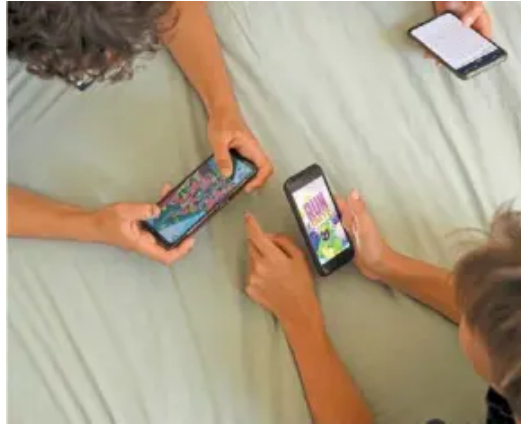


- Screen time / Bedtime / Sleep / Adolescent psychology

No screen in bed

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WHETHER it's watching a movie, listening to music, scrolling on social networks, or texting, young people's bedtime habits often involve screens. According to a Canadian study, these practices are raising concerns about the effects screens could have on preteens' quality of sleep.



Research, conducted by the University of Toronto and published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, highlights sleep disturbances linked to presleep screen use in young people. Researchers analysed data from more than 9,000 preteens aged 11 to 12, between 2018 and 2021. These young people were questioned about their sleep habits and their use of screens and social networks at bedtime. The scientists found that a quarter of the preteens had sleep disturbance. Nearly two in ten (16.2%) reported having been woken up at least once in the past week by phone calls, text messages or emails. Nearly 20% said they had used their phone or another device if they woke up during the night.

The paper reports that “in early adolescents, several bedtime screen use behaviours are associated with adverse sleep outcomes one year later, including sleep disturbance and shorter weekly sleep duration.” And when electronic devices are left on in bedrooms during the night, they are more readily available and all the more tempting to use.

In a news release, study lead author Dr Jason Nagata, associate professor of paediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco, says: “Ensuring adolescents get enough sleep is vital, as it supports their physical and mental growth and development. Our research found that leaving notifications on, even in silent mode, leads to less sleep compared to turning the phone off completely or keeping it outside the bedroom.”

“Adolescents can be extremely sensitive to phone notifications, often waking up instantly when they hear their phone,” continues Nagata. “Even if a phone is on silent or vibrate, adolescents may still check it overnight. Once they start reading or responding to messages, they can become more alert and activated.” – AFP Relaxnews