

MUNI
FSS

Parents vs. teens:

Comparison of parents' and early adolescents' reports on risky online activities

Lenka Dedkova, Barbora Lisztwan Honusová, Vojtěch Mýlek

Project PARKA

Parental Knowledge of Early Adolescents' Online Social Lives: The role of Parental Mediation



2nd International Children and Youth Perspectives Conference, Prague, September 18-19, 2025

Parental awareness of their children's activities...

- ... is important:

- Awareness of adolescents' whereabouts, activities and relationships is linked to adolescents' positive psychosocial adjustment (Kerr et al., 2010)

- ... is not high for online activities:

- Especially risky activities or experiences tend to be under-estimated by parents (Barlett & Fennel, 2018; Caivano et al., 2020; Sorbring & Lundin, 2012; Symons et al., 2017)
- More harmful experiences seem to be more under-estimated than less harmful ones (Geržičáková et al., 2023)

Why is parental knowledge low?

- **Lots of parents do not talk to their children about their online activities**
 - EU Kids Online IV: between **17%** (France and Croatia) and **56%** (Czechia) of 11-16 year old children report their parents *never or hardly ever* talk to them about what they do online (Smahel et al., 2020)
 - Around **70%** of Dutch adolescents (13-15) report their parents *never or almost never* initiate a conversation about social media and what they do there (Beyens et al., 2024)
- **Lots of adolescents do not voluntarily share the information**
 - Around **60%** of Dutch adolescents (13-15) report they *never or almost never* voluntarily disclose what they do on social media (Beyens et al., 2024)
 - They report it more often when asked about unenjoyable experiences (70%) than enjoyable experiences (51%)

Why is parental knowledge low?

- **Key barriers in disclosure of experiences with online sexual solicitations** (Lisztwan Honusová et al., in review)
 - **Parents themselves:** poor relationships with parents, not discussing intimate topics at home, lack of parents' ICT skills
 - **Fear of consequences:** anger, bans, overreaction
 - **Adolescents themselves:** shame, private matter, indifference about the situation
 - **Using different coping strategies:** blocking, peers, solving the issue on their own
 - (...)

Current study

- **Focus on online social risks:** potential for harm that could benefit from parental intervention
 - Self-disclosure on social media: posting potentially risky content publicly and privately
 - Sexting, sexual solicitations, aggressive messages
 - Exposure to potentially risky content
- **Early adolescents** – 11-14 year old
 - Starting to use digital media more socially as they grow (Smahel et al., 2020)

Method

- **Dyadic data**: one parent and one adolescent
- Online survey
- Collected spring 2025

- **Quotas**
 - Proportional to Czech households with children: SES (parental education), region (NUTS2), municipality size
 - Balanced: adolescents' age and gender
 - Parental gender: at least 40% fathers

- **Items**
 - Parents and adolescents answered the same items
 - 5-point frequency scales, dichotomized to „never“ and „at least once“ in past 6 months



1,523 dyads

Adolescents

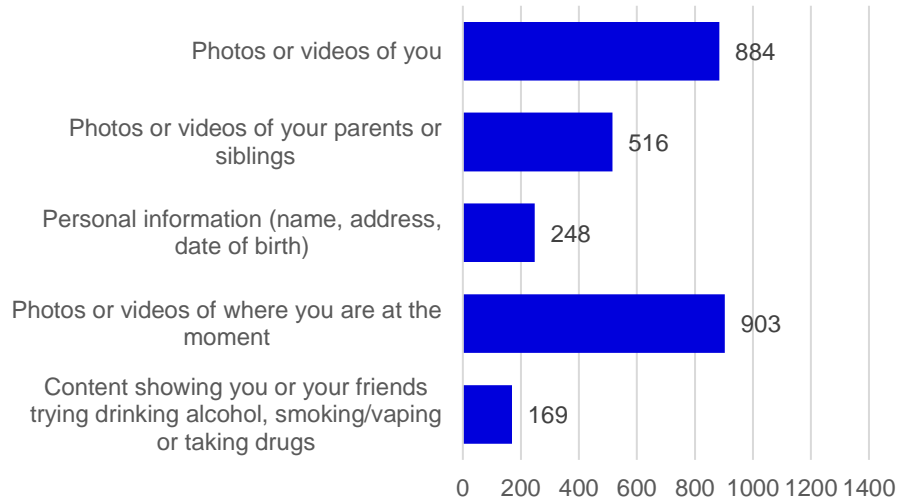
11-14 years old
($M = 12.51$, $SD = 1.13$)
51.4% boys

