How far is the INTERNET responsible for a decrease in TEENAGE HEALTH?

Global Perspective Research Project
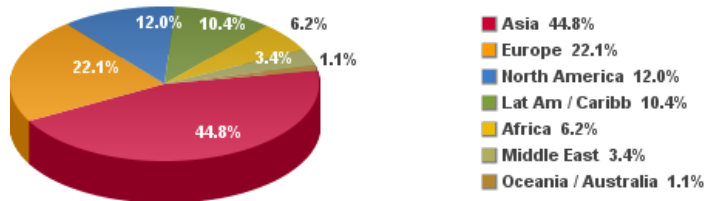
"Internet is a big issue for all the parents regarding their child's excessive use of internet. This report tells how internet is harmful to teenagers and how the health problems can be prevented."

Dhruvin Doshi

I have chosen this topic because all kids of my age including me are always busy on internet, either surfing or downloading or social networking. I am very addicted to my laptop for using Internet. I have chosen this topic to know different problems associated with over using internet. I would also like to understand other's perspective on this topic and what are their comments.

Global Perspective

All over the world there are 2,267,233,742 internet users worldwide. That is 32.7% of total

Internet Users in the World
Distribution by World Regions - 2011

- Asia 44.8%
- Europe 22.1%
- North America 12.0%
- Lat Am / Caribb 10.4%
- Africa 6.2%
- Middle East 3.4%
- Oceania / Australia 1.1%

Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm
Basis: 2,267,233,742 Internet users on December 31, 2011
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Figure 1

population in the world using internet. As figure 1 shows the percentage of internet users per continent out of 2,267,233,742 internet users. Internet has reached almost in every single house of United States. China has its half the population using internet. Researchers say that Internet addiction is a devastating problem facing far too many teens and their families. While medical professionals have done limited research on the topic, more and more

are recognizing this destructive behaviour and even more, the potential mental effects it can have. These all lead to decrease in teenage health, and teen years are very important; most of the habits and development for their adult life takes place during these years.

How Sitting Too Long Affects the Body

Head
Blood clots that form after sitting too rigidly can travel to the brain, causing strokes.

Lungs
In individuals who experience heart failure, fluid first backs up in the lungs.

Arms
Physical activity reduces the risk of hypertension, or high blood pressure.

Stomach
Sitting too much contributes to obesity and colon cancer. Enzymes in the blood vessels of muscles responsible for burning fat get shut off, and the body's method of metabolizing fuels such as glucose and lipids gets disturbed.

Neck
Fluid retained in the legs during the day moves to the neck at night and contributes to obstructive sleep apnea.

Heart
A sedentary lifestyle contributes to cardiovascular disease. In people who suffer from heart failure and obstructive sleep apnea, fluid collects in the lungs and neck at night.

Legs
Fluid collects in the legs during sitting. Walking helps pump it out before it causes problems.
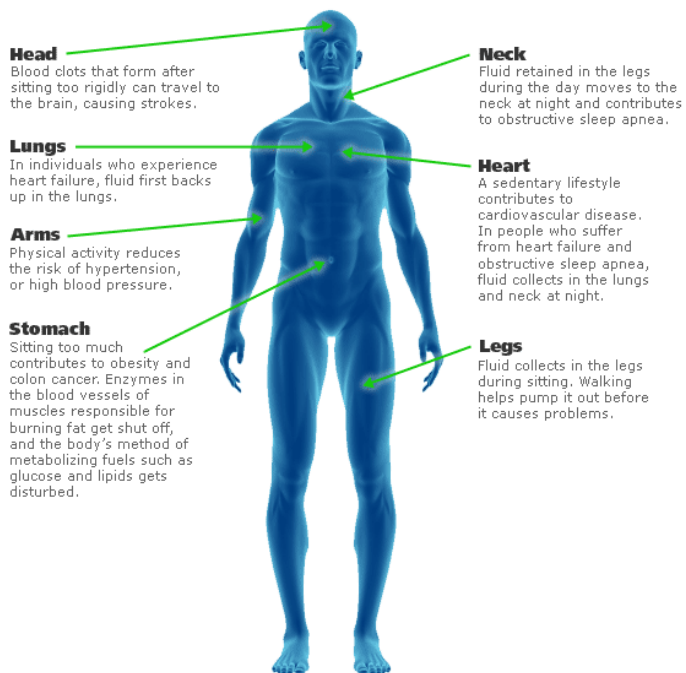
Figure 2.1

