IJCRT.ORG ISSN : 2320-2882

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Impact Of Excessive Screen Time On Health And Role Of Homoeopathy

Dr Akash B Vaali (INTERN), BVVS Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital
Dr Neeta Patil MD (HOM), Assistant Professor Department of Human Anatomy
BVVS Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Bagalkot-587101

Abstract:

This literature review explores the rising phenomenon of screen overuse, particularly smartphone addiction, and its effects on physical, psychological, and social health. Excessive screen time has been linked to behavioral addiction, sleep disturbances, visual strain, and lifestyle-related disorders such as obesity and depression. [4,9] A systematic search of modern medical and homeopathic literature was conducted using databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus. The review highlights the neurobiological basis of screen addiction, complications including mental health disorders, and effective preventive strategies like digital detox, physical exercise, and mindfulness practices. [5,6]

From a homeopathic perspective, screen overuse is viewed as a manifestation of underlying constitutional susceptibility, with remedies like Nux vomica, Coffea cruda, and Aconite providing symptomatic relief[11,16] This paper aims to provide an integrated understanding for clinicians and researchers, while suggesting areas for future research.

Keywords: screen addiction, smartphone overuse, digital detox, lifestyle modification, homeopathy, behavioral health.

Introduction

Defination

Screen overuse refers to the excessive and often uncontrolled use of digital devices such as smartphones, computers, tablets, televisions, and gaming consoles, leading to negative physical, mental, and social consequences. It goes beyond the recommended healthy screen-time limits and interferes with daily functioning, sleep, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being[2].The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) recommends that children aged 2–4 years should not spend more than 1 hour per day on screens, while older children and adults are advised to balance screen time with physical activity and healthy sleep.[1]

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2016) defines screen overuse as exposure that exceeds age-appropriate guidelines and causes behavioral, academic, or health problems.

Global Rise of Screen Overuse

1)Digitalization of Daily Life

The rise of affordable smartphones, high-speed internet, and streaming services has made screens an inseparable part of work, education, and entertainment.

Globally, the number of internet users increased from 1.6 billion in 2008 to over 5.4 billion in 2024 (International Telecommunication Union, ITU).

2)Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

Remote work, online classes, and digital socialization drastically increased screen dependence.

Studies report a 60–80% rise in average daily screen time during the pandemic across all age groups (Nagata et al., 2021, JAMA Pediatrics).

3)Gaming and Social Media Expansion

Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and online gaming communities encourage prolonged use through addictive algorithms and reward-based systems.

The Global Digital Report (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2024) states that the average global daily screen time on mobile devices has crossed 7 hours per person.

4)Work-from-Home & Education Shift

Hybrid work culture and online education have normalized prolonged screen use.

UNESCO (2022) highlighted that over 1.5 billion learners were affected by school closures, making e-learning a global necessity.

5)Cultural and Lifestyle Changes

Digital entertainment has replaced many outdoor and social activities.

The rise of “digital leisure” (e.g., binge-watching, online shopping, esports) has contributed to increasing sedentary screen-based lifestyles.

Importance of addressing this issue.

1)Physical Health Protection[1]

Prolonged screen use is linked to obesity, poor posture, eye strain (digital eye syndrome), sleep disturbances, and cardiovascular risks. Addressing screen overuse helps prevent long-term lifestyle diseases (WHO, 2019).

2)Mental and Emotional Well-being[9]

Excessive screen exposure, especially social media, is associated with anxiety, depression, attention deficits, and low self-esteem (Twenge & Campbell, 2018, Journal of Adolescence).

Early intervention can reduce the risk of technology addiction and improve psychological resilience.

3)Child Development and Academic Performance[2]

For children, excessive screen time delays language, social interaction, and cognitive development.Controlled use promotes better concentration, creativity, and academic outcomes.

4)Work-life Balance and Productivity[4,5]

For adults, unmanaged screen overuse reduces work efficiency, increases fatigue, and causes burnout.Promoting healthy digital habits can improve focus and professional performance.

5)Social Relationships[9]

Overuse can lead to reduced face-to-face interaction and weak family bonds.

Addressing this issue supports healthy communication, empathy, and real-world socialization.

Global Public Health Concern

With average daily screen time exceeding 7 hours worldwide (We Are Social, 2024), this is no longer just an individual but a population-level challenge.

Governments, schools, and healthcare systems must address it to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases, mental health crises, and digital addiction.

