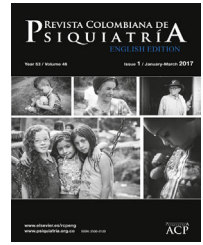




REVISTA COLOMBIANA DE PSIQUIATRÍA

www.elsevier.es/rcp



Letter to the Editor

Mental disorders due to excessive use of mobile phones[☆]

Alteraciones mentales por el uso excesivo del móvil

Dear Editor,

In recent years in the technological era, the use of mobile phones has increased significantly, especially among the younger population.

In the study by Tamura et al.,¹ conducted in 2017 in Japan, the relationship between mobile phone use and insomnia and depression in adolescents was investigated. The results showed that the use of mobile phones for more than five hours per day is associated with a shorter duration of sleep and with insomnia, but not with depression. The use of mobile phones for two or more hours a day for social media services and online chats is associated with an increased risk of depression. Excessive mobile phone use can be linked to unhealthy sleeping habits and insomnia.

The study by Lemola et al.,² conducted in 2015 in Switzerland, explained that adolescence is a time of increasing vulnerability to poor mental health, including depression, and that sleep disturbances are a risk factor for suffering from depression in adolescence. This study examined the changes in adolescents' use of electronic media at night and sleep associated with smartphone ownership. The use of smart phones was negatively related to sleep duration and positively to sleep difficulties, which in turn were related to depressive symptoms. Sleep difficulties were a more important mediator than sleep duration. The results of this study indicate that adolescents could benefit from education on sleep hygiene and the risks of using electronic media at night.

In the article by Elhai et al.,³ conducted in 2017 in the United States, excessive use of mobile phones and psychopathology are discussed. The results indicate an association between excessive mobile phone use and depression, anxiety, chronic stress and low self-esteem.

The study by Li et al.,⁴ conducted in 2017 in China, states that depression is a common mental disorder that is widely seen among teenagers who suffer from mobile phone addiction. This study examined the mediating effects of positive emotions on the relationship between social support and depression among adolescents suffering from mobile phone addiction. Both positive emotions and social support showed a significant negative correlation with depression.

The study by Thomée,⁵ conducted in 2018 in Sweden, revealed that mobile phones emit radio frequency radiation. No previous generation has been exposed to this type of radiation during childhood and adolescence. The brain is the main target organ for radio frequency emissions. With regard to the health implications of digital technologies, it is important to consider their relationship to neurological diseases, physiological addiction, cognition, sleep and behavioural problems. Well-being must be carefully evaluated as an effect of behavioural change in children and adolescents through their interactions with modern digital technologies.

After critically analysing the results of studies in recent years, it is possible to observe different mental disorders that excessive mobile phone use is capable of producing among the youngest. However, the mobile phone is an important tool both for working and for interacting with loved ones and learning, and there are even certain applications to help people with health problems or addictions. The problem comes when they are overused for recreational purposes. The young population is the most vulnerable and the most exposed. For this reason, responsible mobile phone use should be promoted – both in health centres and hospitals as well as in schools, institutes and workshops therein – and information should be provided about the mental disorders that can occur from excessive use. It is the role of health professionals to prevent such disorders

DOI of original article: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcp.2020.01.005>.

[☆] Please cite this article as: Martínez Pizarro S. Alteraciones mentales por el uso excesivo del móvil. Rev Colomb Psiquiat. 2021;50:70-71.

as far as possible. In addition, new strategies, activities or more effective techniques should also be investigated to achieve this goal.

REFERENCES

1. Tamura H, Nishida T, Tsuji A, Sakakibara H. Association between excessive use of mobile phone and insomnia and depression among Japanese adolescents. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2017;14:E701, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14070701>.
2. Lemola S, Perkinson-Gloor N, Brand S, Dewald-Kaufmann JF, Grob A. Adolescents' electronic media use at night, sleep disturbance, and depressive symptoms in the smartphone age. *J Youth Adolesc*. 2015;44:405-18.
3. Elhai JD, Dvorak RD, Levine JC, Hall BJ. Problematic smartphone use: a conceptual overview and systematic review of relations with anxiety and depression psychopathology. *J Affect Disord*. 2017;207:251-9.
4. Li M, Jiang X, Ren Y. Mediator effects of positive emotions on social support and depression among adolescents suffering from mobile phone addiction. *Psychiatr Danub*. 2017;29:207-13.
5. Thomée S. Mobile phone use, mental health. A review of the research that takes a psychological perspective on exposure. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2018;15(12):E2692, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15122692>.

Sandra Martínez Pizarro

Hospital Comarcal de Huércal-Overa, Spain

E-mail address: mpsandrita@hotmail.com

18 November 2019

2530-3120/

© 2020 Asociación Colombiana de Psiquiatría. Published by Elsevier España, S.L.U. All rights reserved.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcpeng.2020.01.001>