Parents

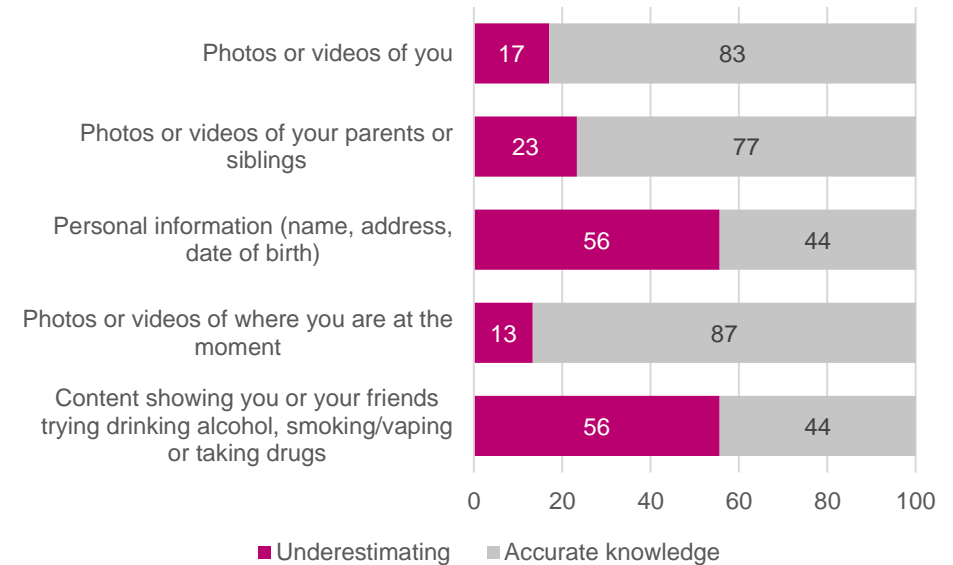
24-71 years old
($M = 43.63$, $SD = 6.15$)
59.2% mothers

Results: Posting content publicly

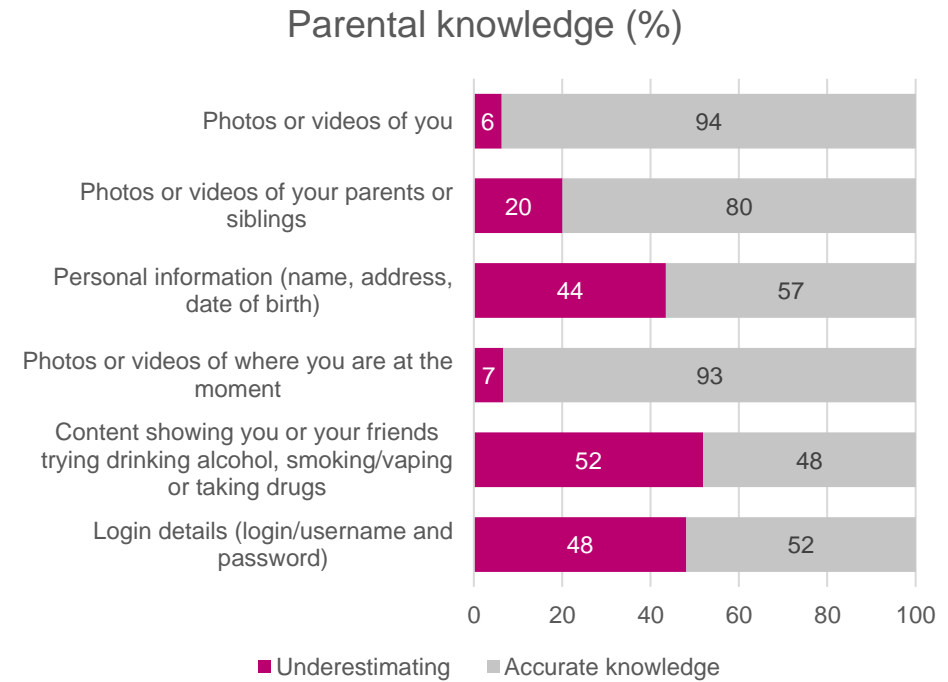
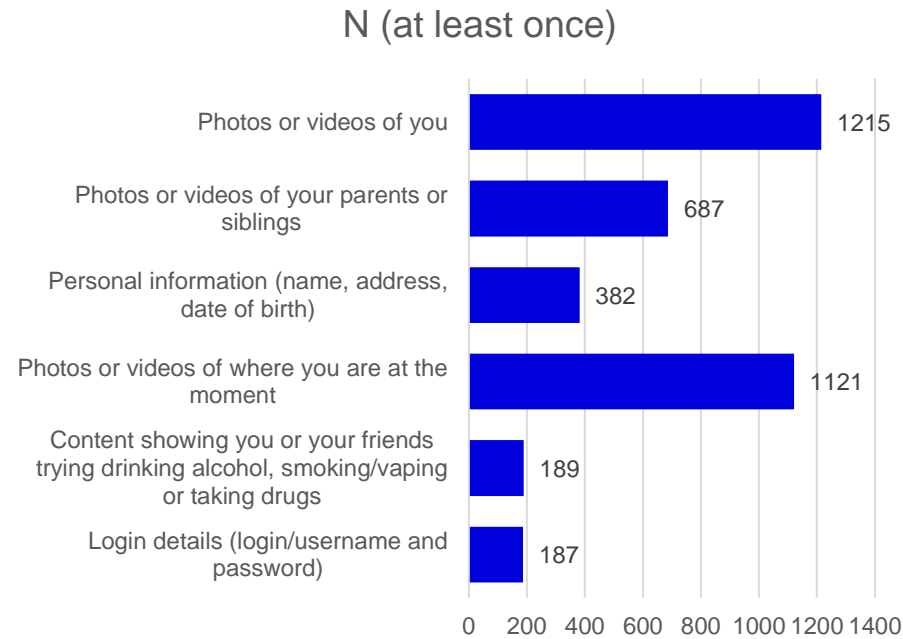
N (at least once)



