

[IMAGE]

The Dangerous Trend in Texting

By Editorial Staff

Over the years, we've reported frequently on the health consequences of social media, particularly in children / adolescents. From excessive screen time to postural issues; from an increased risk of anxiety and depression to impaired social and communication skills – the dangers of social media use are real. And of course, that list doesn't even include "sexting," an increasingly common form of texting that can deliver inappropriate sexual images and language to (and from) children of all ages.

Yes, we said all ages – at least as young as age 11, if you can believe it. According to research in *JAMA Pediatrics*, a journal of the American Medical Association dedicated to research on children and adolescents, as high as one in four young people have received "sexts," and one in seven have sent them. More than 10 percent (12.5 percent) of young people in the study reported they have received a forwarded "sext" without their consent.

All of the 110,000-plus study participants were under the age of 18, with the age floor as low as age 11, and researchers based their findings on analysis of nearly 40 projects conducted from 1990-2016. That means "sexting" is a real and significant challenge for parents to address with their children as soon as they're old enough to send or receive texts. Talk to your doctor for more information on the negative health consequences associated with excessive use of electronic and social media.

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