

Violent video games: aggressive thoughts?

12 October 2005

Michigan State University researchers say playing violent video games leads to brain activity patterns that may be characteristic for aggressive thoughts.

Using a functional magnetic resonance imaging study, 13 male research participants were observed playing a latest-generation violent video game. Each participant's game play was recorded and content analyzed on a frame-by-frame basis.

"There is a causal link between playing the first-person shooting game in our experiment and brain-activity patterns that are considered as characteristic for aggressive cognitions and affects," said Rene Weber, assistant professor of communication and telecommunication at MSU. "There is a neurological link and there is a short-term causal relationship."

Violent video games frequently have been criticized for enhancing aggressive reactions. "On a neurobiological level," said Weber, "we have shown the link exists."

Weber conducted the research with Klaus Mathiak of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Technical University in Aachen, Germany, and Ute Ritterfeld of the University of Southern California.

The study will be detailed in the January edition of the journal *Media Psychology*.

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APA citation: Violent video games: aggressive thoughts? (2005, October 12) retrieved 2 December 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-10-violent-video-games-aggressive-thoughts.html>

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