

# Silicon Valley Smartphone use leads to hallucinations, detachment from reality, aggression in teens as young as 13: Study

By

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Smartphones are making teenagers more aggressive, detached from reality and causing them to hallucinate, according to new research.

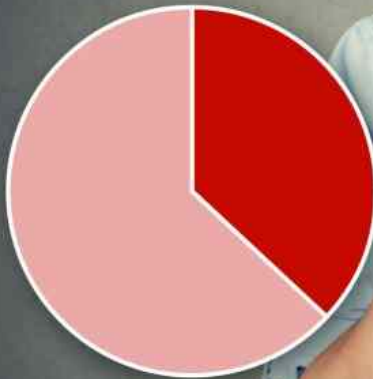
Scientists concluded the younger a person starts using a phone, the more likely they would be crippled by a whole host of psychological ills after surveying 10,500 teens between 13 and 17 from both the US and India for the [study, by Sapien Labs](#).

“People don’t fully appreciate that hyper-real and hyper-immersive screen experiences can blur reality at key stages of development,” addiction psychologist Dr. Nicholas Kardaras, who was not part of the team who did the study, told The Post.

# PHONES WARPING TEEN BRAINS

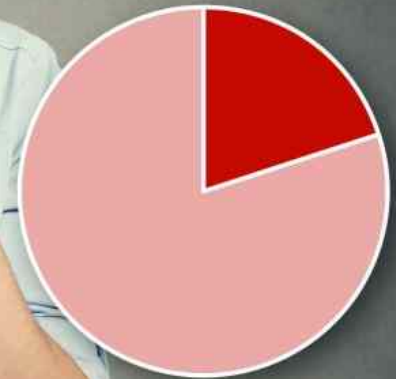
13-year-olds  
experiencing  
aggression

**37%**



13-year-olds  
experiencing  
hallucinations

**20%**



Source: Sapien Labs "The Youth Mind:  
Rising aggression and anger" report

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“Their digital world can compromise their ability to distinguish between what’s real and what’s not. A hallucination by any other name.

“Screen time essentially acts as a toxin that stunts both brain development and social development,” Kardaras explained. “The younger a kid is when given a device, the higher the likelihood of mental health issues later on.”

The teens surveyed for “The Youth Mind: Rising Aggression and Anger” were significantly worse off than older Gen Zers in Sapien Labs’ database and the youngest ages were more likely to suffer aggression, anger and hallucinations compared to their older counterparts. A staggering 37% of 13-year-olds reported experiencing aggression, compared with 27% of 17-year-olds.

Frighteningly, 20% of 13-year-olds say they suffer from hallucinations, compared to 12% of 17-year-olds.

“Whereas today’s 17-year-olds typically got a phone at age 11 or 12, today’s 13-year-olds got their phones at age 10,” the report noted.

Respondents also reported they could pose a harm to themselves. 42% of American girls and 27% of boys aged 13 to 17 admitted to problems with suicidal thoughts.

The majority of teens polled said they had feelings of hopelessness, guilt, anxiety, and unwanted strange thoughts. More than 40% reported a sense of detachment from reality, mood swings, withdrawal, and traumatic flashbacks.

The researchers also warned phones are making kids withdraw from society.

“Once you have a phone, you spend a lot less time with in-person interaction, and the less you have in-person interaction, the less integrated you are into the real social fabric,” Sapien Labs chief scientist Tara Thiagarajan told The Post.

“You’re no longer connected in the way humans have been wired for hundreds of thousands of years.”

Kardaras, author of “Glow Kids”, also wasn’t surprised aggression was associated with phone use.

He runs Omega Recovery tech addiction recovery center in Austin, where teens are often admitted after violently attacking their parents for taking their phones away.



## The Youth Mind: Rising aggression and anger





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Courtesy of Dr. Nicholas Kardaras

Kids around the country have also been assaulting their teachers at school after having their devices confiscated, with one Tennessee teacher even pepper-sprayed by a female student after he took her cell phone.

The CDC also warned in 2023 teen girls are at risk of increased violence — often at the hands of one another. Sapien Labs also flagged the uptick in aggression is disproportionately taking place in females, according to their research.

“There’s a fairly rapid rise now in kids experiencing actual violence in school, and kids are fearing for their safety,” Thiagarajan said. “That is something that everyone should sit up and take note of.”



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She pointed to a December school shooting in Wisconsin was anomalously carried out by a teen girl. It had been 45 years since a female juvenile perpetrated a school shooting. That shooter, Natalie “Samantha” Rupnow, 15, was known to have spent a great deal of her life online and had exhibited extremist views on the internet, but authorities are still looking for a motive for her shooting, after which she turned her gun on herself.

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What do you think? Post a comment.

Overall 65% of female respondents were deemed “distressed or struggling in a manner that substantially impairs their ability to function effectively in the world and would be of clinical concern,” according to the report.

There’s no indication that this trend of continually worsening mental health will slow, according to the researchers, who point out kids continue to be given devices at younger and younger ages, and it’s not uncommon today for toddlers to be given access to iPads or their parents’ iPhones.