Kristen Koppers

English 4 -Research Paper

Mrs. Koppers

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**Smartphones Anonymous**

The idea of cell phone addiction is not just an idea. There has been proven factual evidence that people have depended on a cell phone as a means of comfort in society. Fiending for the cellular device. But in this case why, and what is so pleasing about a cell phone, social media only makes one more anti-social and the pointless games eventually get old. Yes, there is means of communication but everyone who has an iPhone, or an android know that throughout their day it is not only texting and talking that is going on, there is a bigger picture. Fiending for a cell phone due to psychological reasons such as a lack of dopamine or endorphins which are triggered by receiving a text or seeing something one has not seen a while on your Facebook news feed, but at one point is it too much. Especially when children are exposed to these things at such a young age. That prolonged time does only bad to a developing brain especially on learning skills such as attention, concentration and focus

Technology like smartphones has only been in existence since 1992 with the Simon Personal Communicator, a device created by IBM way before the thought of something we would come to call an iPhone this device came out 15 years before the original and first iPhone. Phones have also changed with time and evolved. Today’s phones are very different from the ones that originally came out. On the phones of today, the internet, social media, and information can be easily accessible. With this higher technology many trends have come about with them, such as being almost forced into the mindset they must text back at the same minute they receive a text as well as the situation that one is rewarded for keeping a day to day streak on snapchat with somebody. In an article by Doctor Nicholas Kardaras, he states “the new tech is more intense”, “more stimulating” and “more penetrating”. Dr. Kardaras, continues by saying the penetration goes beyond penetrating brains that is also affects people’s “psyches”. The device is drawing people in more and more each day and once one goes on to snapchat it leads to one seeing something on Facebook, Instagram or twitter and now they are sucked into this digital realm in which nothing matters other than what is right in front of your face. In fact, many may not see this as a huge problem, but an addiction is still an addiction it comes in hundreds of different forms, none of them positive in any way. The over conformity causes things to be taken to the extreme, even something such as drinking water can be brought to an extreme in which can be deadly. All in all, addiction is one of the most negative aspects of life and smartphones are only provoking this.

In this paper I will argue that, cellphone addiction is real and that it comes with major problems hurting all ages exposed to it. For some the cell phone is only a means of communication and this is reflected in older people such as parents and grandparents who only find the phones to talk to and contact one another. The younger generation and with young children it is used very different, there is more than just texting and call going on in the devices of a adult in their thirty’s and twenty’s and adolescent and young children. Them being exposed to these phones at ages as early as 5 years or even younger, there are serious mental problems that ensue. One problem that is caused by prolonged cell phone use is a shortened attention span which is important in a child’s brain as they must absorb lots of new information in their first 10-15 years of life. Yes, the process slows down but it is continuous and cell phones are only stopping this from occurring. In an article by Cris Rowan a writer for CNN, she talks about the reasons why kids should not have handheld devices. She states her first reason as “Rapid Brain Growth” and continues to explain that from zero to two and infants brain “triples in size” and continues to be in “rapid development” until twenty-one years of age. Rowan explains that “stimulation to a developing brain caused by overexposure to technologies” is linked to “attention deficit, cognitive delays, impaired learning” and so on. All of which hurts kids in the futured when it comes to things such as school and socializing. This is one of the many new problems being introduces because of the overexposure to handheld devices. Another, reason she states for kids not having devices under the age of 12 is that “one in three children now enter school developmentally delayed, negatively impacting literacy and academic achievement”. As I already said this hurts their ability to absorb the information they need to do good and school and essentially life, making it much harder for the students to understand things they should easily. Alice G. Walton talks about a study done in the U.S which. “had young people give up their phones, found that they had preformed worse” when they are “in withdrawal”. The teens participating in the study felt symptoms like “increase heart rate and blood pressure” and a “sense of loss”. This is like the symptoms drug addicts feel while going through withdrawal from the drug or drugs they are addicted to. Similar to what drugs make the addicts feel the people used in the study felt it was harder to do things without their phones being on or near them, knowingly that they could not go on their phones if they wanted to. Depriving them from their essential drug (cellphones) made their ability to do things more efficiently went down. It is easier for them to do stuff with their cellphones. Similar to an addict feeling relived once they get their share of a drug after trying to with draw.

