CENTER OF THE STUDY OF VIOLENCE
2008 Fall Conference on Violence and Aggression
Friday, September 5, 2008, Gallery, Memorial Union
Iowa State University

8:30-9:15 Refreshments; Graduate student posters

9:15-9:40 Opening remarks: Craig Anderson, Director

Note: Presenters will leave time for questions/comments at end of their presentations.

9:40-10:20 Edward L. Swing, M.S.; & Craig A. Anderson, Ph.D.

Risk Factors for Aggressive Behavior and Personality Among Young Adults[a]

Summary: Past research on aggression has identified a variety of individual characteristics and life experiences that are associated with aggression. These risk factors include sex, association with delinquent peers, exposure to community violence, drug use, physical abuse, socioeconomic status, and exposure to media violence (Satcher, 2001). Previous aggression studies have typically examined one or two of these factors at a time. This study sought to compare the strength of the associations between many of the known risk factors and aggressive behavior within a single sample of undergraduates, using both self-report and laboratory behavior measures of aggression. Researchers have also assessed distinct components of aggressive personality, including self-reported attitudes toward violence, the accessibility of aggressive concepts, and physiological desensitization to violence. We also explored how various known predictors of aggressive behavior relate to each of these distinct components of aggressive personality and how those personality components in turn relate to aggressive behavior.

Bio: Ted is a graduate student at Iowa State University. In addition to studying risk factors for aggression, Ted has studied media effects on aggressive behavior and personality, how and what video games teach, and screen media effects on attention deficits.

10:20-11:00 Douglas A. Gentile, Ph.D.; Kathleen Thomas, Ph.D.; & Craig A. Anderson, Ph.D.

Violent Video Game Effects on Brain Activation of High and Low Aggressive Game Players[b]

Summary of Project: There is a broad body of literature on the deleterious effects of media violence on subsequent aggression (e.g., Anderson et al., 2003; Gentile, 2003). However, this research has generally focused on cognitive, affective, or behavioral effects. Very few studies have addressed the brain systems that may be impacted by repeated exposure to violent media content. The current project proposed a pilot neuroimaging study to examine the brain systems engaged during video game play, comparing brain activity in the same individuals during a violent game and a non-violent game. In addition, we proposed to examine the effects of repeated exposure to media violence by comparing brain activity in individuals with extensive violent video game playing experience to those with predominantly non-violent video game playing experience.

Presenter Bio: Doug's research focuses on the effects of media on children and adolescents. Much of his recent work concerns the effects of violent video games. He is currently funded by the CDC, NICHD,

and private foundations for his research. His research has been published in numerous top journals in psychology and medicine. He is the editor of the book *Media Violence and Children: A Complete Guide for Parents and Professionals* (2003; Praeger Press) and is coauthor of the book *Violent Video Game Effects on Children and Adolescents: Theory, Research and Public Policy* (2007; Oxford University Press).

11:00-11:40 Christopher P. Barlett, M.S.; Douglas A. Gentile, Ph.D.; & Craig A. Anderson, Ph.D.

The Effect of Violent Video Game Play on Emotions, Arousal, and Salivary Cortisol Levels in Young Adults and Children[a]

Summary: Two experiments investigated the effects of violent video game content on aggressive feelings, aggressive thoughts, and physiological arousal. In Experiment 1 participants ($N = 103$ undergraduates) completed baseline measures of aggressive feelings, cardiovascular responding, and cortisol, played a violent or non-violent video game, and then completed post-game measures. In Experiment 2 participants ($N = 136$ children) completed a similar procedure, but aggressive thoughts were added as a post-game measure. Results showed that aggressive feelings (Experiment 1), aggressive thoughts (Experiment 2), cardiovascular arousal (Experiment 1), and cortisol (Experiment 2) were higher after violent than after non-violent video game play. The cortisol findings in particular suggest that violent stimuli activate a fight-or-flight response in children. Theoretical implications and future research are discussed.

Presenter Bio: Chris is currently a graduate student at Iowa State University. He received his Bachelors and Masters degrees from Kansas State University prior to coming to Iowa State. His primary research interest is aggression with an emphasis on media violence, video game violence, hostile attribution bias, and self-efficacy relating to the tendency to behave aggressively. He has also published work on body image concerns in men and counterfactual thinking.

