

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Screen time is the time spent with any screen device such as television, smart phone etc. Excessive screen time among young children is rising and is associated with many negative outcomes. However, studies done on this area are limited.

Objectives

The study was conducted to assess the screen usage patterns, associated factors with screen time and knowledge and perceptions of primary caretakers' on screen time of one to three year old children in the MOH area of Kolonnawa.

Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 511 primary caretakers. They were selected by two stage cluster sampling technique. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect information. Screen usage patterns, knowledge and perceptions of primary caretakers were described using frequencies and percentages. The associations of children's excessive screen time were assessed using odds ratios and Chi square test at significance of $p < 0.05$ level.

Results

The response rate was 100% with 511 participants. Prevalence of excessive screen time among the children was 75.3%. Average screen time of the children was 75.2 minutes (SD \pm 66.7). The mostly viewed screen device was television with 68.6%. Average age of starting to view screens was 10.2 months. Overall, 52.1% of caretakers had co-viewed screen devices with children and 57.9% were aware of the availability of screen time recommendations. The majority 73.2% were aware of alternative activities for children but only 40.9% had perceived that children had excess screen time.

Both maternal and paternal excessive screen time and higher education level, high family income and presence of television and internet access were significantly associated with excessive screen time of children. Mother being a housewife, and older age were found as

protective factors. No significant associations were found between presence of elder siblings, child's sex, ethnicity, overall knowledge score of caretakers and screen time of children.

Conclusions and recommendations

The prevalence of excessive screen time was high among the children. Most of the factors associated were modifiable. Therefore, interventions should be carried out to empower caretakers on methods to reduce screen time of children.

Key words – Screen time, Excessive screen usage, Young children, Primary caretaker