

MEDIA INFLUENCE: EVIDENCE ABOUT THE EFFECT OF MEDIA VIOLENCE

	Columbine High School Massacre	The Public Health Risks of Media Violence	Violent video game effects on aggression, empathy and pro-social behaviour in eastern and western countries: a meta-analytic review	Literature review on the impact of playing violent video games on aggression	The portrayal of violence in the media: impact and implications for policy
YEAR	1999	2008	2010	2010	1996
RESEARCHERS	Various commentators and academics.	Christopher J Ferguson John Kilburn	Craig A. Anderson et al.	Australian Attorney General's Department	Melanie Brown, Australian Institute of Criminology
TYPE OF STUDY	Case study, moral panic	Meta-analysis	Meta-analysis	Literature review	Paper
OVERVIEW	On Tuesday, April 20, 1999 Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold killed twelve students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Denver, Colorado. In the aftermath of the Columbine school shooting, many people blamed the mass media for the tragedy, including violent films like 'Natural Born Killers', video games like 'Doom' and the music of Marilyn Manson.	Christopher J Ferguson and John Kilburn's 2008 metastudy of violence refuted claims that the effect of media violence is on par with smoking cigarettes. The study examined the results of twenty five different studies conducted between 1998 and 2008. They found "little support for the hypothesis that media violence is associated with higher aggression."	In a 2010 meta-analysis, Craig Anderson and a range of other researchers reached the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between violent media and aggressive behaviour, agreeing with the US Surgeon General that violent media "increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behaviour in both immediate and long-term contexts."	A comprehensive review of research into the effect of violent video games preceding the introduction of an R18+ classification for video games. The literature review looks at a range of studies, concluding that there is a "small statistical effect of violent video game exposure on aggressive behaviour" but overall research is inconclusive.	An overview of existing research and literature on the effect of violent media. The study attempts to identify the effect of violent media by considering a range of different experiments, including laboratory experiments, field research and correction studies. As the report notes, some of these suggest that there is a relationship between violent media and violent behaviour, others do not.
STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	This is an extremely poor evidence about the nature and extent of media influence. It's little more than a moral panic. In the aftermath of such tragedies, people attempt to explain them and the media is a convenient scapegoat. Academics like Henry Jenkins maintain that we should be examining what children do with the media, rather than what it does to them. "The key issue isn't what the media are doing to our children but rather what our children are doing with the media."	The advantage of this meta-analysis is that it draws conclusions about the effect of media violence by examining a range of different studies. The fact that these were corrected for publication bias is also good. Craig Anderson has criticised Ferguson's work for only examining studies that were published in peer-reviewed journals. It has also been criticised for only looking at studies after 1998 and using a relatively small sample.	An advantage of this paper is that it examines 136 different studies into media violence. Christopher Ferguson has criticised this study for providing very little information about how they located the unpublished studies that were included in the meta-analysis. It has also been criticised for ignoring a number of important studies from researchers who disagree with their perspective.	The advantage of this literature review is that it takes a purely pragmatic approach to the issue of video games and violence, examining potential negative effects resulting from the introduction of an R18+ classification for video games. One of the strengths of this review is that it looked at a range of studies. The review notes that violent video games may be harmful to particular people like those with "aggressive and psychotic personality traits." Overall, research is inconclusive.	This paper give an overview of research into the impact of screen violence, acknowledging the complexity of the research and contradictory evidence. Although this was an interesting paper when it was first published, the nature of entertainment media, particularly video games, has changed significantly since its publication. These changes should be considered when assessing the conclusions that it draws about the relationship between media violence and violent behaviour.

Further study and revision: Find and evaluate five different studies of your own.