**Effects of television exposure on developmental skills among young children**

* Ling-Yi Lina, Rong-Ju Cherngb, Yung-Jung Chenc, , , Yi-Jen Chend, Hei-Mei Yangd
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**Highlights**

• Young children are exposed to too much television viewing before the age of two.

• Viewing television increased the risk of delayed cognitive, language, and motor development.

• Children with developmental delays spent more time being exposed to television.

• Maternal education and type of care providers also predicted television viewing time

**Background**

Literature addressing the effects of television exposure on developmental skills of young children less than 36 months of age is scarce. This study explored how much time young children spend viewing television and investigated its effects on cognitive, language, and motor developmental skills.

**Methods**

Data were collected from the Pediatric Clinics at University Medical Center in Southern Taiwan. The participants comprised 75 children who were frequently exposed to television and 75 children who were not or infrequently exposed to television between 15 and 35 months old. The age and sex were matched in the two groups. The Bayley Scales of Infant Development-second edition and Peabody Developmental Motor Scales-second edition were used to identify developmental skills. Independent *t*-tests, *χ*2 tests, and logistic regression models were conducted.

**Results**

Among 75 children who were frequently exposed to television, young children watched a daily average of 67.4 min of television before age 2, which was excessive according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Viewing television increased the risk of delayed cognitive, language, and motor development in children who were frequently exposed to television. Cognitive, language, and motor delays in young children were significantly associated with how much time they spent viewing television. The type of care providers was critical in determining the television-viewing time of children.

**Conclusion**

* We recommend that pediatric practitioners explain the impacts of television exposure to parents and caregivers to ensure cognitive, language, and motor development in young children. Advocacy efforts must address the fact that allowing young children to spend excessive time viewing television can be developmentally detrimental.