

EFFECTS OF WATCHING TOO MUCH TV

Discoveries and invention of devices are always welcome till we, humans, find a way to abuse its benefits and be adversely affected by it. This was the case when Wilhelm Roentgen discovered x-ray and within five years, the British Army was using a mobile x-ray unit to locate bullets and shrapnel in wounded soldiers in the Sudan. TV was also invented with positive thoughts in mind – there would be no national borders, education and communication would be worldwide, etc. However, we are now trying to overcome its physiological and psychological adverse effects on human beings.

One of the physiological effects of watching TV in excessive amounts is eye-strain. It is true that there are specifications for watching TV; TV should be 5 m. away from the eye, the room should be adequately lit, TV should be placed at the same height with our eyes, etc. However, these do not prevent our eyes from getting tired if we keep watching TV for a long time. Another effect is obesity, which is widely observed in people who like watching TV and eating snacks everyday (there is even a term “TV snacks” to refer to fast food that is suitable for eating in front of the TV). TV is such a powerful machine that people cannot get away from it – it is addictive.

Apart from the physiological effects, TV also causes psychological effects. One is a result of being exposed to violence. After seeing so many violent scenes on TV, people start considering violent actions normal and they lose their sensitivity to their environment. Partly connected to this effect, the interpersonal communication among people decreases. Being insensitive to the suffering of other people causes people to become alienated. Also, after coming home from work people seek to relax in front of the TV, and generally people prefer watching TV to talking to each other. This issue is very important since lack of interpersonal relationships mostly end with divorces.

Shortly, inventions are meant to be beneficial for human beings, if we know how to benefit from them. TV is one of such inventions that need to be used for the right purpose only – being educated and entertained for a reasonable (according to age) period of time. We may, then, be safe from or at least reduce the adverse physiological and psychological effects of watching too much TV.

Written by Oya Ozagac, September 2004