Parental knowledge (%)

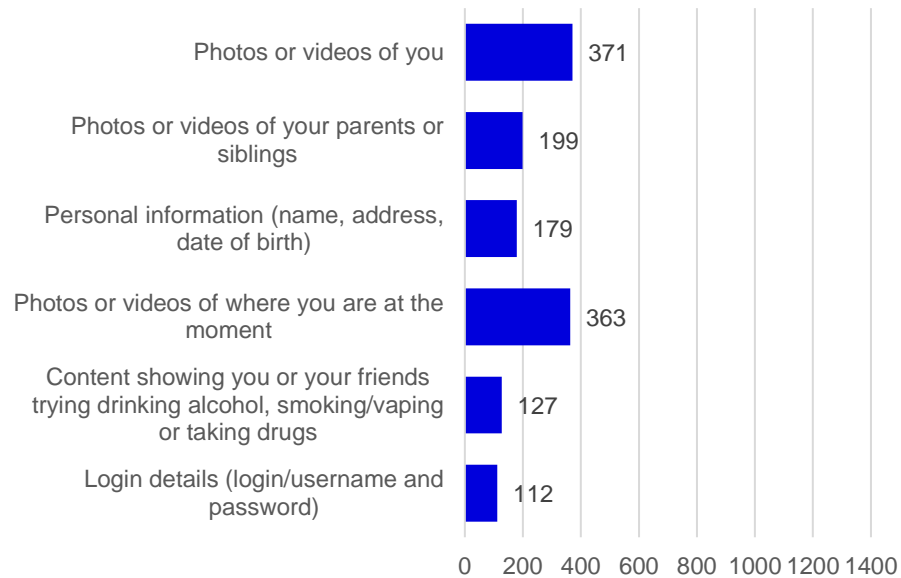


Results: Sending **privately** to friends

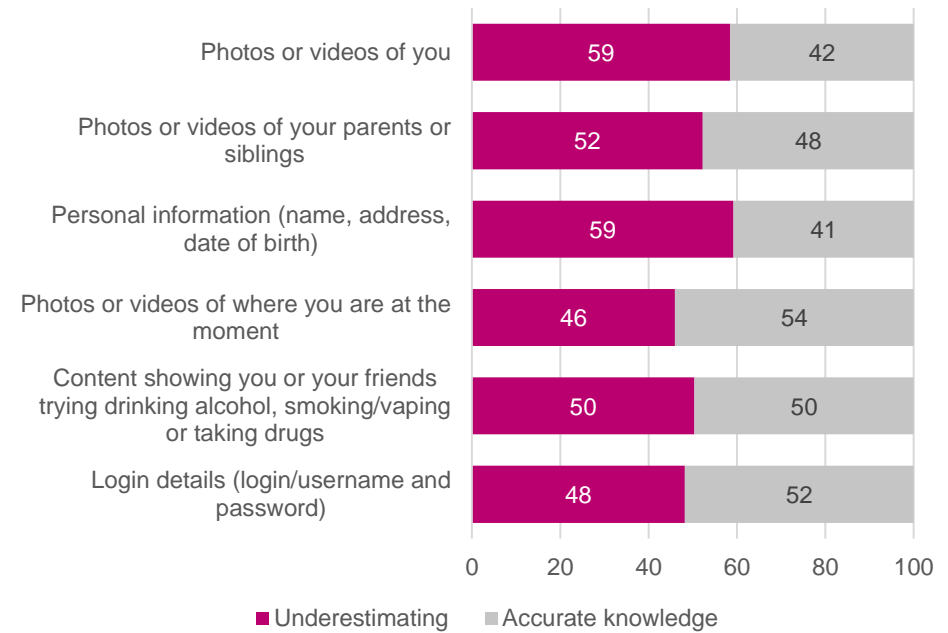


Results: Sending privately to strangers

N (at least once)

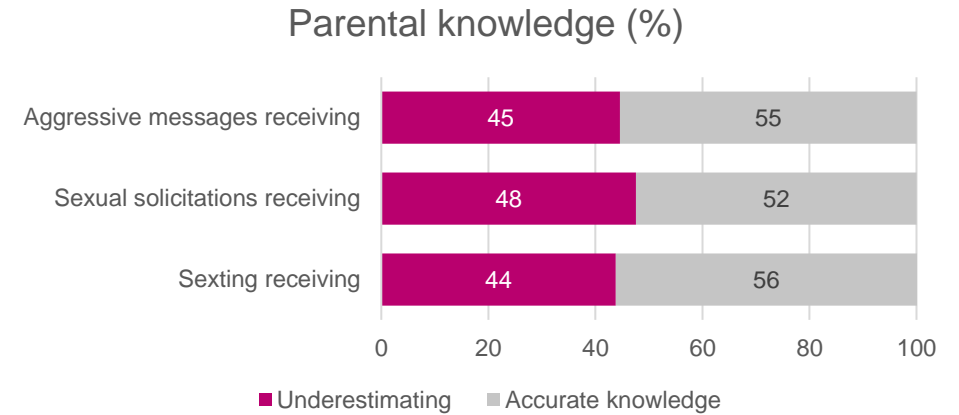
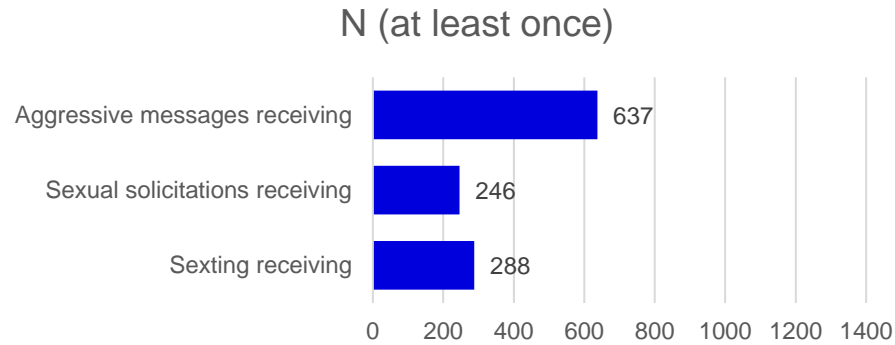


Parental knowledge (%)

