



center on media and
child health (cmch)

Fall
2005

tuned in

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Michael Rich, MD, MPH, Testifies for Safe Games Legislation in Illinois

The State of Illinois, led by Governor Rod Blagojevich, is the site of the most recent attempt by concerned citizens to control children's access to violent video games. On March 8, 2005, Michael Rich, MD, MPH, Director of the Center on Media and Child Health (CMCH), was asked by the Illinois State Legislature to provide expert testimony on the state of the scientific knowledge regarding the effects of violent media on the health and well-being of children. Based primarily on concern for the children, the legislation was passed by both houses of the legislature and Governor Blagojevich signed the Safe Games

Illinois Act into law on July 25, 2005. Planned to go into effect on January 1, 2006, the law will restrict the sale of violent video games to persons 18 or older. However, the Entertainment Software Association, Video Software Dealers Association, and Illinois Retail Merchants Association have filed for a temporary injunction to prevent this law from going into effect as planned. Dr. Rich, along with Dr. John Murray, CMCH Senior Scientist, and other researchers across the US, will be asked for expert testimony on the science See ILLINOIS on page 6

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CMCH Director Co-Authors Federal Children and Media Research Advancement (CAMRA) Bill

CAMRA, a bill introduced in 2004 to the US Senate by Senators Sam Brownback (R-KS), Joe Lieberman (D-CT), Rick Santorum (R-PA), and Hillary Clinton (D-NY), is currently being considered by the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Sponsors and supporters hope to see it acted upon during the upcoming year. The CAMRA bill will authorize the first Federal research dollars to be applied to investigating the effects of media as a public health problem. Michael Rich, MD, MPH, Director of the Center on Media and Child Health, worked for several years toward the introduction of this important legislation by testifying to a number of Senate and Congressional committees, by standing with Congress



Authors of the CAMRA bill: Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), Sandy Calvert, PhD, Georgetown University; Michael Rich, MD, MPH, Center on Media and Child Health; Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT).

See CAMRA on page 6

Director's Cut

Dear Friends:

Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out. So went the mantra of the 1960s counterculture – and many of the children of the Information Age have done just that. Teenagers are plugged into iPods, children surf the Internet and play video games, even babies are mesmerized by “early childhood” videos. We are only starting to understand that, used thoughtlessly, exposure to media can place children and adolescents at increased risk of anxiety, depression, and aggressive behavior, not to mention substance abuse, obesity, eating disorders, and other health risk behaviors. But media can also teach, liberate, empower, and give voice to young people, as we have seen with the sick children who use video diaries to teach their doctors how to take care of them.

The Center on Media and Child Health (CMCH) has been busy pursuing and presenting research, developing media literacy programs, working with policymakers from the U.S. Congress to state legislatures, and developing the CMCH website www.cmch.tv as the key source of information on media effects for parents, clinicians, teachers, and others who care for children.

You will understand why CMCH has become the “go to” source for reliable information on media effects when you read about our recent initiatives and try out the Database of Research at www.cmch.tv. You can be proud to have had the foresight and compassion to recognize and want to respond to the influence of entertainment media on the physical, mental, and social health of children. The time, ideas, expertise, and resources you have contributed have resulted in remarkable achievements. We look forward to working with you, and with others whom you feel might wish to join in this opportunity. With your ongoing support, we can make a difference.

On behalf of the children, I thank you,
Michael Rich, MD, MPH, Director

Tuned In is the quarterly newsletter for the Center on Media and Child Health (CMCH)

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Media Literacy Grant Expands Programs

This summer, CMCH was awarded a \$20,000 grant by the Cabot Family Charitable Trust in Boston to implement a media literacy initiative and to evaluate its effectiveness. CMCH will collaborate with the MediaSmart School Program in Manchester, NH to implement the media literacy program in a public elementary school in Manchester.

The initiative is designed to improve children's health outcomes, risk behaviors, academic performance and social interaction. Formative evaluation will provide feedback from students and teachers that will be used to strengthen this program in preparation for a controlled test of its effectiveness. The initiative includes programs designed for the school's faculty, parents and students. If successful we plan to expand this media literacy program to schools throughout Manchester and beyond.

CMCH Staff Win Awards

Three members of the CMCH staff have won awards in the past year. Director Michael Rich, MD, MPH, won the Holroyd-Sherry Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics. This award recognizes a member whose outstanding contributions demonstrate that children's media use is an important public health issue.

Senior Scientist Richard Chalfen, PhD, received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Buckingham, Browne and Nichols School in Cambridge, MA. The award recognizes Dr. Chalfen's extraordinary accomplishments in anthropology, education and children's health.

