

Unhealthy behavior may be cross-generational

November 19 2014

Children whose parents spend a lot of time sitting in front of a computer or other screen are more likely than other children to have excessive screen-time habits, as well as associated risks for heart and blood vessel disease, according to a study presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2014.

"Screen time of children is significantly associated with parental screen time," said Masao Yoshinaga, M.D., Ph.D., the study's lead author and chief director of pediatrics at National Hospital Organization, Kagoshima Medical Center in Japan. "To reduce screen time in children, parents should reduce their screen time."

Researchers also found the risk of obesity in boys' linked to their fathers' obesity, while girls' obesity was linked with both parent's obesity.

Participants included more than 1,000 healthy children —540 boys and 574 girls—between the ages of six and 12 years old in seven different regions of Japan.

The researchers measured participants' height, weight, [waist circumference](#), and heart and blood vessel risk factors, as identified by blood tests. Both participants and their parents wore a pedometer for a week and answered questionnaires about their screen-time and sleeping habits.

In addition to decreasing [screen time](#), researchers suggest increased

walking and more sleep may be a first-step approach for helping elementary school children to lower their future cardiovascular risk.

Provided by American Heart Association

Citation: Unhealthy behavior may be cross-generational (2014, November 19) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-11-unhealthy-behavior-cross-generational.html>

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