



The All-Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood

Chair: Steve McCabe MP Co-Chair: Baroness Floella Benjamin OBE. Vice-Chairs: Julie Elliott MP, Kim Leadbeater MP, Lord McColl of Dulwich, Adam Holloway MP

Formal details of the Group on the Parliamentary website are available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/parliamentary-commissioner-for-standards/registers-of-interests/register-of-all-party-party-parliamentary-groups/>

MEETING – 19 July 2022 on CHILD OBESITY Notes and Links from Dr Aric Sigman on the links between discretionary screen time and obesity

1) Groeniger, J. O., et al (2020). Time-varying effects of screen media exposure in the relationship between socioeconomic background and childhood obesity. *Epidemiology*, 31(4), 578.

DOI: [10.1097/EDE.0000000000001210](https://doi.org/10.1097/EDE.0000000000001210)

Longitudinal data of 11,413 children from the UK-wide Millennium Cohort Study was analysed. Discretionary (non school-related) screen media exposure was assessed at ages 7 and 11. Body Mass Index was calculated at age 14.

Outcome: 'We estimated that up to 17% of relative and 18% of absolute inequalities in childhood obesity would be reduced if differences in screen media exposure were eliminated.'

'Conclusions: Our findings are consistent with the hypothesis that social inequalities in screen media exposure contribute substantially to social inequalities in childhood obesity.'

2) Kininmonth AR. et al (2021) The relationship between the home environment and child adiposity [obesity]: a systematic review. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*.18:4 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-020-01073-9>

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Examined associations between the social and physical aspects of 3 aspects of home environment (food, physical activity and media) and obesity measures in children up to 12 years old.

Relevant findings:

'Results: ...greater availability of electronic devices associated with higher child adiposity [obesity]'

'Conclusions: The home media environment was most consistently associated with adiposity [obesity] in childhood. Findings were less consistent for the home food and physical activity environments.'

3) WHO (2017) Study: Adolescent obesity and related behaviours: trends and inequalities in the WHO European Region. Health Behaviour in School-aged [11, 13, 15yrs] Children (HBSC) WHO collaborative cross-national study [40 countries].

Relevant outcomes:

'Public health action is needed to implement interventions to reduce screen-time behaviours in young people on an international scale.'

'...the most consistent findings being found for screen-based activities'

'Screen time is also associated with acute eating behaviours such as snacking, but this is not sufficient to explain the detrimental associations between screen time and cardiometabolic health and obesity.'



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Ref: https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/339211/WHO_ObesityReport_2017_v3.pdf

4) NICE guideline, Preventing excess weight gain:

‘Reducing TV viewing and other screen time. Advise people that any strategy that reduces TV viewing and other leisure screen time may be helpful (such as TV-free days or setting a limit to watch TV for no more than 2 hours a day).’

Last reviewed March 2017: www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng7