

Internet and adolescence

Within the modern hustled life, powered by internet, many aspects of adolescence are getting altered. Be it their attitude toward study, behavior with peers or compatibility with daily life – the impact of internet is evident everywhere. The steep rise in its use within the last one decade draws attention from the scientists, including psychiatrists, about the effect of incorporating such dimension in our daily life. A study from the Netherlands found that 3.7% adolescents are potentially addicted to it [1] and the prevalence rises to an alarming 10.7% in Korean adolescents [2]. Not much data are available from India about the extent of the problem.

There have been contrasting claims about the impact of internet among the adolescents – on one hand, social connectedness is suggested to be enhanced by it and on the other, low quality of interpersonal relationships is feared to be precipitated by the excessive use of this technology [3]. There have been studies indicating that there might be relationship between use of internet and skipping schools, lack of sleep, and aggressive behaviors are not uncommon following addiction [3,4].

With rarity of such analysis available from India, Mitra and Rath put up a commendable job by addressing the sensitive facets of this wide epidemic among the most vulnerable section of the society [5]. Authors of this study found significant positive association between internet viewing and sleep problems, increased interest in sexual activity, and conduct problems. Getting cyber bullied has significant association with increased interest in sex, low mood, and lack of concentration, and attention problems. Visiting pornographic sites were associated with interest in sex, low mood, lack of concentration, and unexplained anxiety.

However, their concern was mostly about access to pornographic sites, but they did not elicit whether adolescents are actually getting indulged in sexual activities, following exposure to such contents online. Still, sex being a taboo to be discussed openly in our society, the authors' effort is admirable. The effect of online gaming was overlooked in the article. With an aim of assessing psychosomatic impact on adolescent students, the authors, however, also left out interpersonal relationships and school attendance out of their discussions.

With the proportion of users scaling a new high every year, a report from Australia documented children and adolescent spending 24 h/month online [6]. Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya

Karyakram, India's initiative for adolescents, stresses on both – knowledge, attitude, and behavior of this age group with regard to sexual health as well as mental health concerns of the teenagers. The authors could have linked their findings with the scopes of the national program and suggested some solutions that could be implemented by the program managers across the country.

The present study gives us glimpses from urban India. However, there is need to replicate such studies from other parts of the country, particularly rural sides. We also need to keep a check on the extent of schoolwork requiring online access. The latest development brings enormous opportunities for us to equip our forthcoming generations with amenities like never before but we need to check the side effects.

Manas Pratim Roy¹, Amit Agrawal²

From Departments of Pediatrics, ¹Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi,

²Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

Correspondence to: Dr. Manas Pratim Roy, Department of Pediatrics, Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi, India.

E-mail: manas_proy@yahoo.co.in

REFERENCES

1. Kuss DJ, van Rooij A, Shorter GW, Griffiths MD, van de Mheen D. Internet addiction in adolescents: Prevalence and risk factors. *Comput Hum Behav.* 2013;29(5):1987-96.
2. Park SK, Kim JY, Cho CB. Prevalence of internet addiction and correlates with family factors among South Korean adolescents. *Adolescence.* 2008;43(172):895-909.
3. Valkenburg PM, Peter J. Social consequences of the internet for adolescents: A decade of research. *Curr Dir Psychol Sci.* 2009;18:1-5.
4. Austin W, Totaro MW. Gender differences in the effects of internet usage on high school absenteeism. *J Soc Econ.* 2011;40:192-8.
5. Mitra M, Rath P. Effect of internet on the psychosomatic health of adolescent school children in Rourkela - A cross sectional study. *Indian J Child Health.* 2017;XX [Epub ahead of print].
6. The Nielsen Company. Australian online landscape review. The Nielsen Company 2012. Available from: <http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/au/en/reports/2012/Nielsen%20Online%20Landscape%20Review%20July%202012%20Media%20Pack.pdf>. [Last accessed on 2017 Jun 20].

Funding: None; Conflict of Interest: None Stated.

How to cite this article: Roy MP, Agrawal A. Internet and adolescence. *Indian J Child Health.* 2017; 4(3):284.