Personal Perspective

I feel Using internet can be very helpful and the health problems associated with it are seen after a long time. Most health problems associated with excess internet usage are incurable but can be prevented. I actually have faced problems with my eye when I constantly sit on my PC.

Issues
Health issues- Physical
Sitting too much on Internet can harm your entire body, as shown in figure 1.1. It also leads to Obesity.

- Obesity in teens is linked to the number of hours they spend sitting instead of participating in other, more active hobbies. Hours sitting at a computer compound with other inactive time such as Chatting playing games on total of 5 1/2 hours of screen time per day, on average, for teens. That is more than double

the recommended amount, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Teens who spend more hours sitting at the computer each week are at a higher risk of increased levels of body fat.

- Eyes are also affected as technology plays an ever more prominent role in our daily lives, the subject of eye health and computer usage is becoming increasingly important. According to the London Hazards Centre, surveys of people working at a computer screen for more than six hours a day have found that over 70 per cent (and up to 91 per cent) experience visual problems. It may bring headaches, eye stress, blurry vision, dry eye; develop near-sightedness, tiredness and pain in the neck and shoulders. It is suspected that heavy computer work can lead to glaucoma and other eye problems.

Health issues- Mental

Excessively using internet may cause:

1. Sleep Disruption

- When a teen has his own computer in his room, parents need to pay attention to the teen's sleep patterns. Disruption to sleeping patterns is seen in teens who are extremely active in social networking and stay up chatting until the whole night. This also occurs with online gaming. If your teen is seriously involved in online gaming and his sleep is suffering as a result, it's time to impose limits on gaming hours.

2. Depression

- The American Academy of Pediatrics conducted a study that looked at the link between certain online behaviors and depression among teens. It found a connection between Facebook use and depression. Facebook can play a role in depression because of the large number of hours that teens spend on the site and the extent to which they value their online social interactions. While the study did not recommend total blackouts on Facebook for teens, it does raise points demonstrating that parents and doctors need to be aware of the emotional impact that the social network site might be having on teens.

3. Social Growth

- For a healthy teen, adolescence is the time to meet new friends, have new experiences and build the identity that will dictate the type of adult he or she will grow into. For teens who spend too much time online, this might not be the case. If a teen spends so much time online that he or she misses out on the experiences and networking that is common among teenagers, it can equate to a slowed social development. Parent advocate Sue Schiff worries that too much Internet use can limit the development of teens as they miss out on the previously essential teen challenges and experiences.

Possible Scenarios

If using of internet at this rate continues than all the parents will have issues regarding their child's health problem which may lead into very limited use of internet per week. They also might remove internet connection and band the child to socialize online. As the researchers say that obesity rate will double in next 5 years, this can be the major cause to it. The child mentality and their mental and social behaviour will be totally be changed by using internet.

Dhruvin Doshi

Possible courses of action

Limit internet usage to 20 minutes daily and only do social networking and gaming for 10 minutes. This limits the child sitting on computer allowing him or her to go out and play or make new friends.

The kids of 7-8 years are also members of social networking sites by giving their wrong ages so I think that they should give their identity proof such as school Id etc. if the age is above 15 then only you can be the member of the site. This will also allow their social growth.

Personal Response

I will reduce the time I spend on internet and also the time I do social networking online. This will make me more time efficient and I can save my time daily. I will inform my friends about this and convey to them how harmful it is.

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Word Count: 998