

Life Sciences 生命科學

Smartphones may not be so smart for the body

智能手機影響健康

A study conducted by PolyU Department of Rehabilitation Sciences shows a link between frequent smartphone use and musculoskeletal symptoms, with the younger members of Hong Kong's "bowed-head tribe" at particular risk.

理大康復治療科學系進行的一項研究發現，經常使用智能手機與肌肉骨骼徵狀有關，而香港俗稱「低頭族」的年輕人沉迷使用電子產品，他們產生痛症的風險亦較高。



(Photo on left) Dr Grace Sezto demonstrates the correct postures in using the electronic devices.
(左頁圖片)司徒佩玉博士示範使用電子產品的正確姿勢。

(Photo below) Stretching exercises can help prevent and lessen pain.
(下圖)伸展運動可預防及改善痛症情況。



Smartphones and other portable electronic devices have undoubtedly improved our lives, but they are also putting us at risk of such musculoskeletal ailments as neck, shoulder, wrist and hand pain, and even articular degeneration of the thumb joint and index fingers. This is the disturbing message of a joint three-year study carried out by the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and the Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association.

The study, led by PolyU's Dr Grace Sezto, involved a two-phase survey. In the first phase, conducted in 2011-2012, 465 adults aged 18 to 50 were asked on the time they spent each day using various IT products and the tasks they performed and postures they adopted when using them. They were also asked to report any associated physical symptoms, such as neck, shoulder, wrist and hand pain.

The second phase, conducted in 2013, asked the same questions of primary and secondary schoolchildren aged 10 to 15.

The vast majority of both groups were daily users of smartphones, and the regular use of other electronic devices was also widespread. Although many more adults than children reported musculoskeletal symptoms (70% and 30%, respectively), the latter are still in their growing stage. The risk of such poor postural habits as forward head, poking-chin, kyphotic back and rounded shoulders – all associated with the use of handheld electronic devices – may become fixed, leading to life-long adverse health effects.

毫無疑問，智能手機和其他手提電子產品改善了我們的生活，但它們同時導致我們產生痛症的風險，這些症狀包括頸痛、肩痛及手部不適等，甚至會引致手指肌腱發炎、拇指關節退化等問題。康復治療科學系與香港物理治療學會合作，在過去三年進行調查，研究報告總結出這個值得人關注的訊息。

理大司徒佩玉博士領導的調查研究分為兩期。第一階段的調查於二零一一年至二零一二年進行，共有四百六十五位成年人參加，年齡介乎十八至五十歲。問卷調查主要針對他們每日使用各種電子產品所花的時間、以產品進行的活動和採用的姿勢，以及有否因此而引起身體各種問題，如頸痛、肩痛、腕痛及手部不適等情況。

在二零一三年進行的第二階段學童調查，以相同問題訪問十至十五歲的中、小學生。

研究結果顯示，絕大部分受訪者是日常使用智能手機的用家，而經常使用其他電子產品的習慣亦相當普遍。儘管出現肌肉骨骼徵狀的成年人比學童組別的數字為多(分別為70%和30%)，但後者仍然在發育階段。過度使用手提電子產品，會造成不良的姿勢，如前額或頭部前傾、駝背、肩部肌肉緊張等，在長大後更難於糾正，長遠來說可影響整體健康及發育。