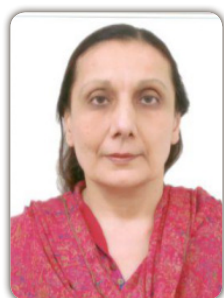


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Effects of excessive and unsupervised TV viewing

This study was conducted some years back to assess the impact of excessive and unsupervised television viewing in children (5-15 years) in urban and rural settings in North India. This cross-sectional study was carried out in the out-patient department of Rural Health Training Centre (RHTC) and in the Urban Health Training Centre (UHTC) of the department of community medicine, J. N. Medical College, Aligarh. 47 children from RHTC and 53 children from UHTC were interviewed and the answers noted in a prepared questionnaire, which included questions on the children's background, viewer-ship patterns, situation of TV in the house, time spent watching TV by the child, programmes watched, outdoor activities, behavioral changes, study time, supervised or unsupervised TV viewing and changes in health and behavior attributed to TV. The findings were then computerized and analyzed using SPSS 17. The study revealed that most children watched TV for more than 2 to 3 hours per day, the patterns being different in rural and urban areas. The time of day that children watch TV and the type of programmes watched were different in the two settings. In both groups, children liked to eat while watching TV. In rural areas TV viewing was rarely supervised. A large number of children watched violent and horror programmes, especially in rural areas. This we felt was responsible for the behavioral problems reported by the parents in the teens and pre-teens. Excessive TV viewing with reduced play time and increased consumption of junk food had we felt, a direct relation to rapid weight gain noted in the subjects under study. Here however obesity was more marked in urban children vis-a-vis rural children. Finally, excessive TV watching with the associated reduced social interaction negatively impacted the development of social, language and creative skills in both urban and rural children.

Biography

Sadiya Zinjani has completed her Graduation from the prestigious Armed Forces Medical College in the state of Maharashtra in India. She is attached to the Max Hospital, Saket, Delhi, as Visiting Consultant but her major focus is her private clinic at her residence in Delhi, where she consults, conducts well baby clinics and does minor procedures. Her main interest is disease prevention.

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