



CMCH Accomplishments in 2006

The Center on Media and Child Health (CMCH) made substantial progress in 2006 on each of our core objectives:

Advance scientific research into the effects of media on children and adolescents

CMCH Research Projects

- CMCH researchers piloted a new method for investigating media exposure in youth that is more sensitive to the variety of media used, more responsive to media multitasking, and more accurate in its capture of both media content and usage time.
- Our researchers continued analyzing a national dataset on the influence of media on the development of bullying and victimization in school, a major problem in itself and a contributor to school shootings.
- We continued a study of video and computer game acquisition, use, and health influences among school age children and adolescents.
- Our researchers continued analyzing data from an anonymous survey of Boston area high school students to determine the relationship between their media use (television, movies, and video games) and risky social and health behaviors including bullying, carrying a weapon to school, fighting, substance use, smoking, and sexual behaviors.
- In collaboration with Harris Interactive, CMCH researchers designed and implemented a nation-wide survey of children and adolescents investigating the relationships between reality TV viewing, character identification, and issues pertaining to body image.
- Our researchers also moved forward in the development of a broad intervention and research infrastructure in Manchester, NH, which includes collaboration with local schools, the health department, hospitals, courts, and community programs. When complete, the project will implement the new media exposure instrument with young people across the community and measure a wide variety of physical, mental and social health outcomes through a comprehensive outcomes database.
- Our Video Intervention/Prevention Assessment (VIA) researchers approached completion of data collection on a six year study of young people with cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, spina bifida, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- VIA also continued their work on a second study of overweight in children and adolescents.

- CMCH designed a research project to evaluate the in-school curriculum created by Connect with Kids (CWK) to increase the pro-social behaviors of children and young adolescents. The study will be implemented in DC area schools during the 2006-2007 school year, and will evaluate the effectiveness of adding a broadcast, at-home viewing experience to an in-school media-based character development program.

CMCH Publications

- Our staff and affiliated collaborators published original research in a wide range of professional journals, representing the leading publications in child and adolescent health, psychology, and communication, including *Pediatrics*, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *Media Psychology*, *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, *Pediatrics in Review*, *Visual Studies*, *Health in Action*, *Visual Research Methods* and the *Special Libraries Association*.
- Our researchers also contributed a chapter to the prestigious *Blackwell Handbook of Child Development and the Media* and *Children and Television: 50 Years of Research*.

Develop and evaluate necessary interventions on media's negative effects

- CMCH collaborated with MediaSmart, a program of Child Health Services in Manchester, NH, to implement and evaluate media literacy interventions on violence, substance use, and obesity as part of the health curricula in Manchester elementary schools. We found that after the program, participants were better at recognizing the effects of media. A second year, more rigorous study is planned.
- CMCH collaborated with the Internet Keep Safe Coalition, DARE, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and the US Department of Justice to develop, implement, and evaluate a program to help parents protect their children from Internet predators. The program was awarded funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- We are exploring the prevalence and influence of media use rules in the home.
- And, we are developing interventions for pediatricians to guide parents of newborns to adopt healthy media use in the home and improve the media environment in which infants are developing.

Educate children, parents and the public on media and their effects on the physical, mental, and social health of all children

- We developed the second workshop in the Mastering Media Messages series, an educational program for Boston area middle schools on the health influences of media. This year's topic is media violence.
- We continued to build www.cmch.tv as an online resource for parents, teachers, researchers, and policy makers looking for information on media and their influence. A grant from the American Legion Foundation allowed us to conduct focus groups with parents and teachers across the country, and develop web resources to answer their questions with evidence-based research translated into practical advice.
- We completed the addition of all of the violence research to the CMCH Database of Research from 1980-present. This represented a 100% increase in the citations that were added to the database.
- We launched a blog that keeps subscribers up to date on research and events in the area of media effects on children.
- With the support of Atmosphere/BBDO, we launched the VIA addition to the CMCH website. This section of the site provides visitors with information on VIA projects, as well as a unique, patient-centered perspective on media and child health.
- We have become one of the “go to” resources for the national press on the subject of media effects on health, with stories on national (CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, CBS, ABC, Fox, PBS, BBC, NPR) and local television and radio, and in magazines (*New York Times Magazine*, *San Francisco Chronicle*) and newspapers (*Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *USA Today*, *Reuters*, *Associated Press*). Our market distribution increased by almost 900%, and we saw a 400% increase in unique press stories about CMCH.
- CMCH researchers were invited to serve as experts on panels for the National Institutes for Health (NIH), National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the area of media effects on children.
- CMCH researchers did additional outreach to organizations including the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston, the National Association of Children's Museums and Blue Cross Blue Shield on topics including reducing the effects of violent media on children and the effects of media use on children's health.
- Dr. David Bickham provided expert testimony on the effects of violent video games on children's health and behavior to the US Senate Judiciary Committee; Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights.

CMCH Organizational Development

- CMCH spent the past year focusing on strategic planning. We have worked with Jeff Olson, a volunteer from Accenture Consulting, and our Advisory Board members to refine our organizational identity, including our core values, vision, mission and goals. We will continue to work with Jeff, as well as New Sector Consulting in FY 07, to improve our strategic objectives and operational model and continue to bring them line with the strategic work that was done in FY 06.

CMCH Financial Development

- CMCH secured \$574,300 in philanthropic funds
- CMCH researchers secured \$186,031 in grants/contracts for FY 06
- CMCH researchers secured 4 grants/contracts for FY 07 totaling \$273K
- We continued to work to broaden our funding base, with guidance from our Advisory Board and the Children's Hospital Trust. We increased our focused outreach to individuals, corporations, and foundations, and presented to several groups of prospective supporters.