



Effect Of Mass Communication Among Impressionable Minds Of Children

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Abstract

Children's emotional and social development are significantly impacted by media exposure. So, doctors should talk to parents about how much TV, radio, music, video games, and the Internet their kids are exposed to and provide advice on how much time kids of different ages should spend with each medium. The purpose of this statement is to examine the potential positive and negative impacts of media exposure on children's physical and mental well-being, and to suggest ways in which medical professionals might advise their patients and their families to encourage positive media habits. Keywords: commercials, education, healthy media consumption, media, media effects, media stereotypes, violence in the media, music, porn, positive media, watching television, video games, and underage gambling

Keywords: Media, Psychosocial development, television, radio, music, video games, and the internet, mental and physical health, educational media, healthy media diet, media impacts, stereotypes, media violence etc.

Introduction

Both beneficial and negative impacts of television on society, especially on children and adolescents, have been the subject of several studies (1,2). The good or negative impacts of a medium on a youngster are highly dependent on the child's stage of development. Not all shows on TV are terrible, but there is strong evidence that watching shows with graphic violence, sexual content, or foul language may harm young viewers.

- i. Doctors have the power to influence and enhance their patients' TV watching habits (4).
- ii. Canadian youth have a serious problem with TV addiction (5,6).
- iii. Children's aggressive behavior seems to rise in correlation with their exposure to violent media (2,7).
- iv. Overtime in front of the TV has been linked to an increase in juvenile obesity (8,9).
- v. Over time, viewing too much TV might hurt your brain and your grades (10).
- vi. There is evidence that suggests watching certain shows might lead to risky sexual behavior (11).
- vii. Advertising on television may reach a wide range of youngsters (12).

The typical Canadian kid spends roughly 14 hours a week in front of the tube. The typical high school senior will have spent more time in front of the TV than in class (2). The amount of time people of various ages and cultural backgrounds spend in front of the TV has been shown to vary. This is significant for research into the negative effects of excessive TV viewing among economically disadvantaged groups.

There has not been a dramatic decline in the amount of time younger children in North America spend in front of the screen recently (14). Many kids start watching TV far earlier than they should (15), and they often watch more than the recommended two hours per day. There is some evidence that links the amount of time kids and teens spend in front of the TV to the extent to which it affects them (1, 2, 16). So, after enough time in front of the screen, what we see on TV starts to seem like the actual world (1, 2).

Too much time in front of the TV may cut into kids' opportunities to play, read, learn to communicate, socialize, tell stories, get regular exercise, and build important physical, mental, and social skills (9). Whether children watch tv alone or with their parents, as well as the child's developmental stage and

degree of sensitivity, are all elements that affect the medium's impact on children.

Learning- Teaching Interface: Educating using television may be effective (17). Sesame Street is a great example of an educational television program that may help teach young children important lessons like diversity, teamwork, compassion, numeracy, and literacy. Educational movies may be very effective prosocial teaching techniques, and several public television shows encourage trips to zoos, libraries, bookshops, museums, and other active leisure locations. Evidence suggests that watching Sesame Street might help kids become better readers and learners (18). TV may be used as a teaching tool to promote good eating and exercise habits in low-income communities (17).

Even yet, watching TV may be disruptive to other activities, such as studying. Even 1 to 2 hours of daily unsupervised television watching by school-aged children has a considerable negative influence on academic performance, notably reading (10,19), according to more recent and well-controlled research.

Violence-Depiction and Psychological Impact: The prevalence of violent content in the media is increasing (20). The typical youngster is exposed to 12,000 acts of violence every year, including several images of murder and rape. Extensive viewing of violent media, especially among males, has been shown in over a thousand studies to promote aggressive behavior (2,21–23). Some research suggests that seeing or reading about a suicide on television or in the press may raise one's own suicide risk (24-28).

Children in the following demographics may be more susceptible to media violence:

- a) young people from ethnic and migratory minorities;
- b) youngsters with mental problems;
- c) youngsters that are unable to learn;
- d) youngsters who suffer from parental maltreatment; and

e) family members (2,7) who are children.

If a youngster has a history of aggression and is seen by a doctor, the doctor should ask about the child's exposure to violent media.

