

MEDIA INFLUENCE: EVIDENCE ABOUT VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES

	Mortal Kombat Murderer	Screen in the machine: What brain imaging studies tell us about the impact of violent media	Do television and electronic games predict children's psychosocial adjustment?	Twenty-Five Years of Research on Violence in Digital Games and Aggression	Behavioural and Psychological Involvement of Online Video Gamers: Building Blocks or Building Walls to Socialization?
YEAR	2007	2013	2013	2013	2013
RESEARCHERS	News reports	Dr Wayne Warburton, Macquarie University	University of Glasgow	Christopher J Ferguson	Benjamin Hickerson Andrew J Mowen
TYPE OF STUDY	Case study, moral panic	Laboratory research	Longitudinal study	Meta-analysis	Questionnaire
OVERVIEW	Seventeen year old Lamar Roberts killed the step-sister of his girlfriend while acting out moves from the video game Mortal Kombat. He later plead guilty to murder and was sentenced to 36 years in prison. In the aftermath of this event, the media played up the link to Mortal Kombat, suggesting it influenced Roberts' behaviour.	Speaking at a conference called 'Media, minds and neuroscience' Dr Wayne Warburton discussed that brain imaging has revealed that cumulative exposure to violent video games limits the development of the pre-frontal cortex, the region of the brain responsible for impulse control. Warburton told ABC's PM that this leads to a "loss of empathy".	A study of 11,000 children in Britain which involved interviewing parents about their media consumption and behaviour. The study found that watching at least three hours of television every day resulted in behaviour problems between the ages of five and seven. Electronic games did not result in behavioural problems.	A meta-analysis of twenty-five years of research into the effect of video game violence, looking at experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal, and meta-analytical research. The study concluded that research is mixed and cannot support the claims that violent video games are a public health risk. Ferguson encourages other scholars to make "more conservative and careful statements" about	Hickerson and Mowen interviewed 150 players lining up for the release of Call of Duty: Black Ops. Most of the subjects were college aged students who spent about twenty hours a week playing video games. The study concluded that extreme video game players are likely to have friends and are not socially isolated.
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 video games are a convenient scapegoat. In this case, Roberts had experienced extreme hardship dealing with his negligent mother, suffered from ADHD and alcoholism. These factors probably had a greater influence on his behaviour than the video game.	This is a credible study because it considers the long term effect of playing violent video games. Subjects were split into two groups, those with a lot of exposure to violent video games and those without. Those accustomed to violent video games had very little response to violent images, some studies demonstrating an "active suppression of the emotion centres of the brain." This research didn't involve exposing subjects to real world violence.	This study is credible due to its large sample size. Nevertheless, the results rely on parents honestly reporting the behaviour of their children. Similarly, the study only looks at exposure to video games in general and not specifically video games featuring violent content.	Ferguson's meta-analysis of the research on violent video games is a thorough review of research into the impact of violent video games and addresses some of the ideological bias that media effects theorists bring to this area. Ferguson concludes that "public health crisis crumbles when it becomes plainly apparent that no public health crisis emerged" and that moral panics over forms of new media tend to burn themselves out.	It is often argued that people who play violent video games are isolated loners. This study proves that this type of gamer is likely to have friends and is not socially isolated. Although this study addresses the early claims in the 1980s and 1990s that video game play might be socially isolating, it does not address issues of violence and aggression, instead focusing on the social connection of gamers.

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