Family relationships and internet abuse in 25 European countries

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* Social mediation
* Literacy and skills
* Risks and harms
* Online safety and policy regulation
* Internet usage, practices and engagement

## Sample

This research analysed the EU Kids Online survey dataset (Livingstone, 2011). The survey was
administered in-home and face-to-face during spring and summer 2010. In total, 25,142 children and adolescents from 25 European countries participated in this study. IA was measured only for students aged between 11 and 16 years (mean = 13.50,SD = 1.69), which reduced the sample to 18,709 children (9,352 male and 9,357 female).

## Implications For Parents About

* Parental practices / parental mediation
* Parental digital literacy
* Parenting guidance / support

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

* Stepping up awareness and empowerment
* Creating a safe environment for children online
* High-quality content online for children and young people

# Abstract

The aim of this article is to understand the link between family relationships and internet abuse (IA) using a sample of 18,709 children in 25 European countries. Our results suggest that family relationships are a significant predictor of IA – even when controlling for other significant individual and country-level factors. According to our results, children in two-parent families were less likely to have IA than children in other types of homes, but their advantage seems to derive from having better family dynamics (manifest in more communicative and less autonomous lifestyles) rather than family structure as such. Moreover, the importance of family structure with respect to IA is mediated by children’s relational lifestyles. This suggests that positive parenting characterised by high levels of dialogue may work as a protective factor of IA. We also identified sociodemographic risk factors: IA is more common among older and male children, those with lower levels of self-efficacy, and those living in large cities. The specific components of advantageous relational lifestyles can guide interventions to protect children from IA.

# Outcome

Results show that children in two-parent families were less likely to have IA than children in other types of homes, but the authors highlight that "their advantage seems to derive from having better family dynamics (manifest in more communicative and less autonomous lifestyles) rather than family structure as such" (Rivera et al., 2019: 13). Results suggest that
positive parenting characterised by high levels of dialogue may work as a protective factor of IA. Rivera et al. (2019) point out that context matters, clarifying that "in all the empirical models, a relevant percentage of variance is explained by factors at country level, and social
inequality was positively related to IA in our final model" (p.13).

The authors highlight the importance of children’s relational lifestyles inviting policy makers and practitioners to apply bottom-up and peer-to-peer policies and programmes "focused on the improvement of children’s and adolescents’ dialogical and evaluative skills have the potential to reduce IA by supplementing (not replacing) parental contributions to adolescents’ relational lifestyles" (Rivera et al., 2019: 13). The authors also point out that the prevention of IA in all family types might need to focus on developing healthier relational lifestyles to enhance parent–child communications, especially with boys. On the other hand, the authors advice to guide parenting effort by knowing that time invested in relationship skills may protect against IA more effectively than time spent regulating and monitoring.