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Puja Singh

Nowgong College (Autonomous), Nagaon, Assam, India

Dr. Jyotismita Das

Department of Zoology, Nowgong College (Autonomous), Nagaon, Assam, India

Zuganta Jyoti Das Assam University, Silchar, Assam, India

Effect of digital technology on our brain health

Puja Singh, Dr. Jyotismita Das and Zuganta Jyoti Das

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Abstract

Background: Digital technology is a source of information, source of entertainment and a platform for social interaction and making new friends. Besides, researchers found from their research that it cause a bad effect on our health, especially on our brain health due to excessive use of digital gadgets.

Aim: Effect of digital technology on our brain health.

Materials and Methods: The data is collected from pub med/Medline, Google scholar.

Result: After reviewing many research papers, we can say that digital technology has both its own pros and cons; we have to use digital technology a controlled way to reduce its harmful effect on the brain health.

Conclusion: We discussed both good and bad effects of digital technology on our brain health but we have to study this topic on the basis of other aspect also like its effect after COVID-19 pandemic, effect on GenZ generation etc. to come up with clearer result, than what we have now.

Keywords: Digital technology, internet, brain health, social media

Introduction

According to World Health Organisation, a good brain health is a state in which every individual can realise their own abilities and optimize their cognitive, emotional, psychological and behavioural functioning to cope with life situations. Brain health conditions emerge throughout the life course and are characterised by disruption in normal brain and functioning [1]. The human brain craves for information, and there was a revolution that began around 1980 called digital revolution, which is now become a large store house of unlimited information and this revolution become solution for that craving of human brain. In the last 3-4 decades digital technology has emerged rapidly day by day and with it the human brain also tries to adapt itself with every new experience with it. Though at first we thought digital technology was a helpful tool in our daily lives but with the passage of time the neurologist come to know that it has also a harmful effect on brain health. Because of being surrounded by all kinds of technologies, we suffer from heightened attention deficit symptoms, impaired emotional and social isolation, unpaired brain development, disrupted sleep etc. [3] According to a Global Overview report 2021, from 7.83 billion total population 4.66 billion people have access to internet and this number increasing rapidly every day [2]. In this review report, we try to abridge all good and bad effects of digital technology on our brain health.

Materials and Methods

The related data on effect of digital technology on our brain health were recouping from the digital data bases like Google scholar, pub med/Medline, and Google search engine.

Results and Discussion

In the course of adaptation with the new digital technologies we forget that for proper functioning of our brain it needs proper rest, sleep and full concentration and time to analyse new information. As there is an increased in the time we spend on technology and digital screens, its effects on our brain health increases day by day ^[3]. According to 2021 screen time statics report, most people on average, spend 3 hours and 15 minutes on phones ^[4]. In Table.1 we mention all the possible harmful effect of digital technology on human brain health which is found from reviewing different research papers.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Jyotismita Das Department of Zoology, Nowgong College (Autonomous), Nagaon, Assam, India In spite of bad effects of digital technology, the new studies show that it has several benefits on brain health. The Table.2. Shows the benefits on brain health. Besides, on the given Table.2. There are also some other positive effects of digital technology on our mental health, like improving depression, stress release, anxiety control etc. These are

found through different studies but it needs elaborate research for authentication ^[56, 57, 58, 59, 60]. We review some research papers related to the effect of digital technology on our brain health. The outcomes of the research papers are given below in Table.3.

Table 1: The Name of Harmful Effect of Digital Technology on Our Brain Health

Serial No.	Name of Harmful Effect on Our Brain	Findings	
1	Reduced Attention	A 2014 meta-analysis indicates a correlation between media, technology use and attention problems. There is a link between extensive screen time and symptoms of attention deficien hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) [5, 6, 7, 8, 9].	
2	Different studies shows that spending extensive period of time with digital media translate spending less in time communicating face to face which impaired intelligence [10, 11, 12, 13]		
3	Technology Addiction	Study shows that students with internet addiction are likely to suffer from ADHD symptoms than from other psychiatric disorder. But between ADHD symptoms and internet addiction link is not confirmed yet [14, 15, 6, 17, 18, 19].	
4	Social Isolation	Ninety percent of young adults in the U.S use social media and they visit the platform daily. Paradoxically, social media use is linked with social isolation which cause poor health outcomes and increase mortality [20, 21, 22].	
5	Impact on Cognitive Development	Studies shows that children with daily basis of screen time has been associate with poorer language development executive functioning [23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28].	
6	Effect on Sleep	Recent studies indicates that screen exposure disrupts sleep, which can have negative effect on cognition and behaviour of the individual [29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34].	
7	Grey Matter Atrophy	Multiple studies have shown atrophy (loss of tissue volume) in grey matter areas in internet/gaming addiction [35].	

