

More than 2 hours of TV a day increases high blood pressure risk in children by 30 percent

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A study on European children concludes that spending more than two hours a day in front of a screen increases the probability of high blood pressure by 30%. The article also points out that doing no daily physical activity or doing less than an hour a day increases this risk by 50%. Credit: SINC

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For years now scientific literature has associated watching the television with a sedentary lifestyle and obesity in young people. Now research led by the Universities of Zaragoza (Unizar) and São Paulo (Brazil) reveal the relationship between this habit and a greater risk of developing [high blood pressure](#).

"The study shows the number of new high blood pressure cases and the connection between [physical activity](#) and different sedentary behaviours with the risk of high blood pressure in European children," explains Augusto César F. de Moraes, a Brazilian researcher who collaborates with the Unizar group and lead author of the article, to SINC.

The scientists based their conclusion on data from the study on 'Identification and Prevention of Dietary- and Lifestyle-induced Health Effects in Children and Infants' (IDEFICS), gathered over two years in 5,221 children from eight European countries (Spain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Cyprus, Estonia, Sweden and Belgium), who were between 2 and 10 years old at the beginning of the study.

The results, published recently in the *'International Journal of Cardiology'*, show that the cumulative incidence of high blood pressure in this population during the two years analysed is high: 110 in 1,000. "High blood pressure can cause cardiovascular problems later in life," adds F. de Moraes. "For example, it increases the risk of ischemic heart disease".

The authors state that children who are sedentary for more than two hours a day, in front of the television, computers or videoconsoles, run a 30% greater risk of developing high blood pressure. "The figures are worrying, given that sedentary behaviours are common in infancy and subsequently, later in life".

Among the non-communicable diseases, high blood pressure has a high

incidence in adults. Different studies have demonstrated that the levels of arterial pressure in infancy and adolescence have an enormous impact on developing high blood pressure as an adult.

More than one hour a day of exercise

To beat this condition, experts recommend that young people carry out physical activity for more than 60 minutes a day, and advise that sedentary activities last no longer than two hours a day.

Similarly, the researchers have observed that not doing an hour of physical activity a day increases the risk of high [blood pressure](#) by 50%. "Scientific evidence indicates that physical activity is a powerful vasodilator. Therefore, the rate of oxygenation of the heart increases, and at the same time, decreases arterial pressure," concludes F. de Moraes.

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