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW:

The purpose of this review is to critically examine the phenomenon of screen overuse, its underlying causes, and its rapid global rise in the modern digital era. By consolidating findings from international health organizations, epidemiological studies, and social research, the review aims to highlight the health, psychological, and social implications of excessive screen exposure. It further seeks to emphasize the urgency of addressing screen overuse as a public health priority, while exploring strategies for prevention and management. Ultimately, the review intends to provide a comprehensive understanding that will guide clinicians, educators, policymakers, and families in promoting healthier digital habits and mitigating the risks associated with prolonged screen use.

Objectives

1. To review literature on the prevalence and causes of screen overuse.

2. To analyze the physical, psychological, and social complications associated with screen addiction.

3. To explore modern medical and holistic preventive strategies, including Homeopathy.

Methodology

Search Strategy:

Articles were searched in PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, and ResearchGate using keywords like “screen addiction,” “smartphone overuse,” “digital detox,” “lifestyle diseases,” and “homeopathy.”

Inclusion Criteria:

Peer-reviewed articles published between 2015–2025.

Studies focusing on screen addiction and health complications.

Both modern medicine and complementary medicine sources.

Exclusion Criteria:

Non-peer-reviewed blogs or unverified reports.

Articles not available in English.

Literature Review

1. Definition and Classification

Screen addiction defined as a behavioral addiction similar to gambling and gaming disorder (DSM-5 reference).

WHO classifications: Internet Gaming Disorder, Problematic Smartphone Use.

2. Epidemiology

Study	Year	Population	Key Findings
BMC Public Health	2025	School Children	Mobile addiction mediates sleep disturbance
IJCM&PH	2024	Adults 68%	exceeded healthy screen time limits
WHO Report	2023	Global 1 in 4 teens	show signs of screen addiction

3. Causes & Risk Factors

Biological: Dopamine reward system activation similar to substance abuse.

Psychological: Stress, anxiety, loneliness, peer pressure.

Social: Easy internet access, work-from-home lifestyle, online education.

Environmental: COVID-19 pandemic increased screen dependency.

4. Complications

A. Physical Health

Eye strain → Computer Vision Syndrome[5,7].

Sleep disorders → blue light suppressing melatonin[7].

Sedentary lifestyle → obesity, metabolic syndrome, hypertension[1].

B. Psychological

Anxiety, depression, low self-esteem.

Poor academic performance.

Emotional instability and aggression.

C. Social

Isolation, poor interpersonal relationships.

Increased cyberbullying.[5,9]

5. Preventive & Lifestyle Strategies

Preventive Level	Strategy	Example
Primary	Awareness & education	Digital wellbeing campaigns
Secondary	Early detection & counseling	Screening scales like SAS-SV
Tertiary	Rehabilitation CBT	group therapy, yoga, mindfulness

6. Homeopathic Perspective

Homeopathy views addiction as a constitutional imbalance.

Remedies address mental-emotional states caused by overuse:

Nux vomica [11,12,13]

Keynotes:

Overstrain from sedentary lifestyle, long hours at desk/computer.

Irritability, hypersensitivity to noise/light, easily angered

Complaints worse from late-night work, stimulants (coffee, energy drinks), loss of sleep.

Physical generals: Insomnia after mental strain; digestive troubles from irregular lifestyle; headache from excessive screen work.

Clinical relevance: Suited to modern "digital age" patients—students, professionals with overwork, overstudy, and nervous tension.

Coffea cruda[12,13,15]

Keynotes:

Sleeplessness from over-excitement of the mind, constant flow of thoughts after screen exposure.

Hypersensitivity to external impressions—light, sound, touch.

Headache like "nail driven into head" from overstimulation (bright screens, late-night scrolling).

Physical generals: Sleeplessness despite tiredness, nervous restlessness, neuralgic pains.

Clinical relevance: For insomnia and nervous excitement after prolonged device use or late night gaming.

Gelsemium sempervirens[11,16]

Keynotes:

Mental dullness, heaviness, inability to concentrate after long screen sessions.

Desire to be quiet, drowsy, with tremulous weakness.

Headache from eyestrain, especially occipital.

Physical generals: Drowsiness with muscular weakness; "brain-fag" from prolonged digital exposure.

Clinical relevance: Students/workers facing mental fatigue and performance anxiety worsened by screen dependence.

Phosphorus[14,15]

Keynotes:

Over-sensitivity to sensory impressions—light, sound, smell.

A nxiety, restlessness, burning in eyes, visual weakness from screen glare.

Craving for cold drinks; exhaustion after mental exertion.

Physical generals: Weak vision, photophobia, eye strain, nervous exhaustion.

Clinical relevance: Suited to cases where screen glare causes visual fatigue and nervous irritability.

Ruta graveolens[12]

Keynotes:

Eye strain from overuse of computers/reading, burning pain, blurred vision.

Weakness in ciliary muscles; “strained eyes” after prolonged close work.

