

Impact of Cable Television on Lives of Patients Visiting a Teaching Hospital in Karachi, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

A cross sectional survey was conducted during August 2014 to October 2014, to identify the impact of cable television channels on lives of the people, in Karachi, Pakistan. Three hundred participants were selected through convenience sampling and a pre-tested structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analyzed in SPSS version 19.0. About 15% of participants were more than 40 years. About 62% were females in the study sample. Regression analysis showed that viewing television at night impacts work performance (OR: 1.39; 95% CI: 0.81-2.37), sleep (OR: 1.07; 95% CI: 0.63-1.81), family life (OR: 1.52; 95% CI: 0.89-2.60) and social life (OR: 1.38; 95% CI: 0.78-2.42).

To minimize the adverse impact of the cable television it is imperative to monitor and control individual screen time, to avoid its adverse impact work performance, sleep, social life and overall health.

Key words: Cable television, media, social life, family life, work performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction of cable television networks has brought about a revolutionary change in the lives of people. Developing countries like Pakistan have seen a dramatic transformation in communication technology over the recent past¹. About hundred cable television channels broadcast a variety of programs, including news updates, religious shows, and music programs and sports news.

Cable television has favorably influenced society. It has created awareness about the social, economic, political and health issues in society. Domestic violence has received attention and women rights have been highlighted².

Cable television viewing also has unfavorable influence on mental and physical health. It has been associated with violence, hostile and malicious behavior, anxiety, depression, and insomnia³. Presence of cable television in bedroom increases risk of obesity and smoking, especially among teenagers who spends less time in

outdoor activities and have poor academic performance^{4,5}. Young adults watching cable television are more likely to have antisocial personality disorder and it reduces time for healthy activities such as exercise, social work and family time⁶.

Limited data is available regarding impact of cable television in Pakistan. Therefore, this study was designed to identify the impact of cable television channels on lives of the people, visiting a teaching hospital in Karachi, Pakistan.

MATERIALS & METHODS

A cross sectional survey was conducted during August 2014 to October 2014 in a tertiary care hospital of Karachi-Pakistan. Three hundred individuals between 18 to 50 years were recruited through convenience sampling. Written informed consent was obtained from the study participants. The study was approved by the departmental research committee of the Aga Khan University.

A pre-tested structured questionnaire was developed on the basis of thorough literature search. The questionnaire was composed of 02 sections. First section included demographic details while the second part included details about cable television viewing practices and about the possible impact of it on family life, social life, sleep, cultural norms and values. Moreover, the data collectors were trained before data collection to eliminate the chance of interviewer bias.

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Data was double entered and analyzed in SPSS version 19.0. Proportions were calculated and logistic regression analysis was performed to observe the impact of different hours of television viewing and its impact on various aspects of life. All the analysis was two-tailed and a p-value of 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of study participants (n=300)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age		
20 to 30 years	189	63.0
30 to 40 years	66	22.0
More than 40 years	45	15.0
Gender		
Male	113	37.7
Female	187	62.3
Marital Status		
Never married	225	75.0
Married	75	25.0
Educational Status		
Can read or write	50	16.7
Primary (0-5)	111	37.0
Secondary (6-9)	139	46.3
Occupational Status		
Self employed	83	27.7
Employed	191	63.7
Student	26	8.7

RESULTS

Out of the total 300 participants, 13 participants did not have cable television connection at their home; therefore only their demographic information was included. Most of the participants were between 20 to 30 years of age. There was a preponderance of females in the study sample (62.3%). Approximately 46.3% of the participants had attained secondary level education and majority of them (63.7%) were employed (Table 1).

Participants responded that cable television viewing at night adversely impacts sleep (OR: 1.39; 95% CI: 0.81-2.37), work performance (OR: 1.07; 95% CI: 0.63-1.81), family life (OR: 1.52; 95% CI: 0.89-2.60), social life (OR: 1.38; 95% CI: 0.78-2.42) and adverse impact on cultural norms and values (OR: 1.01; 95% CI: 0.57-1.79). In addition the participants believed that cable channels are promoting violence among children (OR: 1.82; 95% ci: 1.02-3.27) and affecting children health by promoting unhealthy practices (OR: 1.41; 95% CI: 0.81-2.44).

