

## **Impact on Children's Mental Health and Development Being Indoors During the Lockdown**

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### **Abstract:**

The Children due to the lockdown were shut in the indoors. This increased their time spent on watching television and playing games on gadgets, decreasing the amount of physical activity. All these reasons have affected the mental and physical development of children. The children are very vulnerable and excessive use of gadgets might be harmful especially when the physical activity is mostly restricted. This Research paper examines the impact of lockdown on children's mental health and development. The data for the research was collected via questionnaire to investigate the effect of being indoor on the mental and physical development of the children. The paper aims to suggest measure that can be taken to ensure the child's mental and physical development.

**Key Words:** Mental Health, Physical Development, Lockdown

### **Introduction:**

The Child's mental health and development is related to the surroundings in which the child is. The surroundings include the parents, close relatives, neighbors, teachers and friends.<sup>(1)</sup> As Children spend a substantial period of time in school teachers and school friends have a significant impact on the child. Apart from the school the child has a set of friends with whom they play in evening hours after school where they learn their social skills apart from the school in an informal set up.<sup>(2)(3)</sup> Child grows observing all the people nearby and this observation child learning experience which cannot be taught either in schools or parents. Sudden outbreak of the pandemic of COVID-19 led to closure of schools, the fear of getting infected made the parents to shut children indoors helplessly.<sup>(4)</sup> This was a sudden drastic change in the routine of the children depriving them from going to school, tuitions, any activity classes, outdoor playing. The children had to spend time at home indoors either studying or playing indoors.<sup>(5)</sup> The children staying home spend most of the time in watching Television or playing computer games.<sup>(6)</sup> Outdoor playing was restricted interaction with friends was restricted, outdoor play was restricted for a prolonged period of time. All the above reasons made the child stay indoors, sleep more, talk less kept the child frustrated and irritated as parents were busy doing work from home And rest of the time household chores due to absence of household maids. All the above reasons have affected the child's mental and physical development.<sup>(7)(8)</sup>

The reopening of schools children are spending most of the time in front of gadgets as the classes are conducted online. The concern which parents had is now the solution of the problem, still has exposed child to new issues.<sup>(9)</sup> Spending excessive time on gadgets has increased the strain on eyes,

increased headaches. Sitting for long hours, No outdoor play, playing online games have led to lack of focus, lack of attention, weight issues among children. Children are getting addicted to online games as they have no option of playing physical activity games.<sup>(10)(11)</sup>

### Objective:

To evaluate the impact of lockdown on the mental health and development of the child

### Research Methodology:

Research focuses on studying the impact of lockdown on the mental health and development of the child. For the purpose of data was collected from 500 people who had children. The data was collected via questionnaire having questions relating to online school, playing habits, behavioral changes observed.

### Hypothesis:

There is a significant impact of lockdown on the mental health and development of the child

### Data Analysis:

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Online Classes	500	1.6905	.46099	.02062
Students Understanding	500	1.6710	.43547	.01948
Students Regularity	500	1.7455	.46426	.02076
Teachers Support	500	2.2170	.35272	.01577
Online Examination	500	1.7365	.46972	.02101
Excessive use of gadgets	500	1.7015	.44432	.01987
Restricted to Indoors- Irritation & frustration	500	1.7755	.47241	.02113
No Socializing-low performance	500	2.0360	.43166	.01930
No outdoor play- irritation, lethargy	500	1.6790	.45428	.02032

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 1.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Online Classes	9.240	499	.000	.19050	.1500	.2310
Students Understanding	8.780	499	.000	.17100	.1327	.2093
Students Regularity	11.824	499	.000	.24550	.2047	.2863
Teachers Support	45.454	499	.000	.71700	.6860	.7480
Online Examination	11.258	499	.000	.23650	.1952	.2778
Excessive use of gadgets	10.141	499	.000	.20150	.1625	.2405
Restricted to Indoors- Irritation & frustration	13.040	499	.000	.27550	.2340	.3170
No Socializing-low performance	27.766	499	.000	.53600	.4981	.5739
No outdoor play- irritation, lethargy	8.811	499	.000	.17900	.1391	.2189

The mean value obtained in all the above cases is more than 1.5 and the significance (2-tailed) value obtained is also less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) hence it can be concluded that is a significant impact of online school on the mental health and development of the child. Thus from the above, it is concluded that the hypothesis “There is a significant impact of lockdown on the mental health and development of the child” is accepted.

## Discussion:

In order to improve the mental health it is essential to imbibe so indoor physical exercise habit in children. It will ensure good healthy body. Introducing Breathing exercises will increase the energy levels. Exposures to meditation can lead to peace of mind and loss of irritation and frustration. It is essential for children to have a balanced diet and the parents should focus on health mid time meals. Apart from the above the hours spent on the use of gadgets must be limited to avoid mental hazards. Many studies conducted during lockdown reflected on alarming aspects of child development and effects on community<sup>(12-14)</sup>. Waghmare et. al. reported that there was tremendous reduction in cases of accidents during lockdown<sup>(15)</sup>. Gaidhane et. al. reported on depression, anxiety and stress among the general population in the time of COVID-19 Lockdown<sup>(16)</sup>. Some of the interesting related studies were reviewed<sup>(17-19)</sup>.

## Conclusion:

The study concluded that there is a substantial impact of lockdown on the mental and physical development of children. Due to the online schools students have very less social interactions they also face issues in understanding the school curriculum. Excessive use of gadgets has increased and has led to issues like increasing body weight, increased the strain on eyes, increased headaches. As the children are restricted to the indoors they are facing they do not get chance to socialized leading to low performance and low self-esteem. Being indoor lack of exposure to outdoors increases the irritation and frustration resulting into increased or loss of appetite. Lack of physical activities due to the lockdown has increased laziness and lethargy.

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