Discussion 7B

Do you consider computers and mobile devices to be harmful to your health - emotionally and/or physically? Would you change your electronic device usage, change your habits, or rearrange your computer work area to minimize your risk? Why?

Between work, school, and personal use, I spend about seventy hours a week in a sitting position working on a computer. After three years of this routine I have observed a decline in my physical health, including weight gain and back/neck pain. Undoubtedly, computer and mobile technology can have a negative influence upon a society’s physical and emotional health. I emphasize the word “influence” as modern computers and mobile phones are not sentient, rather, they are tools which can greatly enhance our daily lives if used correctly or can cause harm if used incorrectly.

The common physical risks congruent with improper computer use include: eyestrain, obesity, muscle injuries, back and neck pain. The emotional, mental, and social risks are, in my opinion, much more harmful. Consider behavioral problems such as severe aggression that might develop after prolonged exposure to violent video games. Patience becomes a lost virtue as individuals become accustomed to receiving information and/or services instantly from the internet. How many real-life opportunities and relationships are missed as individuals go through life with their eyes glued to the phone? Long ago family and friends would gather around a campfire for a source of light, warmth, and social opportunity. Centuries later they would gather around a radio, and decades later around a television. Today they no longer gather together, but individually submerge themselves in their mobile devices. Has something important been lost…?

The solution to these risks begins with our own individual choice to practice proper usage and time restrictions. To avoid back and neck pains one should practice proper ergonomics, including sitting posture, screen height, and distance from screen. Opportunities for movement and stretching should be taken when possible. Our emotional and social health needs to be stimulated by real-life activities and human interaction. Individuals should limit the time they spend on their computer or mobile device and ensure that time is spent with family, friends, or in the community. I have personally tried to keep my computer habits under control, rather than allowing them controlling me. I realize that I still need to improve, and I have a personal goal to do so.

Resources:

1. <https://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&id=3006&np=285>
2. <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/computer-related-injuries>
3. <https://ergonomics.org/>
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4815370/>