Today’s story is prepared by Aleks Olszewski, MD from an NPR story [More Screen Time For Teens Linked To ADHD Symptoms](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/07/17/629517464/more-screen-time-for-teens-may-fuel-adhd-symptoms).

This NPR article discusses a JAMA article published July 17, 2018 which assessed a connection between screen time and ADHD.1,2 The study suggests that frequent use of digital media in adolescence may increase risk of developing symptoms of ADHD.

The article notes that previous studies show increased social media use may be linked to depression in teens, and increased television and video game use may increase risk of ADHD. This study followed 2,587 10th graders in LA county over 2 years. All included subjects had no significant self-reported ADHD symptoms at onset, and by the end, those with more screen time had more self-reported ADHD symptoms.3 Students who frequently used six or more activities had a higher likelihood of developing ADHD symptoms. Teens who used 7 to 14 of the listed online activities “frequently,” compared with teens who did not do any of the activities frequently, were twice as likely to have symptoms of ADHD (9.5-10.5%, 51 teens using 7-14 activities frequently, versus 4.6%, 114 teens who did not use activities frequently).

Overall, this article very simply and clearly discusses a hot topic in developmental pediatrics, and it nicely discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the study while avoiding jumping to broad conclusions. It highlights that the study did not diagnose teens with ADHD nor prove causation, and it points to the importance for future work that validates the measures used and further assesses causation. The study included a large number of teenagers from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds with a wide range of behavioral health co-morbidities. However, the self-reported measures of media use are not validated, and the self-reported symptoms do not render a diagnosis. Because participants did not have ADHD symptoms at the start of the study, causation is a possibility, but reverse causality or undetected baseline ADHD symptoms cannot be ruled out. Lastly, other confounding factors like sleep and home dynamics were not assessed.

**RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES ON ADHD:**

[ADHD – a guide for families](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/Home.aspx) *American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*

[CHADD](http://www.chadd.org/NRC.aspx) *national resource on ADHD*

[Understood](https://www.understood.org/en) *for learning and attention issues*

**RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES ON SCREEN TIME WITH TEENS:**

[Reduce screen time tools and references](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/tools-resources/tools-reduce-screen-time.htm#handbooks-resources) *NIH*

[Real parents, real talk about kids and screens](https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/12/06/496907205/real-parents-real-talk-about-kids-and-screens) *NPR Morning Edition: Dec 6, 2016.*

[Caring for kids screen time recommendations](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/screen-time-at-home-healthy-habits) *Canadian pediatricians’ site* Last updated 6/2017

Other References:

1. Chatterjee R. More screen time for teens linked to ADHD symptoms. July 17, 2018. https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/07/17/629517464/more-screen-time-for-teens-may-fuel-adhd-symptoms
2. Ra CK, Cho J, Stone MD, De La Cerda J, Goldenson NI, Moroney E, Tung I, Lee SS, Leventhal AM. Association of digital media use with subsequent symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder among adolescents. JAMA. 2018 Jul 17;320(3):255-63.
3. Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS-v1.1) Symptom Checklist. <https://add.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/adhd-questionnaire-ASRS111.pdf>

Wilms Floet, Scheiner, Grossman. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Pediatr Rev. 2010;31;56-69.

Kastner L, Wyatt J. Getting to calm – cool-headed strategies for parenting tweens and teens. June 1, 2009.

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!