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New analysis reasserts video games' link to violence

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By [Sharon Jayson, USA TODAY](#)

A new review of 130 studies "strongly suggests" playing violent video games increases aggressive thoughts and behavior and decreases empathy.

The results hold "regardless of research design, gender, age or culture," says lead researcher Craig Anderson, who directs the Center for the Study of Violence at Iowa State University in Ames.

His team did a statistical analysis of studies on more than 130,000 gamers from elementary school age to college in the USA, Europe and Japan. It is published today in *Psychological Bulletin*, a journal of the [American Psychological Association](#).

But Christopher Ferguson, an associate professor at Texas A&M International University in Laredo, says in a critique accompanying the study that the effects found "are generally very low." He adds that the analysis "contains numerous flaws," which he says result in "overestimating the influence" of violent games on aggression.

Ferguson says his own study of 603 predominantly Hispanic young people, published last year in *The Journal of Pediatrics*, found "delinquent peer influences, antisocial personality traits, depression, and parents/guardians who use psychological abuse" were consistent risk factors for youth violence and aggression. But he also found that neighborhood quality, parents' domestic violence and exposure to violent TV or video games "were not predictive of youth violence and aggression."

Anderson says his team "never said it's a huge effect. But if you look at known risk factors for the development of aggression and violence, some are bigger than media violence and some are smaller.

"If you have a child with no other risk factors for aggression and violence and if you allow them to suddenly start playing video games five hours to 10 hours a week, they're not going to become a school shooter. One risk factor doesn't do it by itself."

But he notes that video game violence is "the only causal risk factor that is relatively easy for parents to do something about."

Both of his college-age kids grew up playing video games, Anderson says, but many games rated "E" (for "everyone") contain violence.

"The rating itself does not tell you whether it is a healthy or unhealthy game," he adds. "Any game that involves killing or harming another character in order to advance is likely to be teaching inappropriate lessons to whoever is playing it."

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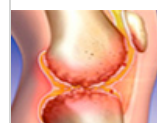
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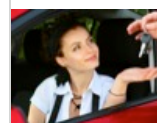
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78bo (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 3m ago

Christopher2, you are an idiot. How can you possibly sit there and think our men and women are killers? I am a Veteran and take personal offense by that statement. When a natural disaster hits who's the first people out there? The military! When bad guys attack who are the people that come to your aid? The military. You sit on your computer and call us killers, yet in the same breath say you'd rather use the nukes. So you're saying you'd rather kill hundreds of thousands of people, or possibly wipe out whole cities, then to send in soldiers? I really hope you don't have kids.

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Denel12 (5 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 3m ago

There have been numerous studies done on the effect of violent video games on aggressiveness of children and the results are that the aggressiveness increase is statistically insignificant. However, if you're running a study and the results show what you expected, no matter how slightly, you're going to tout that difference.

Actually, studies have shown that video like the Berinstein Bears and Babar and most educational programming increases the level at which children are socially aggressive towards their peers. At first glance that seems stupid, but reasearcher found that shows like those listed above model for 25 minutes bullying and socially aggressive behavior and in the last 2-3 minutes the conflicts are resolved and eveybody plays well together. Children do not make the connection--that's why their children and not little adults. So they learn to be socially aggressive by the video, but don't understand the intent.

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ItTollsForThee (59 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 5m ago

Tommy H. (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 7m ago
I remember one time my brother punched me in the arm after I beat him in Pong.

I remember one time my brother kicked me in the head from smoking his bong.

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CptGreedle (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 5m ago

I call BS on that! Time and time again, "Scientists" try to prove there is any connection with violence and video games. I'm sorry, but there isn't. Show me hard actual proof. This study, as they themselves said, is flawed! It is not a good study, and reporting it is irresponsible and purely political. The whole point of articles and "studies" like this is to get on the side of parents, to make them have something else to blame their child's behavior on, rather than their own bad parenting. I am not saying there is therapeutic output here either. Just like you shouldn't show your children rated R movies, you shouldn't let them play rated M games! You can not blame the game if you are letting your children play it against their advice. They should make people sign a waiver when they buy games for their kids. How many people have played a violent game, or seen a violent movie, or witnessed a violent event? Most everyone. How many of them are violent and aggressive as a result? I don't see people going around running down cops and prostitutes in their car after playing GTA. It just doesn't happen. I wish they would stop doing these idiotic studies and articles.

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Xiver (1 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 5m ago

Or maybe kids are violent and angry because they live in a world that is so jacked up by their parents. Kids can't go outside to play because they'll get kidnapped and raped by some 45yr old dude in a mustache and a van. Or they'll get picked up in gangs because their parents don't give a chit about them.

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Instead of blaming everything on video games let's address the crux of the issue: parents these days just suck.

You're right on the mark. We live in a society that sets child predators loose on the streets because its expensive the keep them in jail and a media that sensationalizes every little story that it can get its hands on, so parents are afraid to let their kids out of their sight. Kids get stuck inside all day playing video games because their parents are too tired or too lazy to bring them outside and the kids never get to actually run and play to let off steam. Then they go to school full of pent up energy and wired up from soda and junk food. The school's solution is to recommend that the parents drug them so the teachers don't have to work so hard, so now the kids are drugged up underexercised and over fed. The worst part of it all is that they are told that its normal to live that way.

My generation is all screwed up, but I the next generation.

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Bluline (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6m ago

Tommy H. (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 4m ago

I remember one time my brother punched me in the arm after I beat him in Pong.

When we were kids, my brothers and I used to go out in the woods near our house and play war after watching a war movie on TV (black-and-white, tiny screen). We even had realistic-looking toy guns. We'd be out there for hours. Those were the days.

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vtjer (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 6m ago

Kids need to get out of the house and play outside. But kidnappers are stalking our neighborhoods so maybe we should just let the kids watch tv and play vids all day.

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ItTollsForThee (59 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 7m ago

Chefexec. (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 3m ago

I would argue that these blogs create violence in people or anything else for that matter. Maybe we are just prone to violence. It's are nature. Not excusing it, just saying.

William Golding's, "Lord of the Flies", looks at the issue on Mans good/evil towards itself.

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capnblood (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 8m ago

the damage video games do is nothing compared to that of gansta rap

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