

# Screen time linked to risk of myopia in young people

October 8 2021

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A new study published in *The Lancet Digital Health* has revealed a link between screen time and higher risk and severity of myopia, or short-sightedness, in children and young adults. The study was undertaken by researchers and eye health experts from Singapore, Australia, China and the UK, including Professor Rupert Bourne from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU).

The authors examined more than 3,000 studies investigating smart device exposure and myopia in children and young adults aged between three months old and 33 years old.

After analyzing and statistically combining the available studies, the authors revealed that high levels of smart device screen time, such as looking at a [mobile phone](#), is associated with around a 30% higher risk of myopia and, when combined with excessive computer use, that risk rose to around 80%.

The research comes as millions of children around the world have spent substantial time using remote learning methods following the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Professor Bourne, Professor of Ophthalmology in the Vision and Eye Research Institute at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), said:

"Around half the [global population](#) is expected to have myopia by 2050, so it is a health concern that is escalating quickly. Our study is the most comprehensive yet on this issue and shows a potential link between screen time and myopia in [young people](#).

"This research comes at a time when our children have been spending more time than ever looking at screens for long periods, due to school closures, and it is clear that urgent research is needed to further understand how exposure to digital devices can affect our eyes and vision. We also know that people underestimate their own [screen time](#), so future studies should use objective measures to capture this information."

Provided by Anglia Ruskin University

Citation: Screen time linked to risk of myopia in young people (2021, October 8) retrieved 23 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-10-screen-linked-myopia-young-people.html>

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