

The effects of media violence and the debate of how to solve the problem



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Violent and aggressive behavior show up everywhere from popular video games, movies, to television shows, all of which young children have access to watch. People are also able to interact with these violent types of media as video games take center stage. Video game players are able to mutilate, kill and destroy items, ranging from buildings to streets with bombs, and use of guns and other weaponries throughout a game scene.

In fact, that is how some games are won, as whichever player kills the most opponents wins the round. Multiple psychological studies are showing that aggressive gaming is affecting children so much so that the American Academy of Pediatrics has concluded that “ playing violent video games leads to adolescent violence” (Media 1). The amount of violence throughout the media is setting generations of adolescents to be aggressive and violent. It is becoming obvious that the question is not how media violence is affecting children, but how to counter the effects.

Parents need to be informed of the potential dangers this type of media can have on a child to enable them to take the right steps to reduce the exposure children are susceptible to. If children are taught early by parents and throughout school programs that violence shown throughout the media is fictional and not a common occurrence, it may decrease the aggressive tendencies in children that are occurring as a result from such media. As the issue the effects media violence have carries obvious importance many studies have been conducted researching problems it causes on children behavioral development. This finding was then correlated with later research, which showed behavior shown after prolonged exposure to the violent media.

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Throughout this experiment researchers found that prolonged exposure resulted in increased acceptance of violence as an appropriate means of solving problems and achieving one's goals (1). This same principle is shown throughout a similar study that focused on the psychological development of young children. Researcher Eugene Beresin describes, "Children are unable to distinguish between fact and fantasy and instead may view it as an ordinary occurrence" (Beresin). This principle seems easy enough to fix, do not allow a child to play a mature-rated video game or watch a PG-13 rated show; however the increased amounts of violence are just as prevalent in children's animated shows, causing just as big of a problem as a child watching a show designated for a teenager (Media Violence, 1). The overwhelming influence media violence plays and the inability to escape from the effects, leads one to explore the necessity of educational programs in schools. The AAP highly recommend these classes for their use in teaching how media work, how media can influence the way we perceive reality and develop attitudes, how to determine whether media messages are appropriate, and how to reject messages that are not healthy (Media Violence, 1).

These classes are designed to teach young children fact from fantasy, that violence is not a common occurrence, and should not be used to solve problems, but also to influence them to make better decisions for themselves when using media. These programs will enable each student to be better educated and aware of the on goings of what they are watching and how to react to it. Also, it is becoming obvious that parents may be unaware of the detrimental effects prolonged exposure to media violence

can cause. Furthermore, many parents are unable to fully censor children's viewings of media violence as they are too busy with the on goings of work or family life. These educational programs not only ensure that some understanding is being taught to the children if none is given or available at home, as well as bringing the issue more out in the open for adults to start to see the harmful effects that are happening. With the installation of these programs it is hoped that the effects media violence plays on behavioral development will be decreased.

Although some positive effects can come out from the creation of these programs, some parents may have some apprehension to enabling a teacher to subject their children to classes where violence is introduced at such young ages. The age range these classes would most likely be targeted at would be kindergarten to elementary school children, as those years are the most susceptible ages to media violence effects (as they do not have full understanding of fact from fantasy). This is a problem to parents who are trying to censor their children from media altogether at these early ages, and introducing them to it in a class at school would not only challenge the parents teachings but may present information that the child is not ready for. In a similar issue, arises the sex education program, in which many parents are also against the use of the instruction. In an article, Points of View: Sex Education in Schools, Badertscher and Geier describe the situation in which parents would rather have control on what their child learns rather than the school system teaching them from a generalized program (Geier, 1). In this belief parents express that they know their children much better,

and are more aware of what their child needs, and thus better equip to provide a superior teaching environment.

Furthermore, ??? school-based programs might prove useful, but only to reinforce the teaching that children are already receiving at home??? as this is where most moral growth is learned and developed (1). Parents are better able to ensure a nurturing environment, where the child is more likely to understand, as well as follow, thus ensuring lessened effects. Education on such a serious issue needs to be better installed in the home where the viewings take place, rather than taught in classroom, in which could cause more problems as their age may only confuse the situation more. Parents must be more involved and aware of what their children are using and or watching to make ensure the effects of media violence decrease. Media violence can be an issue, however removing it entirely and sheltering a child away will cause much worse effects. Violence is everywhere, sustaining movie theater ticket sales, game companies, television networks, and constantly displayed on the news.

In attempts to shelter a child from all aspects of violence will only leave them unprepared as they grow up, not protect them any better. By educating and allowing children to be exposed to violent media, in doses, as well as in careful incorporation of what types of media is allowed can lead to a child being better prepared to the media when alone, as well as give off some positive effects. Research is emerging explaining that some violent video games can ave good effects on the gamers. Doom Creator John Carmack explains his view on the topic, stating that he sees no negative effects with video games, and instead finds that ??? violent games grant players an <https://assignbuster.com/the-effects-of-media-violence-and-the-debate-of-how-to-solve-the-problem/>

outlet for their aggression thus reducing their propensity for violence in the real world??? as opposed to growing more violent from playing the game, early research describes (Chivers, 1).

In continuance with this principle, a prominent author and journalist Gerard Jones explains that media has positive effects that are necessities to children as their developing. He states, ??? young people love fantasy violence not because the media indoctrinates them, but because it gives them coping skills they desperately need??? these fantasies teach our kids to trust their own emotions, build stronger selves, and withstand the pressures of pop culture??? (Neal, 1). Lastly, an experiment was conducted by Tobias Greitemeyer and Silvia Osswald, as they looked into action ??? video games with a positive message and pro-social aspects in hopes of it leading to decreases of aggressive cognitions??? (Greitemeyer, 3). Throughout this study, two games were played, Lemmings as the action game and Tetris as a neutral game.

After playing the game for several minutes??? behavior was then tested through a ??? bully type??? simulation: in which a man/bf harasses a woman using a loud voice and aggressive behavior. The situation was used to see if any reaction would be given to help the women from the aggressive male. Through this study researchers found that video gamers that played the action game exhibited more responses to help the women, as opposed to the participants playing the neutral game. The information above details aspects unto how media violence is not always detrimental. Media violence has negative effects, however if the positive effects can be focused on and

developed, there will be a decrease in the detrimental effects caused by excessive media violence.

A median in media exposure must be found so as to incorporate the positive effects that one may gain from small doses of media while still being aware of the effects violence can cause on young children.

References <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/108/5/1222>.

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