Nutritional Inputs- Fad and Necessity: Children who spend a lot of time in front of the TV are less likely to be physically active and are more likely to snack on high-fat, high-energy items (9). Prime time advertising heavily encourage poor food choices (15,29), hence watching TV contributes significantly to obesity. Most food advertising is for high calorie meals including fast food, candy, and presweetened cereals (14,29), despite the fact that the fat content of promoted goods surpasses the current average Canadian diet and nutritional requirements. Only four percent of kids' exposure to food commercials provide healthful options (8). Children are at a greater relative risk for high cholesterol if they spend more time in front of the TV than other kids (8). Adolescent females may develop eating problems after becoming fixated on the slender bodies of television characters (8). Discourage eating in front of the TV since it might lead to less engaged conversation and, perhaps, less healthy eating overall (29,30).

Adverse Impact of Media Expression

(i) Depiction of Sexuality: Television has recently emerged as Canada's primary source of sex education. There was a 270% rise in sex activity during the family hours of 2000-2100 between 1976 and 1996(31). Children are vulnerable to sexually explicit content on television because of the widespread prevalence of such programming, which gives the impression that such activities represent no danger to the viewer. There are 24 times as many depictions of sexual activity between nonmarried people as there are between married people (32-35), and yet there is almost no discussion of STDs or unintended pregnancies.

Teens consider media to be the second most reliable source of sex education after their schools. Adolescents are especially vulnerable to the media's impact on their sexual attitudes, values, and beliefs, as shown in a number of research (34,35).

There are additional scholarly sources that provide a more in-depth guidance to discerning sexual content in media (35).

Some individuals think the media may encourage responsible sexual behavior by highlighting the benefits of using birth control methods like condoms. There is no current evidence in favor of this idea, and the discussion is likely to continue.

(ii) Impact of Alcohol and smoking: The two biggest brewers in Canada together spend almost \$200 million annually on marketing (36). Between one thousand and two thousand beer advertisements every year send the message to teens that alcohol is for 'real' guys. There is strong evidence to show that advertising causes people to drink more beer (34,37), and in countries like Sweden, where advertising for alcoholic beverages is prohibited, alcohol consumption has decreased as a result (38).

In Canada, tobacco products cannot be marketed on television. Yet, passive marketing happens when, say, a soap opera star smokes as a 'macho' act, a Formula One racing vehicle has cigarette advertising, or sports events include the names of tobacco corporations. Passive advertising that promotes the romanticization of smoking has risen in recent years, according to available data (28).

Children learn about cigarette and alcohol use from a variety of sources, and although TV is certainly one of them, it has been criticized for exaggerating the positive effects of these vices. Almost half of all G-rated animated feature films now on videocassette, and a large percentage of music videos, normalize the use of alcohol and cigarettes without discussing the negative health effects of these substances.

The long-term assessment of Advertising: Children's attitudes and actions may benefit from exposure to advertising. Some producers of alcoholic beverages, for instance, devote 10% of their advertising budget to campaigns that highlight the risks associated with drinking and driving. Moreover, milk intake has grown as a consequence of print and television marketing, even though some medical experts differ regarding the health advantages of adequate milk usage.

The influence of ads on children varies with their stage of development. Preschoolers aren't mature enough to comprehend the idea of a hard sell. People are easily persuaded, and they may even feel deprived if they don't have access to the items they see promoted. The vast majority of three and four-year-olds are unable to differentiate between a purely entertaining show and a sales pitch. Numerous studies have shown that youngsters under the age of eight are not cognitively capable of distinguishing between commercials and noncommercial content (12,40,41).

More than twenty thousand ads are seen by the typical youngster each year (12). More than sixty percent of advertising focus on selling breakfast cereals, sweets, fried meals, and children's toys (12). Toy-themed animated shows tend to do well with kids. Adolescents are more susceptible to persuasion by commercials that promote the use of tobacco products (4).

There's a lot of back and forth over whether or not kids can withstand the allure of screen time. Most research indicates that the longer youngsters are exposed to television, the more impacted they become by what they see (4). Previous research has shown that males may be more easily influenced by violent media content than girls (25).

The Need for Education and parental involvement to Defray Negative Impact: There is evidence that media literacy programs in high schools may help students (4). Students get a deeper appreciation for the potential societal impact of the media. The Media Awareness Network in Canada provides several tools for educators and members of the general public to increase the country's level of media literacy. They have an abundance of information that is up-to-date, relevant, and tailored to Canadians (42).