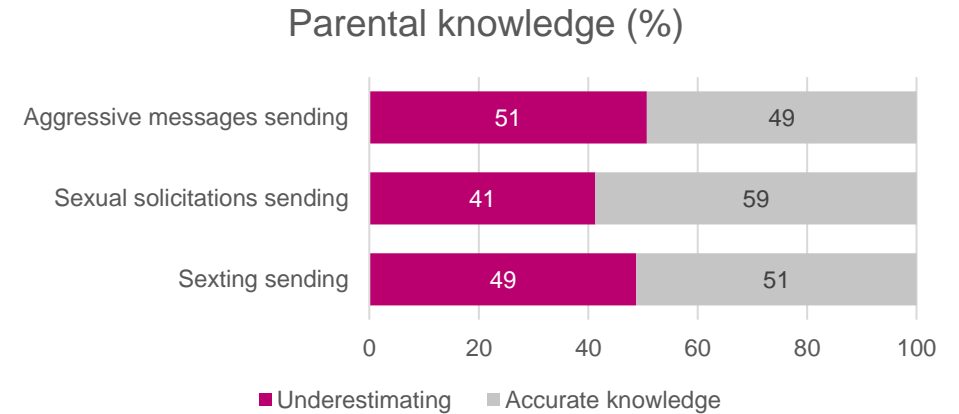
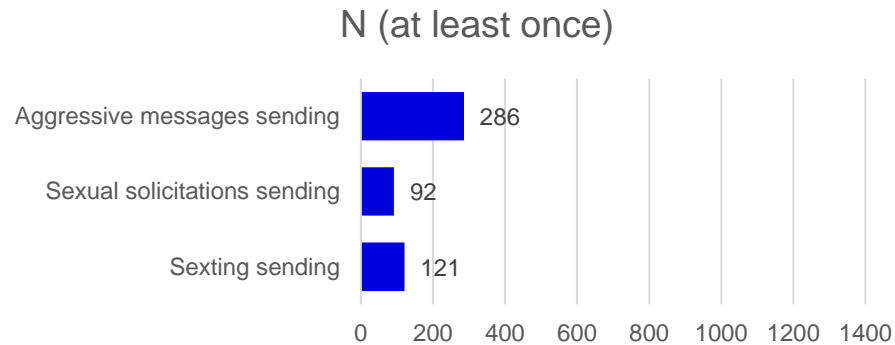


Results: Potentially risky interactions