11:40-12:40 Lunch (on your own) in the Memorial Union or Campus Town

12:40-1:20 Nathaniel G. Wade, Ph.D.; & Daniel B. Goldman

Reducing Aggression and Violence in Men and Women by Promoting Forgiveness[b]

Summary: People hurt one another. As a response, anger and hostility are common and can be protective. Left unchecked, however, harbored anger is likely to lead to greater aggression and violence, which can in turn be costly to individuals and to society. Intervention research over the past decade has explored ways to help people cope with injuries specifically through forgiveness. Results seem to indicate that promoting forgiveness for injuries and offenses can be an effective way to promote positive, prosocial resolution to these difficult situations. However, the data are based primarily on work with women participants; data for the men are much less conclusive. This is a disturbing limitation to the current literature, particularly given men's propensity to respond in more physically aggressive and violent ways than women. This study sought to compare the efficacy of two group interventions for men and women. The first was based on methods for promoting forgiveness that have been traditionally used and might capitalize on the more stereotypically feminine traits of emotional expression and empathy. The second was an intervention tailored for men that focuses more on reducing the symptoms of anger

and hostility. This intervention focuses more on cognitive management strategies and alternatives to anger, hostility, and revenge. The two interventions were compared with a wait-list control group over three time periods: pre-, mid-, and post- treatment.

Presenter Bio: Nathaniel's research focuses on the psychology of forgiveness and religion, particularly as they are applied in counseling and therapy settings. In addition, he is interested in counseling process and outcome research, specifically focused on group counseling. Nathaniel is the Director of the Center for Group Counseling and Research.

1:20-2:00 Brenda J. Lohman, Ph.D., & Shelby A. Kaura

Exploring the Antecedents and Consequences of Late Adolescent Dating Violence[b]

Summary of Project: Dating violence during late adolescence is an increasing social problem. A vast literature base details the intergenerational transmission of violence or how exposure to violence in the family of origin is linked to becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence in romantic relationships. More recently, interpersonal variables such as relationship commitment, jealousy, self-esteem, power, and acceptability of violence have been linked to dating violence. This violence not only impacts a late adolescents' satisfaction with their romantic relationship but it also increases their mental health problems. However, no studies have examined all of the aforementioned constructs simultaneously and nearly all of this past work has been limited to samples of male perpetrators and female victims. In addition, the majority of these studies have involved only one member of the dating couple, thus limiting the ability of these studies to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship. Thus, using reports from both members of the dating couple, the purpose of this research was to examine the antecedents and consequences of dating violence among a sample of college-aged couples. The first aim of this project was to understand how the associations among exposure to parental violence, jealousy, relationship power and commitment, acceptability of violence, and self-esteem are related to dating violence perpetration for both male and female dating partners. The second aim was to explore the relationships between dating violence victimization, relationship satisfaction and mental health for both male and female dating partners, with parental violence, self-esteem and acceptability of violence proposed to influence the level of dating violence victimization reported. A total of 215 dating couples from a Midwestern university completed surveys regarding various aspects of their current relationship. Preliminary results show that only jealousy was correlated with female *physical* perpetration, while jealousy, acceptance of aggressive behaviors, dominance and self-esteem were all correlated with female *psychological* perpetration. For males, all of the antecedents except self-esteem were correlated with *psychological* perpetration, while all antecedents except relationship commitment were correlated with *physical* perpetration. Moreover, female *psychological* victimization was correlated with females' reports of somatization, relationship satisfaction and self-esteem, while female *physical* victimization was not correlated with any of these outcomes. For males, all of the outcome variables were correlated with *physical* victimization, and all but somatization was correlated with *physical* victimization.

Presenter Bio: Brenda is a developmental psychologist whose primary interests concern: successful academic and psychosocial adjustment of adolescents, especially those from economically disadvantaged minority communities; family and ecological systems theories; applied or policy-relevant research.

2:00-2:20 Break & Graduate student posters

2:20-3:00 Jill D. Pruetz, Ph.D.

"Demonic males"? How Valid is a Sociobiological Model of Aggression?[b]

Summary: A resurgent trend among biological anthropologists has been to model the origins of human violence (including warfare) on studies of the behavior of chimpanzees, our closest living relative. However, these attempts and the data used to support the evolutionary origins of human warfare, in particular, are contested by many anthropologists. Data on chimpanzees used to support what has been referred to as the 'Demonic Males Hypothesis' stems largely from the study of only several ape communities in East Africa. The Fongoli chimpanzee in Senegal presents data from a community of West African chimpanzees that live in a habitat more similar to that of early hominids (bipedal apes). Only rarely were Fongoli chimpanzees observed to exhibit behavior associated with intercommunity aggression and, in instances in which chimpanzees were observed at the edge of their range, males advertised their presence via continuous long-calling as opposed to the silent patrolling behavior (leading to ambush and attack) that characterizes Eastern chimpanzees. Lethal aggression has not yet been observed. Additionally, in contrast to the hypotheses that adult males are naturally aggressive and the main hunters among chimpanzee communities (following the ëMan the Hunterí hypothesis first popularized by Owen Lovejoy and Robert Audrey), adult females and immature chimpanzees at Fongoli were observed to use stick tools as spears to obtain bushbaby prey. Such behavior is not uncommon at Fongoli, with over 50 cases now recorded. The behavioral differences seen in the Fongoli chimpanzee community should cause Anthropologists to rethink their generalization of our closest living relative, especially regarding the use of chimpanzees as models to understand the origins of violence, aggression and human warfare.