While parents are allowed to consider ratings, they should do so with care. There is currently no agreement on the most effective ranking system (43). The greatest option is for parents to be involved in picking appropriate shows for their children. Parents should keep an eye on and limit their kids' screen time.

Parental involvement in their children's social learning has been shown to be significant (44), but if parents don't express their own opinions to their

children, the media may educate and influence them without their knowledge or consent. Magazines, radio, video games, and the Internet may all have an impact on kids' lifestyle choices, including what they eat, how often they exercise, what they purchase, and how they feel emotionally and mentally. Without parental monitoring, these forms of media consumption may have the same negative consequences on children as television.

Aping Music Videos for Behaviour Adaptation: Teens may be more receptive to premarital sex and become desensitized to violent content after seeing music videos (45). More than half of films depict violence, most of which is directed towards women, and up to seventy-five percent include sexually explicit content (45). The common portrayal of women as inferior influences young viewers' views on gender roles.

More than 80% of the time, the aggressors in violent music videos are attractive role models. More than three times as many men as women are the perpetrators, and people of color were overrepresented while whites were underrepresented. Sometimes stereotypical ideas are reinforced in music videos. Adolescents' normative assumptions about conflict resolution, racism, and male-female relationships were questioned after a thorough examination of music videos (42).

There has been a rise in the number of sexual, narcotic, and violently explicit lyrics in popular music. Studies attempting to establish a causal connection between listening to music with sexually explicit lyrics and negative behavioral outcomes are still in their infancy. Pediatricians, meantime, should warn parents about the potentially detrimental effects of explicit song lyrics by bringing up the topic in anticipatory counseling sessions with their adolescent patients. The music your kids listen to is something parents should keep an eye on at all times (45).

Video Games, Gaming and Animation: While it's true that playing some video games may benefit the development of abilities like fine motor control and coordination, the same worries about excessive television viewing (such inactivity, antisocial behavior, and violent content) also apply to playing video games. Children's brains may be damaged by playing violent video games, thus parents should try to keep their kids away from them (7,47). Parents should

learn about the many video game ratings available so they may make informed purchases for their children.

Public health officials have long been worried about the impact violent computer games have on young people. Before 2001 (47), there had been no systematic quantitative examination of games' content when they were deemed appropriate for all ages. Many games deemed appropriate for all ages actually included substantial levels of violence, with the research finding that 64 percent of those games featured purposeful violence and 60 percent rewarded players for wounding a character. Therefore, there is a lot of space for growth in the existing video game rating system (43).

All pervasive Internet Incursion: Some parents may feel bewildered or even threatened by their children's computer and Internet savvy, while others may fail to see the importance of the "new medium" in their children's development of the "new literacy." They shouldn't let their lack of confidence or a lack of understanding stop them from reaping the advantages of the Internet. Many different kinds of hidden threats exist in this relatively unregulated "connected" society. These threats need to be exposed, and a prudent parent will learn how to safeguard their kids by familiarizing themselves with the medium and consulting the wealth of materials available to do so. The doctor is in a prime position to advise families on how to safely and responsibly use the Internet.

There is great potential for the Internet to serve as a virtual home library for children and young people today. The Internet is a vast information resource, but its veracity is diminished by the absence of editorial standards. Additional worries exist as well.

A child's postural development might be negatively impacted by too much time spent in front of a screen (48). Excessive computer use has been linked to weight gain, a lack of social development, and addiction (9). Seizures brought on by a flickering screen are uncommon, although they may occur in children with seizure disorders. There is no evidence that prolonged TV watching might weaken the eyes. There is no hard evidence to suggest otherwise, but things may be different when a toddler is constantly staring at a computer screen.

In addition, pedophiles who target minors online raise additional safety issues. Children may be vulnerable to sexual content as well. While parents should feel free to use software that prevents their children from seeing explicit content online, they should be mindful that this does not alleviate their responsibility to monitor their children's online activity.

