

Too Much TV Causes Brain Damage!

You may have heard adults, maybe your parents, say, "TV will rot your brain!" Well, as it turns out, much to most kids dismay, those adults may be right.

Although it may be fun, we all know that watching a lot of TV isn't that good for us. Eye problems, weight management issues, sleep problems, attention problems, homework problems, and parent problems are all associated with watching a lot of TV. Now we can add brain damage to that list! Yeah... brain damage!



According to a new study, watching too much television can change the structure of a child's brain in a damaging way.

Researchers at Tohoku University in Japan studied 276 children from ages 5 to 18. All of these children watched between two and four hours of TV per day. The average amount of TV among the group was just over two hours a day.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) brain scans showed that children who spent the most time watching TV had greater amounts of gray matter around the frontopolar cortex of their brains. The frontopolar cortex is the area at the front of the frontal lobe - just behind your forehead.

Maybe you're thinking that more gray matter would be a good thing. After all, grey matter contains most of the brain's neuronal cell bodies. It's in areas of the brain involved in muscle control and sensory perception - such as seeing and hearing, memory, emotions, speech, decision making, and self-control. This is important stuff! But more gray matter in the frontopolar cortex is not a good thing. According to the researchers, it's linked with lower verbal intelligence.

The researchers suggested that this gray matter needed to be thinned down during childhood in order to operate efficiently. Children with superior IQs show the most amount of cortical thinning in these areas, the team wrote. In a nutshell, kids with higher IQs had less grey matter in their frontopolar cortex.

The team pointed out that TV programs do not advance to a higher level, speed up, or vary. In other words, TV does not get harder to watch the more you watch it. It doesn't stimulate your brain.

The researchers, and I'm sure most parents, suggested more stimulating activities as alternatives to TV. Here is a short suggestion list: playing a sport, learning a new language, learning a musical instrument, reading a different style book, taking up a new hobby, jigsaw, crossword, and math puzzles, meditating, joining a club or community group, volunteering, and even having a meaningful chat with a friend about current affairs involves brain exercise.

So, try to limit how much TV you watch. It may seem fun to sit for hours watching your favorite shows, but it isn't good for you.

Here's the Jellybean Challenge!

Just once a day - Brush your teeth with your opposite hand!

(so if you are right handed - brush with your left and vice versa)

Now, let's try a little fill in the blank exercise!

I'm very interested in _____ and today I will learn something about it!

I've always wanted to try _____. (sport)

I'd like to play the _____. (musical instrument)

I'd like to learn to speak _____. (new language)