Brandy King, MLIS, received the Innovations in Technology Award from the Special Libraries Association. The award recognizes a member for innovative use and application of technology in a special library setting. Ms. King was the youngest recipient to ever receive the award.

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Internship Programs Broaden CMCH Reach

CMCH hosted three internship programs over the summer. The first was organized by the Library staff. Scott Stoneburner supervised three outstanding graduate students: Scott Farrar, Amanda Geno, and Frances McConihe.

During their 10 week internship, students learned how to index citations for the CMCH Database of Literature, successfully adding 600 citations to the online database.

The library is happy to report that Scott Stoneburner finished his master's degree in library and information science and has moved on to serve as librarian at a Boston-based medical corporation. Our three Summer interns are staying on with the project through the Fall.

The Video Intervention/Prevention Assessment (VIA) Analysis Internship Program was also an overwhelming success. The staff selected a team of six very talented undergraduates. Ana Martinez, Gayle McElvain, Erica Sorrentino, Linden Spital and Jessi Streib joined the team for the first time this summer. Kirimi Papp returned for her third summer and served as a mentor for the new interns.

VIA interns are primarily responsible for logging the many hours of visual illness narratives that participants in VIA studies create. This summer, interns logged tapes from the Transitions project, focusing on spina bifida, sickle cell disease and cystic fibrosis during their ten week program.

Thanks in large part to beautiful new office space, which includes a room equipped with carrels for each intern, VIA had the most productive summer to date. Interns logged 375 hours of tape, covering all of the Transitions data created through the end of July.



VIA Staff and Summer Interns: (L-R) Top Row: Erica Sorrentino, Jessi Streib, Jennifer Patashnick, Julie Szymczak Bottom Row: Ana Martinez, Linden Spital, Kirimi Papp Not Pictured: Gayle McElvain

Additionally, interns participated in weekly research meetings, which were intellectually engaging and helpful in identifying significant themes on the tapes. VIA analysis relies on the interns to create a thorough log of the data from which the research staff can conduct more in-depth analyses. This year's team worked very hard and did a fabulous job.

The VIA Field Internship Program has been running since the fall of 2004. Past and present interns include graduate students Theofano Pitsillidou from Cypress and Bara Jichova Kirkpatrick from Czech Republic. Both hail from the Massachusetts College of Art - Studio for Interrelated Media (SIM) Program.

During their 13 week internship program for course credit, these interns helped tremendously with the post-production end of VIA. They assisted in editing, dubbing, mastering and organizing our library of data created by participants of the VIA study. These interns also helped create DVD presentations for Dr. Rich and other members of our staff.

CMCH Makes Headlines

CMCH has received press in several print and broadcast outlets across the globe this past year.

- Television -

- CBS 4 Boston
- CNN
- MSNBC
- NBC Nightly News
- Today Show (NBC)

- Radio -

**The Gary Doyle Show,
570AM Ontario, Canada**

**Dr. Liz Hale Show,
820AM Salt Lake City,
Utah**

- Print -

- Associated Press
- *Essence Magazine*
- *In News Weekly*
- *Good Housekeeping*
- KSL News, Utah
- *Financial Times (London)*
- *Mass High Tech, MA*
- Press Releases, IL Governor's Office
- *USA Today*
- *Wilmington Star, NC*
- *Winston-Salem Journal, NC*

For complete press listings, go to the About Us section of www.cmch.tv and click on CMCH in the News.

CMCH Launches Study on Connection Between Video Game Play, Aggressive Behavior and ADD

Is violent video game play linked to aggressive behaviors and symptoms of attention deficit disorder? How do parents decide which games to allow their children to own and play and How do children gain access to the most violent video games? David Bickham, PhD, CMCH Staff Scientist, and Ed Chung, MD, pediatrics resident at Children's Hospital Boston and Boston Medical Center, are currently designing a survey that seeks to answer these questions.

With the help of an intern and a work study student, the researchers will administer the survey to approximately 200 children and their parents who attend a neighborhood clinic of Massachusetts General Hospital. Asking questions of both parents and children will help the researchers tell both sides of the story on video game acquisition and allow them to investigate discrepancies between child and parent perceptions of household media rules.

Detailed questions capturing the content of video games that children play will provide much more useful information than the traditional method of asking how much time children spend playing video games per week. These methods will allow CMCH to begin to discover the processes through which children access video games, the material to which they are exposed and the health and behavioral consequences linked to their play.

www.cmch.tv Update

The CMCH website and Database of Research have been consistently expanding to provide audiences with research and information on the impacts of media on children's health.

This spring, the Smart Search feature of the Database went live. This function allows users to search existing research using natural language and receive a synopsis of the research that applies to the question. For example, a user can type: Will watching violent TV make my child aggressive? and the Database will provide the research that pertains to this topic, with summaries for the general public.

