

## SAMPLE ARTICLE EVALUATION: “Media Violence”

This article appeared in Pediatrics, November 2001, Vol.108, Issue 5. Pediatrics is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The article is a policy statement by the Committee on Public Education, within the American Academy of Pediatrics. At the end of the article, the reader learns that the article represents the views of the whole committee, but was actually written by eight members of the committee, all doctors working in the field of pediatrics.

The **purpose** of the article is to report on the extensive research supporting the view that media violence (including TV, movies, music, and video games) can harm children in several ways. The authors urge pediatricians and other health care providers to take this issue seriously, and they recommend ways to monitor and minimize the harmful effects.

The factual information in the article is **second-hand**, results of studies done by national organizations, such as the National Institute of Mental Health and the American Psychological Association. The information includes recent studies as well as earlier ones, such as Leonard Eron’s ground-breaking study begun in 1960, which first observed a link between heavy viewing of violent TV shows and aggressive behavior in children. Because the writers are all pediatricians, however, they have first-hand knowledge of children with emotional and behavioral problems. Their observations and insights add to the factual data.

The **date** of this article—November 2001—is not really a drawback, since its purpose is to give an **overview** of the most important research on this issue.

The authors are careful in stating their **conclusions**. They don’t claim that exposure to violent media definitely causes children to become violent, but that it “can lead to increased feelings of hostility, expectations that others will behave aggressively, desensitization to the pain of others, and increased likelihood of interacting and responding to others with violence.” Furthermore, every fact is **documented**, with clear references to the six (6) pages of sources listed at the end. Many of the sources are **first-hand** studies done by psychologists, medical doctors, and teachers. The amount of research that supports these conclusions makes the article **persuasive**. I was also impressed by the fact that the authors did **not** recommend censorship of the media. Instead, they recommend educating parents and children about how media work and how media messages can affect our attitudes and behavior.

Though the authors are careful not to over-state a causal link between media violence and real violence, they do **not** mention any studies that would contradict their views.

The **list of sources**—6 pages—is longer than the article itself (4 pages) and includes many well-known studies and organizations. It would be easy for me to verify the information in this article and to expand my research using this list.

**Because of its careful documentation, reasonable conclusions, and impressive list of sources—plus the fact that it was published in a peer-reviewed journal—I consider this article a reliable source for my research.**