

Teenagers are more sedentary on weekends

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The new school year has started and the school routine is back. A European study led by Spanish researchers has shown how the proportion of young people who watch television and play on the computer for more than two hours per day doubles on the weekend. And while boys opt for video games, teenage girls prefer to surf the net.

"A [sedentary lifestyle](#) has become one of the major public health problems in developed countries", Juan P. Rey-López, lead author of the study and a researcher at the University of Zaragoza (UNIZAR), tells SINC. "During the week, one-third of teenagers said they watched more than two hours of television per day. At weekends, this figure exceeds 60%".

The results, published in the July issue of the journal *Preventive Medicine*, show that teenagers devote more time to sedentary behaviour (in front of a screen) at the weekend.

The study, which forms part of the European HELENA study, analysed the prevalence of sedentary behaviour in 3,278 adolescents (1,537 boys and 1,741 girls aged between 12.5 and 17.5) in 10 European cities (Athens and Heraklion in Greece, Dortmund in Germany, Ghent in Belgium, Lille in France, Pécs in Hungary, Rome in Italy, Stockholm in Sweden, Vienna in Austria, and Zaragoza in Spain).

The [teenagers](#) indicated the amount of time they spent in front of the television, computer and games consoles, the amount of time spent connected to the Internet and the amount of time spent studying (outside

school hours). The researchers also studied the availability of computers, televisions and consoles at home and in teenagers' bedrooms, and their impact on whether they watched too much television (more than two hours per day).

"Our findings support the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics not to put televisions in teenagers' bedrooms, in order to (theoretically) reduce the amount of time they spend watching the television", says Rey-López.

Computers in the bedroom, but not televisions

"Having a games console or television in the bedroom triples the risk of exceeding the health recommendations to not spend more than two hours per day watching television. However, having a computer in the bedroom reduces the risk of excessive television watching", the researcher from Aragon explains.

The authors also observed significant differences between the sexes in terms of the amount of time spent on sedentary pastimes. Adolescent girls are more sedentary in terms of the amount of time spent studying and surfing the net, while boys spend more time playing electronic games.

According to a study published last month in the *Journal Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, there is a strong association in adults (dose-dependent) between the number of hours spent watching [television](#) and cardiometabolic health, making it highly recommendable not to watch [television](#) to excess during leisure time.

More information: References:

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