Here are just a few numbers that highlight the use of the website:

45: average number of people who visited www.cmch.tv per day in February 2005

140: average number of people who visited www.cmch.tv per day in August 2005

1,456: average number of visits for www.cmch.tv per day

4,617: number of visits the day www.cmch.tv was promoted at the National Media Education Conference

16: number of minutes users typically spend on www.cmch.tv

832: number of citations currently in the CMCH Database of Research

545: number of users who have tried Smart Search since June, 2005

454: number of users who have tried the Advanced Search since June 2005

We invite you to use the CMCH Database of Research and send feedback to cmch@childrens.harvard.edu

VIA Considers Project in South Africa

VIA staff are currently in discussion with Krista Dong, MD and Bruce Walker, MD of the Partners AIDS Research Center (PARC) at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston about the possibility of utilizing the VIA methodology to examine issues associated with HIV infection in South Africa. PARC is currently funded for the iTEACH (Integration of TB in Education and Care for HIV/AIDS) initiative, which is a comprehensive intervention to support and improve delivery of HIV and TB care within the public health sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Despite the availability of anti-retroviral (ARV) therapy for HIV patients in South Africa, poor adherence is a major concern. VIA is proposing to utilize their methodology to understand, from the perspective of the person with HIV, the challenges that impede consistent



The VIA team (clockwise from lower left): Julie Polvinen, Julia Szymczak, Michael Rich, MD, MPH, Jennifer Patashnick

use of ARV regimens. Findings from VIA can be used to design more sensitive and effective therapeutic strategies, as well as inform and influence policy regarding distribution of ARVs.

CMCH Expands Educational Outreach Efforts

As the CMCH staff has grown, so have our opportunities to teach audiences about the effects of media on children's health. In the past year alone, CMCH researchers have presented to a wide range of audiences around the world including:

Abt Associates, Cambridge, MA

Alliance for Media Literate America, San Francisco, CA

Boston Chapter of the Special Libraries Association, Boston, MA

Boston Knowledge Management Forum, Boston, MA

Center for Child Health Care Studies, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Boston, MA

Center on Young Women's Health, Children's Hospital Boston

Colloquium on Qualitative Research in Health, Boston University, Boston, MA

Eastern Sociological Society, Washington DC

First International Conference on Qualitative Research in IT & IT in Qualitative Research, Brisbane, Australia

Institute on Community Inclusion, Boston, MA

International Communication Association, New York, NY

International Visual Sociological Association, Dublin, Ireland

Konan University, Kobe, Japan

Massachusetts Health Sciences Library Network, Boston, MA

Rhode Island School Nurse Teacher Annual Conference, Warwick, RI

Ricks Center for Gifted Children, University of Denver, Denver, CO

Sixth International Conference on Strategies in Qualitative Research, University of Durham, United Kingdom

Society for Adolescent Medicine, Los Angeles, CA

Society for Research on Child Development, Atlanta, GA

Special Libraries Association, Toronto, Ontario Canada

University of Tennessee Medical School, Memphis, TN

Weston Middle School Sixth Grade Health and Communication Forum, Weston, MA

What is body image?

- How you see or picture yourself
- How you feel others perceive you
- What you believe about your physical appearance
- How you feel in your body

We have also developed and launched an educational program on the relationship between media and body image. This program is designed to teach young women and men about the messages they are consuming and key skills in media literacy so they can understand how these messages are produced. These presentations are currently available for a fee to middle schools in the Boston area.

If you are interested in bringing CMCH researchers to your organization to speak on media literacy or other media and health related topics, please contact our Administrative Director, Amy Branner at (617) 355-1912 or amy.branner@childrens.harvard.edu. Also, check our website for the details on the body image presentation: www.cmch.tv.

CMCH Published Research

CMCH research contributes to a diverse range of academic disciplines. This year alone, staff research has been published by:

Adolescent Medicine Clinics

American Behavioral Scientist

Australasian Journal of Information Systems

Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America

Considering Counter-Narratives

Head Start National Research Conference

Journal of Adolescent Health

Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology

Kaiser Family Foundation

La Televisione del Crimine

Pediatrics

Special Libraries Association

Visual Anthropology Review

Visual Studies

For a complete list of publications, go to the For Researchers section of www.cmch.tv and click on CMCH publications.

