## NEW MEXICO INJURY ATTORNEY BLOG

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## Hypertexting & Hypernetworking: Busy Hands are the Workshop of the Devil?

"Hypertexting" and "hypernetworking" are terms coined for excessive behaviors associated with cell phone and social networking activities. Hypertexting is defined as sending more than 120 text messages per day, while hypernetworking is described as spending more than three hours per day on social networking websites.

Unfortunately, the excessive amount of time a person engages in this type of activity may not be the only problem.

These types of activities may actually be associated with risky behavior which could lead to health problems among teens, according to a recent study conducted by a team of researchers at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Both activities were the subject of a study involving a sample of 4,200 Midwest high school students, 19.8% of whom were identified as teens that engage in hypertexting and 11.5% of whom were identified as teens who engage in hypernetworking. Approximately 4% of teens were identified as engaging in both activities.

The research team found that teens who fall in the hypertexting category are 40% more likely to have tried alcohol, 41% more likely to have used illegal drugs, 55% more likely to have been involved in physical fights and nearly three and a half times more likely to have had sex. The data for teens who participate in hypernetworking is even higher, with 79% more likely to have tried alcohol, 84% more likely to have used illicit drugs, 94% more likely to have been involved in physical fights and 69% more likely to have had sex.

While the research did not lead to a direct causal link between the activities and risky behavior, it did so a correlation indicating the possibility of a new category of health risks among teens who participate in either hypertexting or hypernetworking. Other factors could be to blame as well, including peer pressure or a lack of parental supervision. Yet, more research will be necessary to determine if there is an actual cause and effect relationship between teens who engage in the excessive use of communication methods and risky behavior leading to health problems. In the meantime, the study results should come as a warning to parents who provide teens with unrestricted access to communication devices.

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