POPULATION HEALTH PROBLEMS

Screen Time

You are seeing 8-year-old Yousef in the developmental clinic. He lives with his parents, who both work fulltime, and his 5-year-old sister. Yousef is in Year 3 and when he is not at school he is looked after by his grandfather until his parents get home. Yousef was referred for an assessment due to concerns shared by his parents and his teachers about poor attention, declining academic performance and increased irritability.

Yousef's parents tell you that he has an irregular sleep pattern - often staying up until midnight - and he seems tired during the day. Yousef also complains of headaches and blurry vision.

Yousef's parents report that he spends up to 5 hours a day on devices, and has access to an iPhone, tablet and a computer; he likes to play games and watches short videos that he describes as, "brain rot". When his devices are taken away, Yousef becomes agitated and irritable, and shows no interest in outdoor activities or playing with other children. His parents worry that he is bored and upset so return the screens to him.

In the clinic Yousef is quiet and is playing on his tablet. His height is in the 25th centile and his weight is 91-98th centile.

Yousef's parents have read about ADHD and would like to know what you think.



1. What are the physical/emotional manifestations of increased screen time?

2. How would you be able to differentiate between screen-related problems and ADHD?

3. What advice and signposting can you offer Yousef's parents?

SUPPORTED BY: BACCH British Association for Community Child Health

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