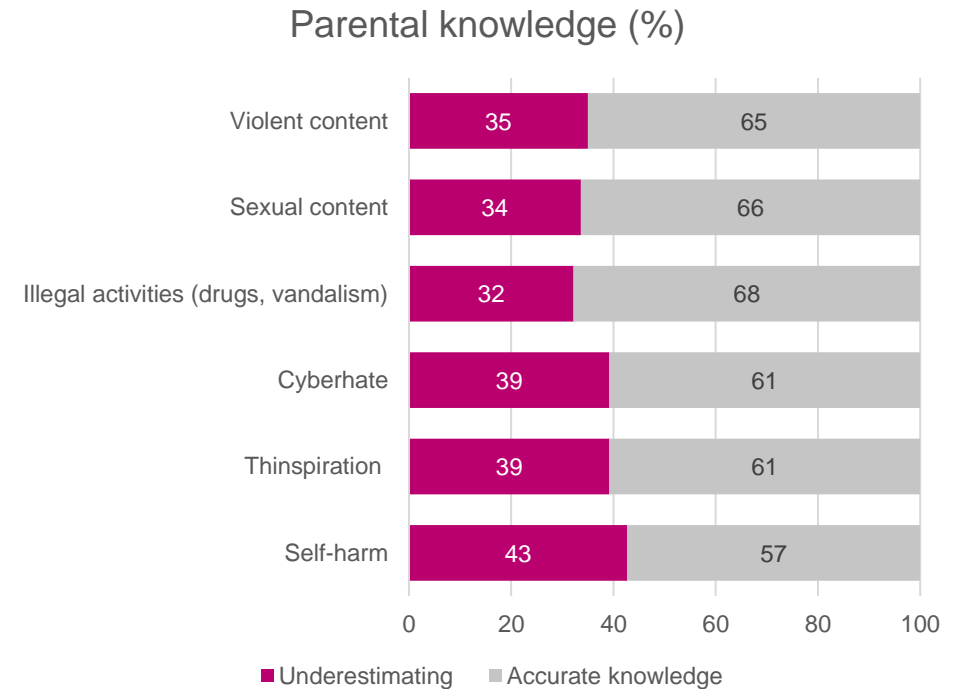
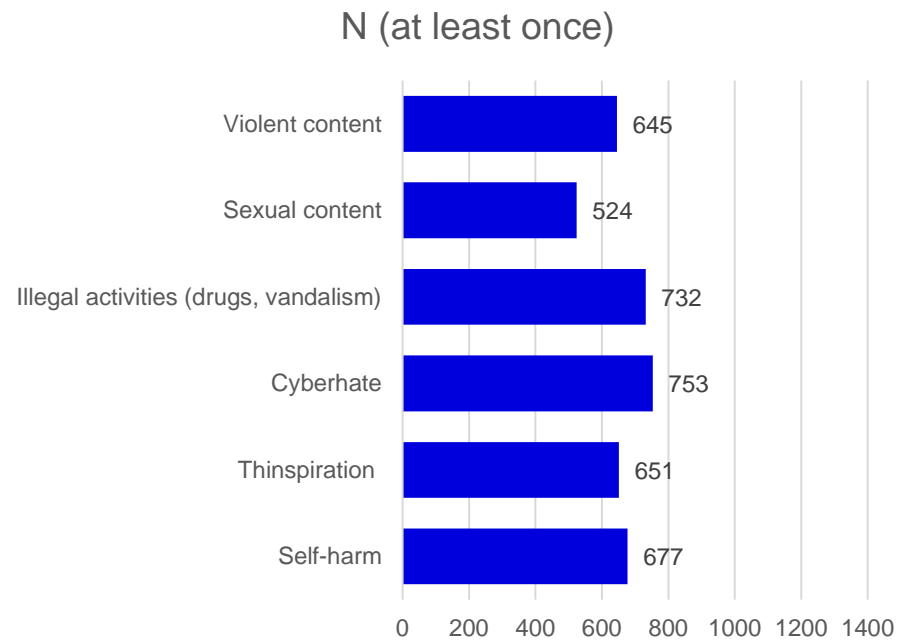
Receiving