For example, someone could be conversating with a person who was on their phones and they only respond with a “yeah”, “mhmm” or a(n) “what did you say, again?” as if they were elderly people hard of hearing with no aid. But it is not only the attention that is the problem as the human body adapts to the cell phone use a user now blocks out all outside information and doesn’t hear anything but what is on the phone. This is an example of a problem that did not exist 20 years ago when pagers were still around. Another problem caused with the overuse of cell phones is actual addiction and withdrawal due to the way cell phones reconfigure the brain. Without cell phones many have stated feelings of “emptiness”, “lost”, “pointless”, and even “useless” as they leave their cell phone at home or forget to charge them. But for many this is a reality. Their lives depend on these cell phones and taking them away can lead to problems such as depression and a feeling of being astray. In this case even I have experienced this as the overt cell phone use has let to hours of procrasonation and a feeling of being lost and useless when trying to complete physical or mental tasks without my phone by my side. Other problems associated with cell phone use include, text neck, eye strain and even infertility in the male category. This is not like drugs where someone can use a phone one time and now their spine is misaligned because their head has been tilted forward too far and is now putting pressure all down their spine. This is a huge problem especially with people who already have spinal problems such as scoliosis or Kyphosis which involve the spine being shaped or misaligned instead of being a straight line it is that of a banana shape. Yes, this is a possibility as people using cell phones tend to lean over and hang their head forward. This puts over 60lbs of downwards force on the spine and neck causing it to be molded in such a way that it can almost stay drooped down even when one is not using a(n) phone. Included in this list of problems is eye strain which an even bigger problem as constant cell phone use has led to a need for prescription glasses as well as blue light filtering glasses. The users’ eyes can become slowed down and almost frantic as they cannot focus on anything for a good 30 minutes following the hours of usage. This eye strain leads to headaches, irritated eyes and blurry vision which impedes many activities physically that one would need the ability of sight and focus but with a pounding headache and sore, blurry eyes who would be able to partake in physical activity. It would be like asking somebody with a fever to go play football in 100-degree weather as if they will not collapse from heat stroke. The problems can only worsen with time, and this is true with all addiction and dependency, it can only bring on more side-effects and problems.

There are also many people who believe that the though of being addicted to a cellphone is not true. These people do not think that cellphone addiction is a really thing. In an article by Melissa Jayne Kinsey a writer for slate.com she calls the term smartphone addiction a “silly notion “for smartphone overuse and that it is silly to think that it is in fact a medical disorder. Kinsey believes that being addicted to a smartphone is unreal and that it is not a problem. Kinsey goes on to say that a possibility for medicalizing phones is because medicalizing excessive phone usage can be a “handy excuse for obtuse behavior”. Kinsey is essentially trying to say that one can easily control the usage of their phone and that not being able to have the self-control to put it down is absurd. Kinsey goes on to say that the term phone addiction is exaggerating a common bed habit many people have, she says that at the same time we are “trivializing the burden of substance abuse”. By saying trivializing Kinsey means putting cellphone addiction as a real thing and problem we take away the seriousness of addictions that are intensely real to the people around them and the people going through it like drug or alcohol addiction and making it seem less important than it really is. Once again to discredit cellphone addiction as a real addiction and from medicalizing it she says that unlike a disease there is no direct cause or a actual way to treat such thing.

