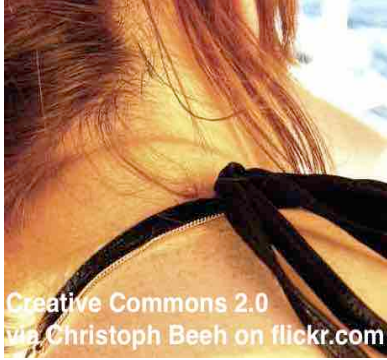


Smartphone use could be changing shape of our skulls

18th June, 2019



Scientists say that smartphones are changing the shape of people's skulls. Some people are spending so long looking at smartphones that a small bony bump is appearing above their neck. Doctors say the bump is large enough to feel by pressing

the bottom of the skull, just above the neck. Dr David Shahar, a health scientist at the University of The Sunshine Coast in Australia, spoke to the BBC about the discovery. He said: "I have been a clinician for 20 years, and only in the last decade, increasingly, I have been discovering that my patients have this growth on the skull." The bump is becoming more frequent among 18 to 30-year-olds who spend many hours a day hunched over their smartphone.

A study led by Dr Shahar looked at the smartphone use of 1,200 people aged 18 to 86. Shahar said 18 to 30-year-olds were more likely to have the skull bumps than older generations. He said the bumps will probably be more common as we spend longer bending our necks while looking at our phones. Doctors say the bump could come from constantly bending the neck at unnatural angles to look at digital devices. Our head weighs about 4.5 kilograms and bending our head at the same angle for a long time can strain the neck. Doctors are calling this strain "text neck". They say the skull bump rarely causes health issues. They advised people to change their posture if their neck becomes sore.

Sources: livescience.com / insider.com / fudzilla.com

Writing

Smartphones should come with health warnings. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

smartphones / shape / skull / neck / doctors / discovery / clinician / decade / patients / study / generations / common / angle / digital device / strain / health issues / posture

True / False

- a) A small bony bump is appearing on the neck of smartphone users. T / F
- b) The bump is too small to be felt. T / F
- c) A clinician said he has had a skull bump for 20 years. T / F
- d) The skull bump is most common in people aged between 18-30. T / F
- e) Researchers looked at the smartphone use of those aged from 18 to 86. T / F
- f) The bumps could be caused by bending our heads at unnatural angles. T / F
- g) Our head weighs about 5.4 kilograms. T / F
- h) Doctors advised people to change their posture if they have a sore neck. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. changing | a. doctor |
| 2. appearing | b. always |
| 3. clinician | c. bent |
| 4. discovering | d. painful |
| 5. hunched | e. finding |
| 6. likely | f. injure |
| 7. common | g. altering |
| 8. constantly | h. widespread |
| 9. strain | i. becoming visible |
| 10. sore | j. probable |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'skull'?
- c) What do you think of this story?
- d) Do you think it's possible for smartphone use to change the skull?
- e) Would you use your smartphone less because of this story?
- f) How important is your smartphone to you?
- g) Is this smartphone skull bump a worry?
- h) What other health problems do smartphones cause?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. a small bony bump is | a. aged 18 to 86 |
| 2. just above | b. over their smartphone |
| 3. in the last | c. their posture |
| 4. The bump is becoming more frequent | d. appearing above their neck |
| 5. spend many hours a day hunched | e. generations |
| 6. the smartphone use of 1,200 people | f. decade |
| 7. older | g. becomes sore |
| 8. constantly bending the neck at | h. among 18 to 30-year-olds |
| 9. They advised people to change | i. unnatural angles |
| 10. if their neck | j. the neck |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How have smartphones changed our lives?
- Should smartphones come with health warnings?
- How can we take care of our skull?
- Will you change how you use your smartphone?
- Do you have good posture?
- What kinds of things give you a sore neck?
- What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

Spelling

- apearipng above their neck
- a health cinsitest
- spoke to the BBC about the icdvosery
- my aeitnpts have this growth
- more requefnt among 18 to 30-year-olds
- ucnhhed over their smartphone
- older egtranioens
- probably be more omcomn
- oscnattnly bending the neck
- digital ivecdes
- bending our head at the same gnale
- change their otspure if their neck becomes sore

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. i	3. a	4. e	5. c
6. j	7. h	8. b	9. f	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Neck Strain

You think neck strain is the biggest danger of smartphones. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their dangers aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): a lack of exercise, poor eyesight or a loss of friends.

Role B – Lack of Exercise

You think a lack of exercise is the biggest danger of smartphones. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their dangers aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): neck strain, poor eyesight or a loss of friends.

Role C – Poor Eyesight

You think poor eyesight is the biggest danger of smartphones. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their dangers aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): a lack of exercise, neck strain or a loss of friends.

Role D – Loss of Friends

You think a loss of friends is the biggest danger of smartphones. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their dangers aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): a lack of exercise, poor eyesight or neck strain.

Speaking – Smartphone

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest dangers of smartphones at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| • radiation | • lack of exercise |
| • neck strain | • poor eyesight |
| • skull bones | • accidents while walking |
| • weight gain | • loss of friends |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.