

Uncertainty surrounds solo journey of Omid

Social Desk

Uncertainty surrounds the return of Omid, the Siberian crane who has been traveling alone from Siberia to Iran and back for 15 years. The male creature is the sole survivor of the western population of Siberian cranes who fly to Iran each autumn. Although last year he found a mate named

Roya, a crane that was sent to Iran from Belgium, they could not journey together to Siberia due to the female crane's inaptitude for such a flight, IRNA reported. Now, Iranian environmentalists are concerned about Omid's absence and speculations have begun. Omid has been coming to Miankaleh alone for 15 years, and the Iranian Department of

the Environment are familiar his behavior and travel patterns. DoE placed the cage with Roya in the same location, hoping that the two cranes would pair up and continue the flight path. While the organization's goal is not necessarily to mate them, it would be a positive outcome. Omid was quick to notice Roya's presence and tried to attract

her attention. They spent time together, exploring the lagoon and planning their journey to Siberia.

On March 5, 2023, after 34 days together, Omid and Roya began their migration. However, their journey did not go as expected. After seven days, it was reported that Roya was seen alone in Tonekabon, one of the western cities of Mazandaran Province.

Omid was alone again, and the efforts to establish a pair had failed. Experts believe that Roya's physical strength was not sufficient for the long migration. The migration process is complex, requiring the birds to be fully prepared in terms of fat storage and muscle development.

Roya was brought back to Miankaleh, and efforts are being made to create suitable conditions for her during the summer season. As for Omid, his delay in returning to Iran may be due to weather changes and altered flight path conditions. A DoE official assured that Omid's absence should not be a cause for concern, as it depends on seasonal factors and the temperature in the Siberian regions.

The DoE has plans in place for the mating of Omid and the preservation of his flight path. The local community is eagerly awaiting Omid's return, as they understand the importance of safeguarding the crane's population.



Screen use cause for concern as it impacts our cognitive functioning

Screens have become seamlessly integrated into our daily lives, serving as indispensable tools for work, education and leisure. But while they enrich our lives in countless ways, we often fail to consider the potential impact of screen time on our cognitive abilities.

A clear link was found between disordered screen use and lower cognitive functioning in a new meta-analysis of dozens of earlier studies, according to The Conversation.

The findings suggest we should exercise caution before advocating for more screen time, and before introducing screens into even more aspects of daily life.

A 2020 UNSW report noted a concerning statistic: about 84 percent of Australian educators believe digital technologies are distracting in a learning environment.

And according to the ABC, a recent Beyond Blue survey of Australian teachers identified excessive screen time as the second-most significant challenge for young people, just behind mental health issues.

Despite mounting concerns, more than half of Australian schools have embraced a "bring your own device" policy. Students are spending more time online than ever

before and starting at increasingly younger ages. A 2021 report by Common Sense Media estimated tweens spend an average of 5 hours and 33 minutes using screen-based entertainment each day, while teenagers devote a whopping 8 hours and 39 minutes.

A surge in screen use has led to some individuals, including children, adolescents and adults, developing screen-related addictions.

The impact of screens on our cognitive abilities – that is, our thinking skills such as attention, memory, language and problem-solving – has sparked much debate.

On one hand, some researchers and reporters claim screen use can have negative effects, such as health problems, shortened attention spans and hindered development.

On the other, schools are increasingly adopting technology to boost student engagement. Tech companies are also marketing their products as tools to help you enhance your problem-solving and memory skills.

The recent study, whose findings paint a concerning picture, sought to understand the potential cognitive consequences of

"disordered screen-related behaviors," through conducting a meta-analysis of 34 studies that explored various forms of screen use and compared the cognitive performance of individuals with disordered screen use to those without it. Across these rigorously peer-reviewed studies, individuals with disordered screen use consistently demonstrated significantly poorer cognitive performance compared to others. The most affected cognitive domain was attention, and specifically sustained attention, which is the ability to maintain focus on an unchanging stimulus for an extended period.

The second-most notable difference was in their "executive functioning."

Interestingly, the type of screen activity didn't make a difference in the results. The trend also wasn't confined to children, but was observed across all age groups.

The first explanation for poorer cognitive functioning in such individuals is that disordered screen use actually leads to poorer cognitive function, including poorer attention skills.

It may be the result of being constantly bombarded by algorithms and features

designed to capture our attention. By diverting our focus outward, screen use may weaken one's intrinsic ability to concentrate over time.

Crucially, impaired attention also makes it harder to disengage from addictive behaviors, and would therefore make it harder to recognize when screen use has become a problem.

The second explanation is that people who already have poorer cognitive functioning are more likely to engage in disordered screen use.

Attention is the bedrock of everyday tasks. People with weakened attention may struggle to keep up in less stimulating environments.

Similarly, people with less inhibitory control would also find it more challenging to moderate their screen use. Research also indicates people with impaired cognitive functioning usually aren't as well equipped to moderate their own screen time. It should be noted that many users with disordered screen use are young.



Cancer causes 55k deaths in Iran each year

Social Desk

A recent report has shed light on the alarming number of premature deaths caused by cancer in Iran. Out of the total 122,000 premature deaths under the age of 70, a startling 34,000 can be attributed to cancer. Furthermore, cancer is responsible for 11,000 out of 85,000 premature deaths under the age of 50, according to the report.

The situation appears to be worsening. Experts predict that the number of new cancer cases in Iran will soar to 160,000 in

the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 20, 2024, until March 20, 2025). This projection marks a significant 42 percent increase compared to previous years, IRNA reported.

The report highlights specific types of cancer that are expected to see the most significant increase in incidence. Thyroid cancers are projected to surge by 114 percent, followed by prostate cancers at 67 percent. Breast cancers, colon cancers, ovarian cancer, lung cancers, non-Hodgkin lymphoma cancer, brain and nervous system cancer, stomach cancer, bladder

cancer, and leukemia are also expected to experience notable increases.

In light of these concerning trends, the report emphasizes the importance of lifestyle changes in reducing the risk of premature death from cancer. While there are various factors that contribute to the development of cancer, adopting healthier habits can play a crucial role in mitigating the risk. Experts suggest that Iranians can make a significant impact by making simple changes to their daily routines, such as engaging in regular physical

activity, maintaining a balanced diet, avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption, and undergoing routine cancer screenings.

Efforts to raise awareness about the importance of early detection and prevention are pivotal in combating the rising cancer rates in Iran. Public health campaigns, educational programs, and access to quality healthcare services are essential in empowering individuals to take control of their health and make informed decisions that can potentially save lives.



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