Although it is easy to understand and to see where Kinsey is coming from, the reality is much more complicated than just putting the phone down. In article on CNN by Sandee LaMotte, she informs us about a Pew Research study where it is found that “fifty-nine percent of people” ages eighteen to thirty-three have reported texting and driving. Cellphones are addictive because the apps and content that are being accessed is something that people feel they need to be accessing without being able to wait. These people are often going back on it because they are thinking about what it is they could be missing by not being on their phone. They could be missing a text, phone call or snapchat. It is a habit to go on the phone check, put it down and then continue to go back on it. The word habit is often used to define addiction. In another article by Amy Nay, she quotes a teenager admitting to being nonstop on her cellphone or table the teenager admits by saying “so, yeah, I’m on my phone or tablet, like a majority of the day, like all the time”. Being on a handheld device “majority of the day” sounds like an addiction because the teen is not able to put it down or think of something better that she can do to not be on it. The odds are she rather be on her cellphone than doing anything else. Many times, talking is the last thing people are doing on their phones. It is not just that cellphones are addicting it is what is on the cellphone that makes them addict to teenager, adults and children. In an article by Alice G. Walton, on phone addiction and its mental health risk, she talks about why it is that teens are so addicted to their phones. Walton makes a good point by saying that a lot of the times it is not games or texting going on with teens “they’re on social media”. Teens are addicted to being on their cellphones because they are addicted to the social media outlets they have installed on the phones. Just like an addiction having consequences of doing the addiction so much, there are also real consequences to being on a cellphone so much. This is because cellphone addiction is a real thing. If being addicted to a cellphone or smartphone was not real there would not be these consequences to it, like needing glasses. It does not and should not have to be a crack or meth addiction to be taken seriously. The consequences are not a “silly notion” either, the tolls that overexposure to phones brings can in fact be crippling. Many of these problems as talked about in previous paragraph include, neck problems, eye problems which can lead to possibly going blind and headaches, difficulty to concentrate, and learning deficiencies in kids. The overexposure due to being addicted and so attached hurt our, bodies, brain and over all health, that it very real to be justfied as a silly notion or excuse for someone’s behavior.

Annotated Bibliography

Hazanchuk, Anat. “10 Years of Using a Cell Phone.” Ooma, 6 Oct. 2016, [www.ooma.com/blog/10-years-using-cell-phone/](http://www.ooma.com/blog/10-years-using-cell-phone/) . Accessed 27 Feb. 2018. The author Ms. Hazanchuk goes through the factual evidence based off the 10 years that smart phones have been in the hands of the public. The physical effects that have come with this sort of technology abuse start with eye strain and can end with car accidents due to distracted driving or depression as dopamine levels drop in your brain. In the document it also describes feeling that are all too common such as a ghost phone in which you feel vibrations and alerts that aren’t there and a heightened sense of time pressure such as trying to plan out days where you are involved in more than 2-3 activities individually. The urge to respond to messages is prioritized over actual physical activity in one’s mind.

“How Is Your Phone Changing You?” Youtube, uploaded by ASAP Science, Chad Hurley, 2 June 2016, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6CBb3yX9Zs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6CBb3yX9Zs) . Accessed 27 Feb. 2018. The authors of the video state how 6 million people worldwide own smart phone. This in fact has brought a variety of results and problems such as myopathy/ near sighted-ness, dopamine is caused by stimulation from app use and the constant blue light creates a burning hole in your eyes.

With the overuse of smartphones many have sought out taking smartphone vacations to further recover from all of the negatives to using cellular devices. Another list of problems stated in the video were things such as a disruption in a human sleep cycle/circadian rhythm and a lack of REM sleep which is extremely beneficial to the human brain in learning. The whole idea presented in the video is that smartphones are changing the human brain and causing long term effects negatively on over 50% of its users.

Kardaras, Nicholas, Dr. “Plugged-in and Tuned-out: The Dangers of Teenage Virtual Addiction.” Fox News, 21st Century Fox, 26 Sept. 2014, [www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/09/26/plugged-in-and-tuned-out-how-to-handle-teenage-virtual-addiction.html](http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/09/26/plugged-in-and-tuned-out-how-to-handle-teenage-virtual-addiction.html) . Accessed 27 Feb. 2018. This author Doctor Kardaras writes on how cell phones can only cause negative factors on development in the human brain during adolescence and early adulthood. Ranging from things such as learning and attention deficiencies to permanent blindness/ vision loss. The author also brings up the idea that major cell phone use in children is part of laziness in the parents part for raising and taking care of their child as they are so distracted by this new found virtual world. Little do they know now their child may be stuck with ADD for the rest of their lives or even blindness as blue light burns images into the retina.

Kindred, Teresa. “The Amazing Thing That Happened When I Locked My Cell Phone in My Car.” Huffington Post, Janet Balis, 18 Dec. 2016, [www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/cell-phone-addiction\_b\_8786500.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/cell-phone-addiction_b_8786500.html). Accessed 2 Feb. 2018. This article was in the perspective of a person who had been in a position in which they were unable to access their phone and had noticed how great life was without a phone. This article emphasizes how we miss millions of little things when were sucked into these cell phone that do much more than just being a cell phone.

