

Author's Reply: Television Viewing and Overweight and Obesity amongst Children

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We are extremely thankful for the learned reader for critically going through our research work and making valuable comments on our study.^[1] We agree to the comments and would like to further elucidate certain issues in relation to the comments made.

We would further like to share with readers of *Biomedical Journal* that the linking of TV watching to obesity was documented more than 25 years ago.^[2] Since then, extensive research has confirmed the link between TV viewing and obesity in children and adults. Research studies which followed children over long periods of time have consistently found that the more TV children watch, the more likely they are to gain excess weight.^[3] Studies designed to reduce children's TV use have found improvements in body mass index (BMI), body fat, and other obesity-related measures.^[4]

With economic transitions and rapid modernization, the duration of time spent on the leisure time sedentary activities like TV viewing, video games, mobiles, tablets, iPads, laptops, and other electronic gadgets among children has tremendously increased. Earlier it was mainly TV viewing, but now with pouring in of electronic gadgets, children are also spending a lot of time on these gadgets. Therefore, it is very true that time spent on TV viewing cannot alone be linked to childhood overweight and obesity; it is basically the lack of physical activity which is an important risk factor for development of obesity.

Concurrent with decrease in energy expenditure, increased time for leisure activities has been associated with the epidemic of obesity.^[2] In a study from Greece, the effect of TV viewing time on childhood obesity was

found to be independent of physical activity status and may be attributed to the increased total energy intake during TV watching.^[5] There are many associated factors which could be linked to obesity and duration of time spent on TV, computer, mobiles, and video games, like increased snacking behavior, motivation to consume junk food by advertisements, and interference with normal sleep patterns.

To combat the current epidemic of obesity among children, we will require a major change in society's recognition to adverse impact of duration of time spent on electronic gadgets like TV, mobiles, computers, laptops, iPads, and video games.

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