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Health Communication

## Publisher

Informa UK Limited

## Topics

* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Content-related issues
* Wellbeing
* Risks and harms
* Literacy and skills

## Sample

children between the ages of 9 and 16 in nine European countries (N = 368)

## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Educators About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Stepping up awareness and empowerment

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Previous research has focused on the associations between technology use and children’s health, using mainly quantitative designs. This qualitative study describes technology’s impact on physical and mental health from children’s perspectives. The differences between children’s experiences and awareness of the health-related consequences associated with digital media use were examined. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with children between the ages of 9 and 16 in nine European countries (N = 368). Results of this study indicate that children’s experiences of health-related technology impacts are different from their awareness of these impacts. Children’s direct experiences with media were less extreme in contrast to their awareness of health problems, which typically involved extreme examples of possible consequences, such as killing people, kidnapping, blindness, and developing learning or psychological disorders. The results are discussed in the context of the “media panic” and “third person effect” theories.

# Outcome

"We found that children’s awareness of technology’s impact on health could be influenced by media representations, which are often extreme. Therefore, children should be critical of the media’s reports on technology’s impact. Parents and teachers should encourage these critical viewpoints by also adopting a more balanced view of technology’s impact on health." (Cernikova, Smahel, Wright, 2018, p. 671)