

Children with TVs in their room sleep less

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Middle school children who have a television or computer in their room sleep less during the school year, watch more TV, play more computer games and surf the net more than their peers who don't – reveals joint research conducted by the University of Haifa and Jezreel Valley College.

The research, conducted by Prof. Yael Latzer and Dr. Tamar Shochat of the University of Haifa and Prof. Orna Chishinsky of the Jezreel Valley College, examined 444 middle school pupils with an average age of 14. The children were asked about their sleep habits, their use of computer and television, and their eating habits while watching TV or using the computer.

The study participants reported an average bedtime of 11:04 P.M and wake-up time of 6:45 A.M. On the weekends, the average bedtime was somewhat later – at 1:45 A.M. and wake-up much later – at 11:30 A.M. Those children with TVs or computers in their room went to sleep half an hour later on average but woke up at the same time.

According to the study, middle school pupils watch a daily average of two hours and 40 minutes of TV and use their computer for three hours and 45 minutes. On weekends, they watch half an hour more TV than during the rest of the week and use their computers for four hours. Children with a TV in their room watch an hour more than those without and those with their own computer use it an hour more than their peers.

A fifth of pupils said they ate in front of the TV set on a regular basis,

while 70 percent said they did so only occasionally. Only 10% reported never eating in front of the TV. Computers were considered to be a less attractive eating place, with only 10% eating in front of the computer on a regular basis, 40% occasionally, and half never eating there.

According to the researchers, there is a direct connection between exposure to the media and eating in front of the TV or computer; the more a child watches television or uses the computer, the greater the chance he will eat in front of the screen.

Source: University of Haifa

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