

Why did so many girls experience early puberty during the pandemic? (The virus might not be to blame)

Among [the laundry list of health problems](#) COVID has inflicted on the world's population, one of the more perplexing could be an increase in the number of girls experiencing what is known as [idiopathic precocious puberty](#) – abnormally early onset of puberty.

[More than one study has spotted](#) the [spike in numbers](#) during the early months of the pandemic of what is typically a rare condition, highlighting a potential link between the virus and a trigger for early adolescence.

Now a study presented at the [60th Annual European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology Meeting](#) in Rome suggests it might not have anything to do with the infection at all.

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One intriguing possibility was the [stark rise](#) in use of smart devices. Or, to be more precise, a significant increase in time spent exposed to the blue light emitted from our phones and tablets each day.

Being the diurnal animals we are, evolution has shaped our bodies to interpret the blue tinge of daylight as prime waking time, and the less vibrant glow of dawn, dusk, and evening as ideal for resting.

This relationship could be so deeply hardwired into our functionality, any serious disruption to the pattern could mess with our health [in profound ways](#), most likely by disrupting the tides of a hormone called melatonin.

While it's generally seen as the chemical that helps send us off to sleep in the evening, melatonin's inhibition at a crucial time in our development could also tell the body it's go-time for ramping up the hormones that prepare the body for puberty.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the full article here**](#)