



AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA: 10 April 2017

Do media violence impacts on aggression vary across different cultures?

Australian researchers have contributed to a 7 nation study of the impacts of media violence on youth. The study, just published online in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, used the same research methodology in each of Australia, China, Croatia, Germany, Japan, Romania, and the US. It found that

- violent media use was positively and significantly related to aggressive behaviour in all 7 countries
- media violence impacts were similar in magnitude in these countries
- the mechanisms through which media violence may influence behaviour are similar across cultures
- The impact of media violence on levels of aggression is similar in magnitude to the impact of other known risk factors for aggression

Dr Wayne Warburton of Macquarie University was the lead researcher for the Australian part of the study. He said “This is an important study for two reasons. First it replicates research showing a link between exposure to violent media and increases in the likelihood of aggressive behaviour across a range of disparate cultures. Second, it looks at media violence exposure as one of a number of ‘risk factors’ for aggression. Exposure to media violence is never enough on its own to cause forms of aggression that are greater than mild. Moderate aggression and violence only occur when a number of risk factors for such behaviour occur together in an individual. However media violence exposure can combine with other risk factors to increase the likelihood of aggressive and violent behaviour. This study shows that the influence of media violence on aggression compares in magnitude with such risk factors as abusive parenting, being male and having delinquent peers. Although media violence is neither the only nor the most important risk factor for aggressive behaviour, it is one of the few that parents and policy makers can actually do something about”.

Prof Elizabeth Handsley, President of the Australian Council on Children and the Media, has called on the Australian Government to provide more effective protections for children and young people through the National Classification Scheme. She said “the weight of evidence over 6 decades shows that exposure to media violence increases the likelihood of aggression in real life. We know a great deal now about which types of violent portrayals (particularly glamorised violence) are risky for children. Our present classification categories and criteria do not reflect this knowledge nor support parents in choosing content that’s right for their children’s age and stage of development.”

The ACCM has been calling on the Government to institute a system that is evidence- and age- based, and which provides Australian parents and carers with more effective tools to reduce risk to children.

Promoting healthy choices and stronger voices in children’s media

Australian Council on Children and the Media (Incorporating Young Media Australia)

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The ACCM is the peak national body advocating for healthy use of media. It provides the *Know Before You Go* movie and *Know Before You Load* app reviews.
www.childrenandmedia.org.au

Link to study <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0146167217703064>