Presenter Bio: Jill specializes in Biological Anthropology. As a primatologist, she has studied the behavior of non-human primates such as chimpanzees, spider monkeys, howling monkeys, tamarins, patas monkeys, and vervets in various locales. She is especially interested in the influence of ecology on primate and early human feeding, ranging, and social behavior. She currently has a research project in southeastern Senegal which has been funded by National Geographic Society and the National Science Foundation. The goal of this ongoing project is study or conduct research on chimps in a habitat similar to that of early hominids.

3:00-3:40 Craig A. Anderson, Ph.D.; Akira Sakamoto, Ph.D.; Douglas A. Gentile, Ph.D.; Nobuko Ihori, M.S.; Akiko Shibuya, M.S.

Longitudinal Effects of Violent Video Games on Aggression in Japan and the United States[b]

Summary: Youth worldwide play violent video games many hours per week. Prior research suggests that such exposure can increase physical aggression. We hypothesized that amount of exposure to violent video games early in a school year would predict changes in physical aggressiveness assessed later in the school year, even after statistically controlling for sex and prior physical aggressiveness. In three independent longitudinal samples, participants' video game habits and physically aggressive behavior tendencies were assessed at two points in time, separated by three to six months. One sample consisted of 181 Japanese junior high students ranging in age from 12 to 15 years. A second Japanese sample consisted of 1050 students ranging in age from 13 to 18 years. The third sample consisted of 364 U.S. 3rd,

4th, and 5th graders ranging in age from 9 to 12 years. Habitual violent video game play early in the school year predicted later aggression even after controlling for sex and prior aggressiveness in each sample, *p*s < .01. Those who played a lot of violent video games became relatively more physically aggressive. Multi-sample structure equation modeling revealed that this longitudinal effect was of a similar magnitude in the U.S. and Japan for similar age youth (*Bs* = .158 & .139, respectively, *p*s < .0001), and was smaller (but still significant) in sample that included older youth (*B* = .075, *p* < .01). These longitudinal results confirm earlier experimental and cross-sectional studies that had suggested that playing violent video games is a significant risk factor for later physically aggressive behavior, and that this violent video game effect on youth generalizes across very different cultures.

Presenter Bio: Craig has published in an array of domains, including, human inference; attribution theory; depression, loneliness, and shyness; and personality. For the last 15 years his work has focused on the psychology of human aggression, especially on media violence effects. His aggression research has appeared in all of the top psychology journals, including the top public policy journal. His work has been funded by grants from the CDC and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). His work has had a major impact on public policy at local, state, national and international levels.

3:40-4:00 Break

4:00-4:30 Business meeting for CSV faculty

POSTERS

Presenter: Julia Maier, M.S.

Attention and level of processing: Movie viewing styles and the priming of aggressive cognitions

Summary: The study investigated if attention to and processing of a movie could serve as input variables in the General Aggression Model. Specially, the type of scenes viewers attended to and their level of processing were examined. Participants completed personality measures and were instructed to either pay attention or just relax during a movie. They then completed a lexical decision task and reported the scene they found to be most striking. Results showed that aggressive cognitions did vary based on scene reported; participants who selected an aggressive scene were more primed for movie-related, non-aggressive concepts than aggression-related concepts. Exploratory analysis suggested that viewers may have an inclination with how to watch a movie and that this could interact with both attention instructions and scene selected.

Presenter: Muniba Saleem, M.S.

The Effects of Negative, Neutral and Prosocial Video Games on a New Measure of Prosocial and Aggressive Behavior

Summary: Previous research has documented that playing violent video games has various negative effects on social behavior in that it causes an increase in aggressive behavior and a decrease in prosocial behavior. Past studies have assessed aggressive and prosocial behaviors using distinct measures. The aim

of the present research was to examine the effects of aggressive, neutral, and prosocial video games on a measure that allows for aggressive and prosocial behavior to be assessed simultaneously. The results of this study suggest that prosocial video games can increase prosocial behavior and aggressive video games can increase aggressive behavior, at least in the short term.

Presenter: Kira Bailey

Put Down the Controller! A Negative Effect of Playing Video Games on Proactive Cognitive Control

Summary: Playing video games represents a popular source of entertainment for children and young adults in industrialized nations. Prior research has demonstrated a beneficial effect of video game experience on visuospatial cognition. Here we demonstrate that video game experience has a disruptive effect on proactive cognitive control in selective attention and affective processing tasks. These data reveal that all effects of video game experience may not be beneficial, cautioning the use of these media as tools for training and remediation.

Refreshments and snacks will be available throughout the day, although lunch will be on your own.

Footnotes

[a]This research was supported in part by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Center for the Study of Violence," Craig A. Anderson, PI, #1 R49 CD000492-01.

[b]This research was supported in part by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Center for the Study of Violence," Craig A. Anderson, PI, #1 R49 CE000790-01.