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Television viewing time and reduced life expectancy: a life table analysis.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Prolonged **television** (TV) viewing time is unfavourably associated with mortality outcomes, particularly for cardiovascular disease, but the impact on life expectancy has not been quantified. The authors estimate the extent to which TV viewing time reduces life expectancy in Australia, 2008.

METHODS: The authors constructed a life table model that incorporates a previously reported mortality risk associated with TV time. Data were from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study, a national population-based observational survey that started in 1999-2000. The authors modelled impacts of changes in population average TV viewing time on life expectancy at birth.

RESULTS: The amount of TV viewed in Australia in 2008 reduced life expectancy at birth by 1.8 years (95% uncertainty interval (UI): 8.4 days to 3.7 years) for men and 1.5 years (95% UI: 6.8 days to 3.1 years) for women. Compared with persons who watch no TV, those who spend a lifetime average of 6 h/day watching TV can expect to live 4.8 years (95% UI: 11 days to 10.4 years) less. On average, every single hour of TV viewed after the age of 25 reduces the viewer's life expectancy by 21.8 (95% UI: 0.3-44.7) min. This study is limited by the low precision with which the relationship between TV viewing time and mortality is currently known.

CONCLUSIONS: TV viewing time may be associated with a loss of life that is comparable to other major chronic disease risk factors such as physical inactivity and obesity.

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