DISCUSSION

We have documented unfavorable impact of cable television viewing on social, family life, work performance and on cultural traditions of study participants. We have found that 96% of the participants watch cable television with an average 4.4 hours of screen time. This is comparable to data obtained from the west⁷. Local channels are not in high demand and people prefer to view foreign channels including Indian and from the west⁸.

Table 2 Impact of cable channels on various aspects of life (n=287)

Variable	< 1 hour n=60	1 -5 hour n=142	> 5 hour n=85	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	P-Value
Watching cable television channels:					
Adversely impacts sleep	33 (55.0)	90 (63.4)	57 (67.1)	1.39 (0.81-2.37)	0.22
Adversely impacts work performance	28 (46.7)	72 (50.7)	42 (49.4)	1.07 (0.63-1.81)	0.78
Adversely impacts family life	24(40.0)	58 (40.8)	21(24.7)	1.52 (0.89-2.60)	0.12
Adversely impacts social life	19(31.7)	44 (31.0)	16 (18.8)	1.38 (0.78-2.42)	0.26
Adversely impacts cultural norms and values	41 (68.3)	93 (65.5)	61 (71.8)	1.01 (0.57-1.79)	0.95
Positively impacts on cultural norms and values	34(56.7)	60 (42.3)	44 (51.8)	1.17 (0.69-1.98)	0.55
Adversely impacts religious norms and values	37 (67.7)	88 (62.0)	62 (72.9)	1.06 (0.61-1.85)	0.81
Positively impacts on religious cultural norms and values	28 (46.7)	62 (43.7)	34 (40.0)	1.11 (0.65-1.88)	0.69
Effects of Watching cable television channels on children					
Adversely affects academic performance	41 (68.3)	97 (68.3)	59 (69.4)	1.15 (0.64-2.06)	0.62
Adversely affects moral values	40 (66.7)	109 (76.8)	69 (81.2)	1.67 (0.93-3.00)	0.08*
Promotes violence	39 (65.0)	115 (81.0)	65 (76.5)	1.82 (1.02-3.27)	0.04*
Promotes use of high energy drinks	36 (60.0)	93 (65.5)	65 (76.5)	1.41 (0.81-2.44)	0.21
Promotes vulgar thinking and behavior	44 (73.3)	110 (77.5)	76 (89.4)	1.60 (0.86-2.99)	0.13

* Variable significant at 0.05 levels.

We have found that watching cable television at night adversely affects work performance (OR: 1.07; 95% CI: 0.63-1.81). Late night cable television viewing may lead to shorter sleep duration and results in day time drowsiness and adversely impacts work performance⁹.

In developing countries, cable television is among few entertainment options available for women and children. Therefore it is important to ensure that favorable impacts on health are considered when cable television is used as an entertainment¹⁰. Unfortunately if this entertainment source is not carefully used, change in behavior and attitude can occur among viewers, with adverse consequences for family life¹¹. Our study results are similar to since participants reported cable television adversely impact family life.

In the current study we did not study the impact of specific foreign channels on the viewers. However, 60% of the study participants responded that they watch foreign channels and this may have an impact on our cultural and religious norms.

Cable television can bring change in viewer's perception of real life and can result in behavior change that can unfavorably influence cultural beliefs¹². It is an alarming situation for Pakistan, since youth and literate population is vulnerable to adverse consequences of cable television viewing.

This study had several limitations. First, it was a cross sectional study so cause and effect relationship cannot be established. Since it was conducted in urban city of Karachi Pakistan; its results cannot be generalized to people living in rural areas.

CONCLUSION

To minimize the adverse impact of cable television it is important to monitor and control individual screen time to avoid its impact on work performance, family life and sleep. Moreover, to resist the effects of foreign

channels, it is recommended that local channels should be strengthened and programs should have better entertainment quotient. In context to Pakistan the channels should produce and broadcast quality programs that could help in the promotion of Pakistani values and traditions and improve the image of Pakistan at international level.

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