CMCH 2005 Advisory Board Provides Guidance and Expertise

*To assist us as we grow and develop, CMCH invited a group of national leaders in business, medicine, philanthropy, public policy and research to serve as members of our Advisory Board. We would like to recognize this exceptional group of leaders for their insights and inspiration and we welcome them to the 2005 Advisory Board Meeting October 27-28 in Cambridge, MA. **Our Advisory Board members are:***

Donald Goldmann, MD
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for Healthcare Improvement

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Children's Hospital Boston

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Provost, University of
California-Riverside

Gary Dixon
President, Foundation for a
Better Life

John Nelson, MD
Immediate Past President,
American Medical Association

CMCH would like to extend a warm
welcome and thank-you to our newest
Advisory Board member, Ralph
Scozzafava, VP and Managing
Director North America/Pacific, of
William Wrigley Jr. Company.



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in support of the 2000 consensus statement on media violence, and by working with the sponsoring senators to author the bill. If passed into law, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development would distribute \$90 million of new funding over five years to research the effects of media on the physical, mental, and social health of children. Initial phases of this research would entail a comprehensive search of the existing literature to determine what is known and what remains to be investigated. Since the CMCH Database of Research is already pursuing this goal, with the larger objective of making this critical body of knowledge available to parents, children, teachers, and clinicians, CMCH will be in a unique position to build the foundation for the new body of research which will result from this funding. **For the health, safety and well-being of our children, please communicate to your senators and congresspersons the importance of this bill's passage into law.**

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supporting the concern that citizens have about the effects of violent media on children. Where previous attempts to control the sale of violent video games have been successfully challenged as restrictions on free speech, this law was carefully written under the guidance of constitutional scholars to respect our rights under the First Amendment while responding to the public interest in protecting the health and safety of their children. Beyond its importance to the children and the future of Illinois, this law has the opportunity to set a precedent – several other states, including North Carolina and Michigan, which have also asked Dr. Rich to testify, have been crafting similar laws, as well as the U.S. Senate, which is using the Illinois law as its model and test case for similar Federal legislation.

CMCH Recognizes Our Valued Supporters

Since our inception, CMCH has received strong support from a wide range of organizations and individuals. We would like to thank our leaders, patrons and friends for their generous contributions.

CMCH Leaders

(support above \$100,000)

The Anschutz Foundation*
BBDO Worldwide*
Cinemark USA*
PepsiCo Foundation*

CMCH Patrons

(support \$1000 - \$100,000)

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* Founding Supporter

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(support up to \$1000)

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Donald and Joan Wolman

This list reflects CMCH supporters from our inception to date. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize for any errors and ask that you contact Amy Branner, our Administrative Director, at (617) 355-1912 or amy.branner@childrens.harvard.edu about corrections.

Tax Deductible Investments in Research, Education and Intervention on Media Effects on Children's Health

Gifts to CMCH allow us to continue our work improving the knowledge and expanding the awareness of the effects of media on our children's health.

CMCH welcomes a range of support:

Direct, Unrestricted Donations

allow you to support the day-to-day activities of CMCH.

Directed Donations allow you to direct support to particular research, education or intervention efforts that you find important and interesting.

In Kind Donations allow you to direct goods and services to support our daily activities or particular research, education or intervention efforts.

A donation envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Donating is also made easy by clicking the Support CMCH button on our website:

www.cmch.tv

As a result of recent federal legislation to support relief for hurricane Katrina, all cash gifts made before December 31, 2005 will be 100% tax deductible.

Thank you for your support!

Additional VIA News

GRANT FUNDING

Video Intervention/Prevention Assessment (VIA) is pleased to announce the receipt of three grants this past year. Thanks to funds received from the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation (\$25,000) and the William F. Milton Fund (\$35,000), we are able to continue our research - studying the transition of adolescents and young adults with spina bifida, cystic fibrosis, and other chronic conditions from pediatric to adult healthcare. A grant from the Hood Foundation (\$150,000 for 2 years) will provide start up funding for our newest study, an intensive look at the lives of overweight children and teenagers and their normal weighted peers.

WEBSITE RE-DESIGN

Propelled by the momentum generated by the VIA logo creation, VIA and CMCH staff are continuing to work with Atmosphere/BBDO to redesign the VIA website, www.viaproject.org. The goal is to integrate the VIA site visually and functionally into the CMCH website (www.cmch.tv) to make the VIA site more user-friendly and navigable. We are excited to be adding information about our new projects and including more participant-oriented pages. We are very fortunate to have a tremendously dedicated team at Atmosphere/BBDO working so closely with us. Stay tuned for the launch of the new VIA website this December.



NEW LOGO

After more than ten years of existence, VIA finally has a logo! Atmosphere/BBDO collaborated with VIA and CMCH staff members to create and refine the logo. The result is a simple yet distinctive design that incorporates VIA themes of empowerment and participant control by combining a video camera aimed directly at the viewer with elements of the CMCH logo. Many thanks to Atmosphere/BBDO for their great work!



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CMCH is a program of the Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health



Children's Hospital Boston



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL



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OF PUBLIC HEALTH