

# Priorities for Future Research about Screen Use and Adolescent Mental Health: A Participatory Prioritization Study

San Juan et al. (2021)

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## For which topic were research priorities identified?

screen use and adolescent mental health

## In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Europe - United Kingdom

## Why was it conducted at all?

The extent to which screen use has a role in mental health - and what this role is - is uncertain, limiting the development of evidence-based policy and practice, despite significant policy interest in the UK (Internet Safety Strategy Green Paper, 2018; Online Harms White Paper - April 2019 - CP 57, 2019; Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper, 2017) and elsewhere. A crucial first step to the development of meaningful evidence-based policy and guidelines and the effective use of resources is ensuring the right research questions are being asked (Terry et al. 2018). Yet to date, the research agenda in this field has been mainly driven by the research community, technology developers, and policy makers, with little input from young people, parents and carers, or teachers (Hollis et al., 2018). The aim of this study is to address this gap.

## What was the objective?

to identify research priorities for future research on screen use and adolescent mental health, from the perspectives of young people, parents/carers, and teachers

## What was the outcome?

a list of 4 research questions

## How long did the research prioritization take?

No information provided.

## Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

consultation; group discussion; survey

## How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: Collecting research questions: 66 research questions relevant to screen use were extracted from the literature. Additionally, researchers with relevant expertise were contacted and asked to identify research questions omitted from this list but which they perceived to be important and to advise of research that was underway to address the existing questions.

Step 2: Group discussions: A total of 12 discussion groups with 4-8 people (7 groups of young people, 3 groups of parents/carers, 2 groups of teachers) were held to build on and refine the long list of questions. Each discussion lasted approximately one hour. Discussion groups included three main parts: 1) individual reflection: participants were asked to reflect and write about their screen activities and how these made them feel, 2) pair work: participants discussed their answers to part one, developed a mind map to describe their experience of using screens and formulated three research questions that they considered important, and 3) group discussion: pairs presented their mind map and research questions to the group and agreements and differences were discussed. Discussion groups were audio recorded and suggestions for specific research questions from each pair collated.

Step 3: Data processing: The discussions were qualitatively analyzed. Research questions were formulated. A long list of 200 questions was generated. Similar questions were grouped together, and out-of-scope questions were removed. This resulted in a list of 26 research questions.

Step 4: Survey for final prioritization: Participants were asked to drag and drop the ten questions most important to them from the list of 26 and then rank these ten questions in order of importance.

## Which stakeholders took part?

Research expert consultation: 9 researchers. Group discussions: 68 participants: 46 young people, 15 parents/carers, 7 teachers. Survey: 357 participants (229 young people and 128 adults).

## How were stakeholders recruited?

Participatory discussion groups were advertised through the Steering Group's networks. The survey link was disseminated through the Steering Group networks via email, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and blogs on pertinent websites. Additionally, a recruitment company was used to increase recruitment of young people during the COVID-19 lockdown. Recruitment materials specifically targeting younger demographics were co-developed with the



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## Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders not only participated but were also actively involved in the research prioritization process: They were part of an advisory board and a steering group. The whole process was guided by a Steering Group formed by