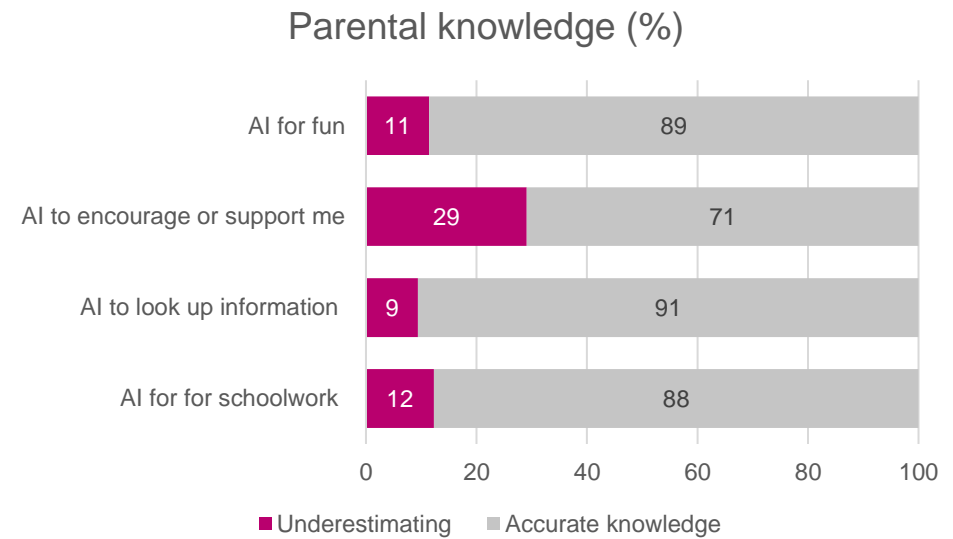
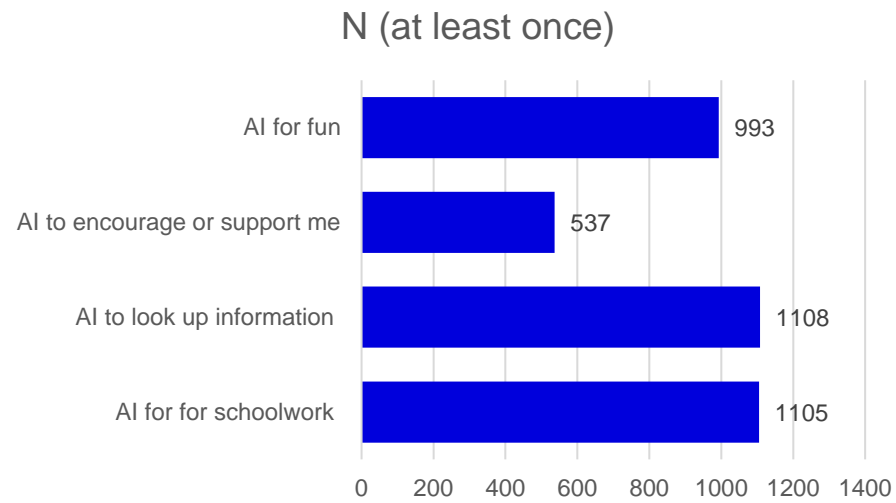
Sending