The upsides and downsides of kids and teens using the internet

Plus points of widespread Internet Cable : Near limitless information resource

- i. Easily accessible and reasonably priced in the vast majority of western societies
- ii. Helpful in doing study or homework
- iii. A means of interaction between classroom instructors and their pupils
- iv. Email and video conferencing provide for instant, low-cost communication.
- v. Disabled people may get their hands on a lot of resources that are normally out of reach:
- vi. By use of the hardware and software that allow for computer usage
- vii. Using methods of social interaction that do not need the outward display of their impairment
- viii. A source of amusement

General risks fraud due to Internet : Due to the engaging quality of the medium, excessive Internet usage is common. It is well-documented that adults may suffer from "Internet addiction," often known as unhealthy use of the internet or addiction to the internet (30,49,50).

- a) E-mail and instant chat may be distracting, both at school and on the job.

- b) Excessive Internet use, like watching too much television, may have negative effects on a child's ability to develop healthy relationships with both friends and family.
- c) Overuse encourages sedentary behavior and may contribute to weight gain.

Misinformation Imparted due to Internet

- a) Insufficient checks to ensure information is correct or relevant
- b) Harmful effects of false information on health
- c) Promoting harmful concepts like this among young people
- d) promoting unhealthy methods of weight reduction and cutting calories. To learn more about this topic.
- e) Creating an underlying desire for monetary possessions
- f) E-mail is often used to propagate fraudulent advertisements or frauds.
- g) Obtaining (or stealing) credit cards to pay for online services presents a tempting opportunity cost.

Adverse effects on inherent, inculcated values

- a) There is a risk that minors may obtain pornographic content, either by mistake or on purpose.
- b) Without adult supervision, children are vulnerable to sexual predators in online chat rooms and over e-mail.
- c) Reduced inhibitions compared to face-to-face interactions; increases the likelihood of sexual contact and promiscuity.
- d) Internet betting
- e) The risk of academic dishonesty

- f) Sites that incite violence against women, gays, or members of certain religious or ethnic minorities
- g) Online harassment and slander by school bullies is a growing problem.
- h) Access to potentially dangerous substances or instructions on how to make weapons; online bullying; violent media; and lyrical content in popular music.

Recommendations for Control and Vigilance

- a) Doctors should educate themselves on the many forms of media to which their patients may be exposed, including shows that promote sexually irresponsible and violent behavior and potentially dangerous online content.
- b) Doctors should educate parents about the effects of TV exposure on children. The first year of a child's life should be spent laying the groundwork for television watching, and the second year should be dedicated to establishing good viewing habits.
- c) Doctors should keep themselves updated on the latest research on how the media affects their patients' psychological and social growth.
- d) Doctors are urged to educate themselves on the breadth of Internet-related concerns so they can provide parents sound advice during preventative checkups. The Media History Tool (51) may help parents and children talk about problematic topics. They might be prompted to create a household Internet use policy. Advice on this matter may be found on the website of the Media Awareness Network (www.media-awareness.ca).
- e) It's important to encourage families to watch media together and talk about what they've learned from it. Kids need to be taught to question and evaluate the material they consume. It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children to distinguish between fiction and reality, especially when it comes to sexuality, violence, and marketing.
- f) A child's bedroom should be a place of rest and study, not of entertainment. We recommend a centralized location with shared credentials.

- g) Watching more than an hour or two of television every day is unnecessary and unhealthy. Families should think about doing more fun and interesting things together.
- h) Planning the week's viewing schedule in advance gives older kids a voice in the matter. Parents should keep a close eye on their children's decision-making and provide a good example by making smart decisions themselves. Parents should talk to their kids about the shows they aren't allowed to watch and compliment them when they choose something acceptable.
- i) Families should restrict the amount of time spent on electronic media as a babysitter, distraction, or alternative learning tool for their children. When parents are unable to supervise their children themselves, they should urge substitutes to continue with the same media restrictions. Rules in homes with divorced parents should be uniform.
- j) Show your appreciation for quality entertainment. Physicians and parents may support legislation that promotes more responsible media usage, in addition to writing to stations that air responsible and excellent television programming.
- k) Encourage attempts to ban alcohol advertising on TV with the same zeal that got cigarettes off the air.

Conclusions

The media itself is neither good nor evil. Simply said, it's a resource that might have far-reaching positive effects on young people but also has the potential to have negative consequences. One essential method to increase the chance of getting benefits while minimizing hazards is to work with children and adolescents to build a healthy media diet. For future generations of so-called "digital natives" to become really aware and competent consumers of the digital world, we believe that early and extensive instruction on healthy media usage is also vital, ideally included into school curriculum.

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