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Maternal Depression and Children's Screen Overuse

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ABSTRACT

Background: It is known that there are various factors associated with children's screen overuse. The aim of this study was to examine the effect of maternal depression on 2–5-year-old children's overuse of various household screen devices.

Methods: Participants were from the Internet-Cohort for Understanding of internet addiction Risk factors/Rescue in Early livelihood (I-CURE) study, an observational prospective cohort study in Korea. Screen time for six types of screen devices (smartphone, television, computer, tablet, video gaming console, and portable gaming console) were assessed by parental questionnaire. Maternal depression was measured by the Korean version of the Beck Depression Inventory II. Logistic regression models were run to determine the association between maternal depression and children's screen overuse.

Results: Maternal depression was associated with children's television overuse after adjusting for other factors (odds ratio, 1.954; $P = 0.034$). Contrary to expectation, the relationship between maternal depression and screen time was not present on other devices such as smartphones, computers and tablets.

Conclusion: Maternal depression is related with 2–5-year-old children's television overuse. Interventions in maternal depressive symptoms and the associated changes in parent-child relationship can be useful for preventing children's television overuse.

Keywords: Maternal Depression; Screen Overuse; Television; Smartphone; Computer; Tablet

INTRODUCTION

Children today are exposed to various and ubiquitous screen media devices.¹ There is no exception on this trend among young children, and the age of initial exposure to devices is becoming younger; at present, exposure begins at early infancy.² In Korea, 38% of infants aged less than 11 months had been exposed to screen media and the average time of their screen exposure is about 2.4 hours per day.³ There is a considerable amount of discussion on the consequences of screen exposure on school-aged children and adolescents. Excessive screen use has been associated with aggressive behavior,⁴ social and peer problems.⁵ However, there are comparatively few studies on preschool-aged children, because the widespread exposure to screen media devices is relatively recent; assessing the use of screen by young children is difficult.⁶ In addition, there is growing evidence that young children