Results: Potentially risky content exposure



Results: AI usage (non-risky activity)



Discussion

- **Parental knowledge for neutral, more common, and less risky activities is quite high**
 - Only a minority of parents underestimate them (6-17% parents underestimate)
- **Lower for more risky and/or less frequent activities**
 - About 40-60% of parents underestimate them
 - Around 40-60% have accurate knowledge
- **The trend does not seem to vary much based on specific risk**
 - Sexual, aggressive messages similar; different problematic content similar
 - Probable reasons: knowing they do something they shouldn't, shame, fear of reactions

Implications

- **Lack of knowledge of more risky activities may exacerbate the potential risk for adolescents**
 - Parents as important sources of support (e.g., Kaiser et al., 2020)
- Factors increasing information sharing between parents and adolescents (e.g., Liu et al., 2020; Geržičáková et al., 2023):
 - General parenting: parental warmth, parental support, parental solicitations
 - Digital parenting: active parental mediation
 - Future research: factors that increase „online“ knowledge specifically

Thank you for your attention

Parental Knowledge of Early Adolescents' Online Social Lives: The role of Parental Mediation (PARKA)

Financed by Czech Science Foundation (GA24-10765S)

Lenka Dedkova

ldedkova@fss.muni.cz

IRTIS

Masaryk university, Brno, Czech Republic

M U N I Interdisciplinary
F S S Research Team on
Internet and Society



irtis.muni.cz

References

- Barlett, C. P., & Fennel, M. (2018). Examining the relation between parental ignorance and youths' cyberbullying perpetration. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 7(4), 547–560. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000139>
- Beyens, I., Keijsers, L., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2024). Development, validity, and reliability of the parent-adolescent communication about adolescents' social media use scale (PACAS). *Journal of Children and Media*, 18(2), 159-177.
- Caivano, O., Leduc, K., & Talwar, V. (2020). When you think you know: The effectiveness of restrictive mediation on parental awareness of cyberbullying experiences among children and adolescents. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.5817/CP2020-1-2>
- Geržičáková, M., Dedkova, L., & Mýlek, V. (2023). What do parents know about children's risky online experiences? The role of parental mediation strategies. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 141, 107626. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107626>
- Kaiser, S., Kyrrestad, H., & Fossum, S. (2020). Help-seeking behavior in Norwegian adolescents: The role of bullying and cyberbullying victimization in a cross-sectional study. *Scandinavian Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychology*, 8(1), 81–90. <https://doi.org/10.21307/sjcapp-2020-008>
- Kerr, M., Stattin, H., & Burk, W. J. (2010). A reinterpretation of parental monitoring in longitudinal perspective. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 20(1), 39–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2009.00623.x>
- Liu, D., Chen, D., & Brown, B. B. (2020). Do parenting practices and child disclosure predict parental knowledge? A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 49(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01154-4>
- Smahel, D., Machackova, H., Mascheroni, G., Dedkova, L., Staksrud, E., Ólafsson, K., Livingstone, S., and Hasebrink, U. (2020). EU Kids Online 2020: Survey results from 19 countries. *EU Kids Online*. <https://doi.org/10.21953/lse.47fdeqj01ofo>
- Sorbring, E., & Lundin, L. (2012). Mothers' and fathers' insights into teenagers' use of the internet. *New Media & Society*, 14(7), 1181–1197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812440160>
- Symons, K., Ponnet, K., Emmery, K., Walrave, M., & Heirman, W. (2017). Parental knowledge of adolescents' online content and contact risks. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 46(2), 401–416. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0599-7>