Kinsey, Melissa Jayne. “The iPhone Intervention.” Slate, Jacob Weisberg, 31 Aug. 2015, [www.slate.com/articles/technology/future\_tense/2015/08/smartphone\_addiction\_is\_not\_a\_real\_diagnosis.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2015/08/smartphone_addiction_is_not_a_real_diagnosis.html) Accessed 27 Feb. 2018. In Kinsey’s article the idea and main point is that she is trying to explain that there could be no such thing as cell phone addiction. Kinsey writes that cell phone overuse should not be labeled as an addiction but rather a bad habit with negative consequences and side effects. The idea presented is that phones do tend to lure us in, but that is no excuse to be sucked in and stuck in a realm of virtual life. Another idea brought up is that with the overuse and common everyday use of something many try to coin that item as addicting such as coffee or energy drinks.

LaMotte, Sandee. “Smartphone Addiction Could Be Changing Your Brain.” CNN, Ted Turner, 1 Dec. 2017, [www.cnn.com/2017/11/30/health/smartphone-addiction-study/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2017/11/30/health/smartphone-addiction-study/index.html). Accessed 2 Feb. 2018. This article is written on how children and young adults who have been given phones at a young age have higher amounts of GABA neurotransmitters in their brain, which in turn causes neurons to fire off slower and lower the ability in one’s attention span and memory. The article also states how 50% of children believe their parents use smartphones much too often. The article gives the idea, that the overuse of cell phones is a greater problem to all who own iPhone, iPod ,android, Samsung ... etc.

Nay, Amy. “Overexposure to Cell Phones Causing New Eye Problems.” KUTV, 18 Feb. 2016, <http://kutv.com/news/local/overexposure-to-cell-phones-causing-new-eye-problems> Accessed 27 Feb. 2018. This article is written on an account in which the author goes through physical problems upon using a cell phone daily, such as a glimpse of myopathy and eye strain due to the blue light emitted from the smart phone. Upon researching similar side effects the author comes to find out that every problem occurring leads back to the overuse of cell phones, tablets, computers and other blue light emitting devices. This article goes to show that cell phones like other hobby inducing items should be used in moderation.

Rowan, Cris. “10 Reasons Why Handheld Devices Should Be Banned for Children under the Age of 12.” Huffington Post, 6 Dec. 2017, [www.huffingtonpost.com/cris-rowan/10-reasons-why-handheld-devices-should-be-banned\_b\_4899218.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cris-rowan/10-reasons-why-handheld-devices-should-be-banned_b_4899218.html) . Accessed 27 Feb. 2018. Ms. Rowans article writes on all of the negatives possibly brought about by cell phone use at ages early as 2 years old. The article also includes a possible guideline based on the age and a(n) limit based on the daily amount of stimulation from technology that is allowed to fully allow ones child to develop. Along with Rowans recommended guidelines there is a list of all possible side effects and negatives ranging from; Radiation, Addiction, Aggression, Mental Illness, Sleep Deprivation, and Delayed Development... All which have no positive enhancements on a child’s growing mind and body. But with these negatives Rowans states the solution is to give the child technology but only in moderation.

Walton, Alice G. “Phone Addiction Is Real -- and so Are Its Mental Health Risks.” Forbes, B.C Forbes, 11 Dec. 2017, [www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2017/12/11/phone-addiction-is-real-and-so-are-its-mental-health-risks/#3856a7e513df](http://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2017/12/11/phone-addiction-is-real-and-so-are-its-mental-health-risks/#3856a7e513df). Accessed 2 Feb. 2018. This author writes on how for the last 5 years people have felt addicted to their phones as well as social media and with that many people have been diagnosed with mental health issues due to this same technology. Also written on was the study in which students were forced to give up their phones for an entire school day and felt feelings of withdraw with a spike in blood pressure and heart rate. This just goes to show cell phones are nothing but negative when it comes to day to day tasks and being successful.

Work Cited

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Walton, Alice G. “Phone Addiction Is Real -- and so Are Its Mental Health Risks.” Forbes, B.C Forbes, 11 Dec. 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2017/12/11/phone-addiction-is-real-and-so-are-its-mental-health-risks/#3856a7e513df. Accessed 2 Feb. 2018.