

More electronic device use tied to more sugar and caffeine in teens

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Katherine Morrison is a professor of pediatrics at McMaster, co-director of its Centre for Metabolism, Obesity and Diabetes Research, and a pediatric endocrinologist at McMaster Children's Hospital. Credit: McMaster University

Do young teens who spend more time with TV and electronic devices drink more sugared or caffeinated drinks than others? Yes, they do, says a study of U.S. teens led by McMaster University researchers.



It is a concern because many exceed recommended levels of both sugar and <u>caffeine</u>, says pediatrician Dr. Katherine Morrison, who led the research together with colleagues at McMaster and California State University—Fullerton.

"There is a trend towards reduced <u>energy</u> drink and <u>soda consumption</u> between 2013 and 2016 which is our latest data, but greater electronic device use, particularly TV, is linked to more consumption of added sugar and caffeine among adolescents," she said.

"Addressing this through counseling or <u>health promotion</u> could potentially help."

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Both sugar-sweetened and artificially sweetened drinks are linked to obesity, diabetes, dental cavities and poor sleep. Excess caffeine, as found in energy drinks, is associated with headaches, higher blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and chest pain as well as poor sleep. Consequently, both the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Canadian Pediatric Society urge physicians to educate youth and families about the risks, and to recommend against these drinks.

The study, published today in *PLOS ONE*, found that more than 27 per cent of teens exceed recommended sugar intake and 21 per cent exceed recommended caffeine from soda and energy drinks. Males consumed more sodas and energy drinks than females, and youth in Grade 8 consumed more than those in Grade 10.

Distracted eating has been found to be linked to adults watching TV alone, so the research team looked at information on 32,418 students in



Grades 8 and 10 from a national, repeated U.S. study called Monitoring the Future Survey.

The researchers found that despite the trend towards total reduced soda and energy drink intake between 2013 and 2016, it was evident that greater use of electronic devices, particularly TV, was linked to higher consumption of both.

An additional hour per day of TV was linked to a 32 per cent higher risk of exceeding World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations for sugar. Each hour more per day of TV was also linked to a 28 per cent increased risk of exceeding WHO caffeine recommendations.

Each hour per day of talking on a mobile phone or using social media was also associated with increased risk of exceeding both added sugar and caffeine recommendations.

The researchers were surprised to find video game use was only weakly linked to more caffeine consumption.

"Given the <u>marketing campaigns</u> that target video gamers, we expected a particularly strong association between caffeine intake from <u>energy</u> <u>drinks</u> or sodas with video game use, but TV was linked more strongly," said Morrison.

However, using a computer for school was linked to a lower likelihood of exceeding <u>sugar</u> consumption cut-offs.

Provided by McMaster University

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