General tendency to sprains, strains, overuse injuries.

Physical generals: Pain in eyes, worse from reading or screens; muscle fatigue.

Clinical relevance: A major remedy for digital eye syndrome due to screen overuse.

Argentum nitricum[11,13,14]

Keynotes:

Mental anxiety, impulsiveness, anticipatory fear worsened by overuse of gadgets.

Nervousness with trembling; gastric disturbances from anxiety.

Headache with visual disturbances (blurred sight, diplopia).

Physical generals: Disturbed digestion, diarrhea from anxiety; eye weakness from strain.

Clinical relevance: For patients with tech-related anxiety and nervous exhaustion.

Natrum muriaticum[14,15]

Keynotes:

Emotional effects of social-media overuse: isolation, sadness, grief, disappointment.

Aversion to company yet desires sympathy; introverted.

Headache like bursting or hammering, worse from sun and eye strain.

Physical generals: Sleep disturbances, eye fatigue, dryness.

Clinical relevance: Suited to emotional burnout and screen-induced migraines.

Auxiliary Advice:

Encourage patients to follow lifestyle guidelines like digital detox, healthy routines, and outdoor physical activities.

Discussion

Correlate findings with real-world clinical implications.

Discuss gaps in research, e.g., lack of homeopathy-specific studies on digital addiction.

Highlight importance of integrated management combining modern behavioral interventions with homeopathic constitutional care.

Conclusion

Screen overuse is a growing global concern, affecting physical health, mental well-being, child development, and social life. It's linked to sleep issues, eye strain, obesity, anxiety, and reduced social interaction. While digital devices are essential for work and learning, unregulated use poses health risks.

A balanced approach is needed—combining prevention, behaviour change, parental guidance, and healthcare support. Homoeopathy can offer additional help for symptoms like insomnia, eye strain, and mental fatigue, using remedies such as Nux vomica, Coffea cruda, and Ruta graveolens, based on individual needs.

Rather than avoiding technology, we must promote healthy screen habits. Future research should focus on measuring screen time, testing behaviour strategies, and evaluating supportive therapies to guide safe and effective use.

References

1.World Health Organization. (2019). Guidelines on Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Sleep for Children Under 5 Years of Age. WHO.

2.American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). Media and Young Minds. Pediatrics, 138(5).

3.International Telecommunication Union (ITU). (2024). Measuring digital development: Facts and figures.

4.Nagata, J. M., et al. (2021). Screen time use among US adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic: Findings from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development Study. JAMA Pediatrics, 175(11), 1188–1190.

5.We Are Social & Hootsuite. (2024). Global Digital Report 2024.

6.UNESCO. (2022). Education: From disruption to recovery.

7.World Health Organization. (2019). Guidelines on Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Sleep for Children Under 5 Years of Age.

8.American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). Media and Young Minds. Pediatrics, 138(5).

9.Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2018). Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents. Journal of Adolescence, 72, 146–159.

10.We Are Social & Hootsuite. (2024). Global Digital Report 2024.

11.Kent, J.T. (1905). Lectures on Homoeopathic Materia Medica. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers.Standard reference for mental and physical keynotes (e.g., Nux vomica, Phosphorus, Argentum nitricum).

12.Boericke, W. (1927). Pocket Manual of Homoeopathic Materia Medica with Repertory. Reprint: B. Jain Publishers, New Delhi.Concise materia medica with clinical indications (e.g., Ruta graveolens, Coffea cruda).

13.Allen, H.C. (1898). Keynotes and Characteristics with Comparisons of Some of the Leading Remedies of the Materia Medica. Philadelphia: Boericke & Tafel.Keynotes for Coffea, Nux vomica, Gelsemium, Argentum nitricum.

14.Hering, C. (1879–1891). The Guiding Symptoms of Our Materia Medica (10 vols.). Philadelphia: Boericke & Tafel.Descriptive details on Phosphorus, Natrum muriaticum, and others.

15.Clarke, J.H. (1900). A Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica. London: Homeopathic Publishing Company.Expanded remedy pictures and clinical experiences.

16.Farrington, E.A. (1887). Clinical Materia Medica. Philadelphia: Hahnemann Medical College.Helpful clinical indications for Nux vomica, Phosphorus, and Gelsemium.

17.Tyler, M.L. (1942). Homoeopathic Drug Pictures. London: Homeopathic Publishing Company.Narrative remedy pictures, often used for teaching; useful for mental/emotional keynotes.

18.Phatak, S.R. (1977). Materia Medica of Homoeopathic Medicines. Pune: S.R. Phatak.Clear,symptom-based description of remedies in practical language.