Coronavirus quarantines have caused a huge spike in 'cybersickness'

The pandemic has forced most of us online at incomparable rates. It's where we've worked, taken classes, attended parties, and gotten lost in 2020's voracious news cycles. But our bodies were not designed to primarily exist in virtual space like this, and as our collective digital time creeps upward, something called cybersickness seems to be leaking into the general population.

Characterised by dizziness and nausea, cybersickness has mostly been studied in the context of aggressively submersive niche technologies, such as virtual reality headsets. In 2011, 30 to 80 percent of virtual reality users were likely to experience cybersickness, though improved headset hardware brought the range down to 25 to 60 percent by 2016.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.
SIGN UP

Now, it seems the scrolling movement in a Netflix queue or a social media newsfeed also has the power to cause cybersickness when used under exceptional circumstances: all day, every day. (Also find out how video calls can tax the brain, leading to the phenomenon called Zoom fatigue.)

"Any kind of perceived motion is going to cause cybersickness," says Kay Stanney, CEO and founder of Design Interactive.

Read the original post