

Maternal perceptions of their children's screen time and its correlates among children attending Child Welfare Clinics in Jaffna Municipal Council MOH area

Deemanthika S¹, Kaveenshan P¹, Pushpanjali V¹, Puviluxshan R¹, Prabodhani I¹, Nirubaa U^{2,3}, Kumarendran B⁴

¹*Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

²*Professorial Paediatric Unit, Teaching Hospital Jaffna*

³*Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

⁴*Department of Community and Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

Background and Objective: Mothers' awareness of screen time plays a major role in children's mental, physical and social well-being. The objective of this study was to describe maternal perceptions on their children's screen time and its correlates among the children attending Child Welfare Clinics in the Jaffna Municipal Council Medical Office of Health (MOH) area.

Methods: This descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 423 mothers who attended 10 Child Welfare Clinics in the Jaffna Municipal Council MOH area from August 2020 to January 2022. We used convenient sampling as the sampling technique. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Data were summarized as frequencies and percentages and analyzed by using the one-way ANOVA test.

Results: Coverage of the intended sample was 91% (385/423). The majority of the respondents were aged 26 to 30 years (45.5%), housewives (55.3%), and studied up to A/L (40%). Components of knowledge on screen time included correct description of screen time (26.5%) and recommended maximum screen time for children below 2 years (28 %). There were mixed perceptions of screen time. The majority of mothers agreed with the desired perception while a considerable number of mothers had wrong perceptions. Less than half (45.5%) of participants agreed that they follow strategies to control screen time such as monitoring the child while they use screen media and setting time limits for screen media use. Maternal perception on screen time was associated with maternal education ($p < 0.001$), number of household members ($p = 0.034$), availability of personal television ($p < 0.001$), availability of personal gaming console ($p < 0.001$), and availability of other personal screen media ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusions: Approximately half of the mothers in the Jaffna Municipal Council MOH area have the desired knowledge on screen time. Most of the mothers have mixed perceptions with correct perceptions predominant. Maternal perceptions were associated with maternal education, number of household members, and the presence of gaming consoles. Over 50% of mothers did not have any strategies to reduce their children's screen time.

Keywords: Screen time, Maternal perceptions, Medical Officer of Health, Strategies