

Texting 'health risk' for teenagers

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-11720546>

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Parents have been warned to watch out for signs of **excessive** texting in their children, amid concerns it poses a new health risk.

Teenagers sending 120 text messages a day are more likely to drink, smoke and have sex, claims a US doctor.

Scott Frank told a US conference that extreme texting and use of social media is linked to higher levels of **risky** behaviour.

A UK expert said internet addicts are at risk of other bad habits.

Dr Scott Frank, a physician and public health expert at Case Western Reserve School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio, surveyed about 4,000 high school students, aged 13 to 18, at 20 local schools on their texting and social media habits.

Almost 20% were **classified** as hyper-texters - sending more than 120 text messages on a school day.

Taking into account lifestyle factors and income, they were more likely than other students to have smoked, drunk alcohol, used drugs and had sex, research **presented** to the American Public Health Association meeting in Denver **suggests**.

'Wake-up call'

Similar **findings** were reported for the one in 10 teenagers who fell into the category of hyper-networking - spending more than three hours of a school day on social networking websites.

Dr Frank said: "The **startling** results of this study suggest that when left unchecked texting and other widely **popular** methods of staying connected can have dangerous health effects on teenagers.

"This should be a wake-up call for parents to not only help their children stay safe by not texting and driving, but by **discouraging** excessive use of the cell phone or social websites in general."

Commenting on the study, Dr Catriona Morrison, Senior Lecturer in Experimental Psychology at Leeds University, UK, said: "There seems to be a small but important subgroup of people for whom internet use is unhealthy, pathological and it doesn't **enhance** their life.

"It appears very similar to gambling but it's a competitive behaviour that has features very similar to other addictions."

Dr Morrison, who has published research pointing to a link between heavy internet use and depression, said addictions are often "co-morbid" - if you suffer from one, you are more likely to suffer from another.

This could explain why teenagers who spend many hours texting or on social websites might be more likely to overindulge in alcohol or smoking, she said.

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A. Read the text and then answer the questions

1. Who is claiming that teenagers that send too many texts are likely to smoke and drink?
2. Who can be classified as hypertexters?
3. What proportion of teenagers fall into the hypernetworking category?
4. What should parents discourage their children from doing whilst driving?
5. To what does Catriona Morrison compare hypertexters?
6. What does she say about heavy Internet use and depression?
7. What age were the pupils who were surveyed?
8. Where was the meeting at which this research was presented?

B. There are five words underlined in the text.

excessive risky popular discouraging enhance

Match them with a word, from the list below, which means the opposite.

For example small is the opposite of large

safe complete unfashionable dangerous nervous
friendly diminish supporting create moderate

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C. Now match the word on the left, found in *bold italics* in the text, with a word on the right which has the same meaning.

classified

results

presented

indicates

suggests

submitted

findings

startling

surprising

categorised

D. What are your views? Is too much texting or Internet use bad for us? Is this any different to too much games playing or reading? Write two paragraphs giving your views on the article.

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Answers

A.

1. Scott Frank, a US doctor.
2. Someone sending more than 120 texts a day.
3. 20%
4. Texting
5. Gambling
6. If you have one you have the other.
7. 13-18
8. Denver

B.

excessive
and
moderate

risky
and
safe

popular
and
unfashionable

discouraging
and
supporting

enhance
and
diminish

C.

classified
presented
suggests
findings
surprising

categorised
submitted
indicates
results
startling