Table 2: The Name of the Beneficial Effect of Digital Technology on Our Brain Health

Serial No.	Name of Beneficial Effect on Our Brain	Findings	
1	Neural Exercise	The finding suggest that searching online may be form of brain neural exercise and also suggest that searching may remain novel and mentally stimulating process then after continued practice [36, 37, 38, 39].	
2	Internet Training and Brain Functioning	Many study suggest that short term internet search training may increase white matter integrity in the right superior longitudinal fasciculus which could result from increased myelination [40, 41, 42, 43].	
3	Cognitive Training	In a meta-analysis of computerized cognitive training investigation found an overall moderate effect on cognition in mild cognitive impairment across 17 trials small to moderate effect were reported for global cognition attention working memory and learning abilities [44, 45, 46, 47].	
4	Multitasking Skills	Studies shows that the multitasking training improve other skills, including working memory and divided and sustained attention [48, 49, 50, 51].	
5	Working Memory and Fluid Intelligence	rking Memory and The study results indicates that successful transfer of improved working memory to improved fluid intelligence measures with a dose-dependent training effect [52, 53].	
6	Visual Attention Reaction Time	Different finding suggest that playing action video games can improve cognitive and motor skills that improve surgical skills and lower error roles in the operating room [54, 55].	

Table 3: Findings of different research papers on the effect of digital technology on our brain health.

Serial No.	Author	Study Aim	Findings
1	Choudhury and Mcknny, 2013	Digital media, the developing brain and the interpretive plasticity, neuroplasticity.	By analysing the neurological adolescent in the digital age as a society extended mind. Firstly, in the sense that adolescent cognition is distributed across brain, body and digital media tools and secondly by viewing adolescent cognition as enabled and transformed b the institution of neuroscience [61].
2	David A, Ziegler I, Mishra Jyoti And Adam Gazzley Z, 2015	The acute and chronic impact of technology on our brain.	A cursory view of the literatine seems to media multitasking and early life exposure in a negative light, a more nuanced exploration shows some profoundly promise aspect of hoe new technology might be harassed to enhance cognition in at risk population, leading to better lives [62].
3	Reid Chassiakos Y, Redecky J, Christakis D, Moreno M and Cross C, 2016	Children and Adolescents and digital media.	The effect of media use on children and adolescent is minimize by parent by understanding their own roles in modelling appropriate media use and balance between media time another activities [63].
4	Ra.C.Cho J, Stone M, De La Carda J, Golden son N and Moroney E, <i>et</i> <i>al</i> , 2018	Association of digital medial use with subsequent symptoms of attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder among adolescent.	Among adolescent followed up over 2 years there was statically significant but modest association between higher frequency of digital use and subsequent symptoms of ADHD. Further research need to determined whether this association is casual [64].
1 5	Firth J, Torous J, Stubbs B, Firth J, Steiner G and		The internet can produce both acute and sustained alternation in each of these areas of cognition, which may be reflected in changes in the brain.

	Smith L, et al, 2019	cognition.	And for further research how the outcome of brain cognition and brain impact on ages of internet youth different from elderly [65].
6	Ketlewell J, Das Nair R, and Radford K, 2019	A systematic review of personal smart technologies used to improve outcomes in adults either acquired brain injuries.	At present there is insufficient evidence to support the clinical benefit of personal smart technology to improve outcomes in acquired brain injury, researchers need to study to measure the potential harmful effect [66].
7	Hutton J., Dudley J, Horowitz, Krus J, Dewitt J and Hooland S, 2019	Association between screens based media use and brain white matter integuity in preschool aged children.	This study found in association between increased screen based media and use, compared with the AAP guidelines and lower micro structural intiguity of brain white matter traits supporting language and emergent literacy skills in prekindergarten children [67].
8	Abdelrahman N R, Polventro M, Wending A, Goetz C and Arnez B, 2020	Brain health: Attitudes towards technology adoption in older adults.	This study suggest that in order to promote the use of technology in older adults, one need to consider wider contextualises, not only design peruses but older adults rational for using technology and their socio- ecological context [68].
9	Korte Martin, 2020	The impact of the digital revolution on human brain and behaviour: where do we stand?	Digital media do have an impact on human psychological well being and cognitive performance and this depends on total screen time and what people actually doing in the digital environment [69].
10	Small W, Lee J and Bookheimer S, 2020	Brain health consequence of digital technology use.	Researchers elucidate both help and harm of brain by digital technology but through specific program, videogame etc. We can improve the harmful effect of it and for further research needs to elucidate mechanism and casual relation between technology use and brain health [3].

Conclusions

The effect of digital technology on our brain health has both good and bad sides, but anything of too much is harmful. So, if we over use these technologies, it will have a harmful effect on our brain health. From the above discussion, we come to know that digital technology has its own pros and cons. Our engagement with technology is increasing swiftly and due to COVID-19 pandemic, a large population of the world turns its work place and study institution to on line platforms. For last two years, due to COVID-19, people have to spend more time online than usual. And it creates a new evolution in the field of digital technology. Researchers have a great opportunity to study deeply about the effect of digital technology on our brain health after the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of increased online involvement, it may give different results or new information about this topic. Beside this for future research, researchers can also study the brain health and its development in GenZ generation because this generation is the first to be born into a time when this digital technology existed. GenZ are the first digital native among all other past generations because they were born between 1997 and 2012. Because of their exposure with digital technology just after the birth, researchers can get clearer results of their study on this type of topic in case of GenZ generation than millennial and GenX generation.

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