Reviewer’s report

Title: Examining the challenges posed to parents by the contemporary screen environments of children: a qualitative investigation

Version: 0 Date: 06 Jan 2018

Reviewer: Jennifer Protudjer

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript, in which the authors report on a qualitative study based on interview data collected from purposefully-selected participants enrolled in a larger, overarching study. In the study described herein, the authors sought to explore parents’ views of their children's screen time, and views on a 'digital balance.' The authors identified that parents perceived screen time as a normal, and necessary, part of modern life, with both advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, parents described that not all screen time is equal, with some viewed as being educational or interactive/social, whereas other screen time is isolating. The reported amounts of time in which children engaged in screen time varied between weekdays and weekends. The authors are to be commended for an interesting, timely and informative study. That said, there are some points that they may wish to consider prior to acceptance of the manuscript.

Major concerns:

1. Was any consideration given to night time screen time behaviours? Specifically, were parents queried, or did they report on their children's behaviours about screen time (specifically tablets, smart phones) through the night? There are quantitative data (e.g. Chahal et al. Pediatr Obes 2013) that support that most children of a similar age as those in the present study have night time access to screen time in their bedrooms. The authors of the present study are encouraged to report this information. Or, if such data are not available, this should be noted as a limitation, in combination with an acknowledgement that the reported screen time is probably an underestimation.
2. Consideration to demographic information difficult to interpret, given that there are no reference norms provided in the manuscript (and thus no comparisons made to these norms), and little consideration was given to the findings in the context of demographics. Please provide this information and contextualise the findings.

3. In the discussion (Page 22, Line 518), the authors highlight parents' perceptions of the negative effects of screen time, including effects on eye sight, behaviour and obesity. However, this did not come across as a major part of the results section.

4. Kindly consider adding the interview guide as supplementary material.

Minor concerns:

1. Page 5, Lines 111-115: When describing the findings from the systematic review, the authors are encouraged to report more specific age ranges of the children. At present, they describe children \( \leq 12 \) years. However, the amount and type of screen time is certain to vary widely between preschoolers and older children.

2. Page 6, Lines 141-151: These lines include substantial information on accelerometry and anthropometry. Yet, this information is presented prior to a description of the purposive sample, thus making the information rather jarring. Please consider reorganising this section.

3. Table 1. Similar to Major Concern 2, How was employment categorised for families in which one parent worked full time and the other was a full time parent. This situation is likely to be quite different than that of both parents who do not work outside the home.

4. Availability of data and material, Page 26, Lines 635-637: As qualitative data may lead to identification of participants, the authors are encouraged to be very cautious about releasing data.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Yes
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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