

The Effect of Parent Psychopathology on Screen-Based Media Exposure

The developed world has seen a recent and dramatic increase in screen-based media exposure, particularly with regard to youth (Weiss, 2011). There is significant evidence linking excessive screen-based media use by children with deleterious effects (Hastings, 2009). Existing research shows links between parenting style and overall screen time, however there is little research directly correlating specific parent psychopathology with child screen-based media exposure (Jago, 2011; Hastings, 2009).

This will be a cross-sectional study conducted on child patients at the Vermont Center for Children, Youth and Families (VCCYF), a clinical treatment and research facility within the Fletcher Allen Department of Psychiatry, Burlington, VT. We will investigate children's screen-based media exposure in relation to three specific parent psychopathology scales.

Data will be obtained from two self-report surveys, the Vermont Child Health Behavior Questionnaire (VHBQ) and the Adult Self-Report assessment (ASR), both completed upon registration at the VCCYF.

Three items will be used from the VHBQ: time spent "watching TV/videos/DVDs," "playing computer games/Gameboy," and "using computer/the internet."

Three of the syndrome scales on the ASR will be used: Withdrawn, Somatic Complaints and Aggressive Behavior.

We will use linear regression to predict child screen-based media use, using parent ASR scales for Withdrawn, Somatic Complaints and Aggressive Behavior as predictors, while controlling for age, sex, SES and child diagnosis.

We expect elevated levels of media use in all three groups compared to a normal group, with children of withdrawn parents showing the highest media use, followed by children of parents with somatic problems, and finally children of parents with aggressive behavior.

References:

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