

Students Stress and Sleep Problems Linked to Screen Culture

Continued studies have suggested that there could be a negative impact of excessive computer use on brain development and an increase of sleep disorders among young people.

Professor Susan Greenfield, in the UK, (amongst others) has undertaken research that suggests that the 'screen culture' of our computer age may be changing the brains of our young people in ways that could have a serious impact on personality, learning and behaviour.

Internet and computer game addiction is emerging as a new clinical disorder. One study indicated computer addicted students spent an average of 38.5 hours a week on their computer excluding time for academic purposes.

It also appears that excessive computer use contributes to the development of sleep disorders with sleep patterns being disrupted by late night computer use past 10.00pm and into the early hours of the morning. Students are then tired the next day, have difficulty awakening in time for school and have concentration problems in class. Such sleep deprivation leads to impaired cognitive functioning and decreased immune system functioning leading to an increase in illness.

The sedentary nature of prolonged computer use also leads to lack of proper exercise and increased risk of weight gain, carpal tunnel syndrome and back, neck and eye-sight problems.

The brain needs time to relax after exposure to screen activities. Light from computer and phone use prior to sleep could interfere with the pineal gland's release of the sleep-inducing chemical, melatonin which only occurs when it is dark. It may also be the case that home wireless networks (wifi) and mobile phone use in the bedroom are impacting melatonin release to cause sleep problems.

It is recommended that adults have on average 7-8 hours of sleep a night, while growing adolescents should have 8-9 hours quality sleep for optimal health.

So, what precautions can be suggested?

1. Use this information for your school newsletter to parents.
2. Browse the internet on research by Susan Greenfield (UK) and Mary Redmayne (NZ).
3. As a family, watch the documentary: *Resonance – Beings of Frequency* on Youtube.
4. Find out about 'earthing' – walking barefoot on the earth more often to release the stress-producing electrical charge that builds up in the body during the day.
5. Try to keep sleeping patterns the same – even at weekends.
6. Use the bed only for sleep and aim for 8 – 9 hours each night.
7. Close-to-face screen-time prior to sleep needs to stop preferably an hour before the intended sleep time.

8. Try using the App 'F.lux' or 'Night Shift' to reduce the bright screen light.
9. Turn off the home wireless router at night-time. (This could prevent unnoticed internet use).
10. Turn off any mobile and hands-free phones or move them well away from the bed head.
11. Try moving your bed to a different area of your room (if possible).
12. Do not hold an iPad (or other tablet with wifi setting switched on), close to your body – such as on your lap.
13. If you lie awake for more than 30 minutes, get up, go to a different room, do some quiet reading, then return to bed when sleepy.
14. Keep hands and feet warm. Try wearing socks and gloves to bed.
15. Use breathing relaxation techniques to maintain a present-centered awareness to improve sleep. Try counting backwards from 50 and take a breath with every descending number.
16. Worried thoughts can only happen when we think about the future. Stay in the present by focusing on wiggling your toes.
17. Keep your bedroom quiet, dark and at a comfortable temperature. Consider using black-out curtains.
18. Educate yourself and your family with why good sleep and reduced use of technology – particularly prior to bedtime is so important for good health. Build it into your family culture like cleaning your teeth.

For further information about this issue, please visit the following links.

<http://www.susangreenfield.com/>

<https://www.wifiinschools.com/index.html>

<https://bioinitiative.org/>

www.5g.org.nz

<http://www.safeinschool.org/>

<http://emrsafety.net/health-effects-of-emr.html>

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20190418/WiFi-may-interact-with-signaling-pathways-in-the-brain-causing-irreversible-damage.aspx>

Short Video: Search "*Casualty Catastrophy*"

Documentary: Search "*Resonance: Beings of Frequency*"