



Obesogenicity of Digital World

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World Health Organization (WHO) has revealed three times rise in obesity in three decades and death of 2.8 million people due to obesity related causes. Compilation of statistics continues to spike overweight population irrespective of age, gender, geographical locations, culture, and socio-economic strata. Innumerable factors like diet, physical activity, heredity etc. were held responsible. Opinions also echo that obesity is a menace and digital technology is fueling it. Intriguing into the concern I decided to do some SWOT analysis on digital technology and obesity.

Rising trend of obesity seems in juxtaposition of the development in digital world. Advanced technology and digitalization has streamed the food chain and fueled the marketing of food and including unhealthy food since long which has resulted in obesity and its associated disorders and diseases. Network of digital media, web based interventions are impeccable and no one could be spared with them. If one can enjoy the delicious meal just placing the order over phone then person may conveniently do so without a second thought. Physical activity is further pruned. Children, youth, adults even elders are entrapped in this network. Hence all are infected with obesity syndrome. Discounts and disposable income add fire to such injurious habits. This is just an example.

Health conscious population has smartly chosen web based intervention to monitor their physical activity level, energy expenditure and calorie count etc. Test profiles are easily screened on mobile apps. Health specialist, doctors and therapists are also easy to search on Google and their prescriptions are scrutinized on the same. Drugs and supplements are not used via OTC (over the counter) but through online purchased. One person is panically attacked by seeing the side effects of medication and often deprives oneself of desired treatment. Another individual self prescribe remedy and sometime lay down in hospital. Professor Google, face book, You- tube, twitter, tiktok Wechat are still seemingly and economically effective remedy for millions. Who will ensure its validity in the world of spurious ingredients and falseness?

The ancient wisdom and numerous researches reveal dietary and pharmacological perceptions about obesity. Cross-disciplinary approaches and critical meta-analysis authenticate the pace of rising trend of obesity. Nevertheless digital technology is a dual

edged sword in the hands of health freaks and weight watchers. Although social resources are important vehicles for mass awareness, behaviour change in health promotion but now social resources implies to social media in the form of whatsapp, you tube, face book, twitter and have progressively altered many aspects of our lifestyle. Radio, television, social media are more potent resource than family and friends to spread the message. These gadgets have started targeting young children for food marketing. Children watching enticing advertisements consume more of empty calories and unhealthy foods and often pester their parents to buy such products. They sometimes put their guardians in embarrassing position in the market. These children are at high risk of childhood obesity. Parents limiting screen-time may prevent their children from such unhealthy behaviours.

Obesity is a preventable condition; alas becoming pandemic. Thanks to digital tools and apps! You tube, Face book etc. provide quick solutions in such as manner weight watchers are highly motivated and swayed by them ignoring the well needed expert advice. "One size does not fit all". Some studies reveal that web-based interventions provide short-term solutions. Undoubtedly media is enticing and encouraging but health prescriptions suitable to the constitution of individual cannot be overlooked. Be it diet plan, exercise, supplements, prescriptions or home remedies in disease state. People are fascinated with wide variety of diets be it, Mediterranean, mono food or keto diets. Do people really follow the way it has been suggested? They partially use it and get deprived of many nutrients. They hardly lose weight rather loose muscle and later find difficulty to achieve their goals. Many become victims of yo-yo effect. Interestingly overweight people might look over nourished but they are often deficient in vital micronutrients [1-3].

Let us examine the association of gadgets like PC, laptop and smart phones with obesity. These gadgets are handy tools to receive, retrieve and monitor their dietary contributions and body contours and blood reports etc. Evidence demonstrate that users of smart phones or any other electromagnetic device particularly in night often face challenges with their eye sight, sleep pattern, physical activity and eating patterns and become victims of high stress, high BMI, insulin resistance, high triglycerides, LDL, fluctuating blood sugar levels and musculoskeletal disorders. Although

people find convenient to pay their bills, book tickets, search people and places and record food intake and store their personal data and exchange on need. Some studies have also shown marked improvement in blood glucose levels, lipid parameters and body fat loss following online health interventions. However, one must be cautious enough that frequency as well as duration of screen time is also very crucial because digital gadgets emit low level of radiofrequency energy, a form of non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation, which can be absorbed by tissues close to the gadget or phone. However, it also depends on many factors such as the distance between the phone and the user, the extent and type of mobile phone use and the user's distance from cell phone towers. Radiation through phones tends to alter the brain activity, cognitive functions, heart rate, blood pressure reaction times, and sleep patterns. However more studies are underway in this regard. Recently wireless technologies such as Wi-Fi have increased the environmental electromagnetic field (EMF) levels and made people life more comfortable. Some of the researchers believe that mobile phones cause oxidative damage. Instantly health effect of digital world can be perceived. Smart phones affect our relationships; interfere with productivity, irregular sleeping pattern as they tend to change our brain activity and reaction time. Electromagnetic radiations tend to influence the endocrine system bringing hormonal changes. Hormones can stimulate or inhibit body processes such as ovulation, the flight-or-fight response, rate of metabolism and body rhythms. Hence web-based intervention for weight management requires caution and attention.

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