

Impact of violence in media

MOHAMMAD ANISUR RAHMAN

THE children and adolescents being important assets in our society, every effort should be made to provide them equal opportunities for development so that they become robust citizens -- physically fit, mentally alert and morally healthy and endowed with the skills and motivations that the societies need.

Neglected children fall an easy prey to criminality -- adolescents claim the highest share in violence due to dashingly nature and endurance and desire for adventure. While violence is not new to the human race, it is an increasing problem everywhere.

With greater access to firearms and explosives, the scope of violent behaviour has had serious consequences. While the causes of youth violence are multidimensional and include such variables as poverty, child abuse, exposure to violence other psychiatric disorders, literature shows that children's exposure to violence in media play an important role in the etiology of violent behaviour.

The broad spectrum of different available audiovisual communication means have increased the desire to satisfy physiological stimulus needs; triggered through aggressive media content. Risky behaviour by young adults can include violence against each other with a lack of remorse for consequences. The type of faulty thinking creates stressors in children which can lead to the onset of many different symptoms. Children who view media violence are more likely to have increased feelings of hostility and a decreased emotional response to the portrayal of injury; leading imitating violent behaviour.

Unfortunately, violence is one of the most popular forms of entertainment -- performing violent acts in video games may be contributing more to children's aggression than anything else. In a short span of time, most children can imitate a movie character -- they just have to open a magazine, click on a website, or turn on the TV to get involved in all kinds of experiences.

It may be said that the main source of violence is our very own little pet called the television -- a medium that broad-

casts an enormous amount of violence every day. Whenever we turn it on, we find shows airing brutal and violent scenes. As children have a weakness towards such stuff, they seem to grasp everything more rapidly than an average adult.

Television enhances a child's imagination. Television puts new ideas in them to create a whole new set of meanings. Children with a high aptitude for imagination cull their ideas from books and/or their own lives to create their own "made-up" stories.

One recent study demonstrated that music videos, internet and video games contain interpersonal violence. At the age children begin to play video games, they have not quite developed the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy. This causes young children to act upon the violence they are exposed to; not knowing that what they are doing is wrong.

How does televised violence result in aggressive behaviour?

Some researchers have demonstrated that very young children will imitate aggressive acts on TV while playing with peers. Before the age four, children are unable to distinguish between fact and fantasy and may view violence as an ordinary occurrence. In general, violence on television and in movies often conveys a model of conflict resolution. It is efficient, frequent, and inconsequential.

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public places and so on.

In the act of a daily life, parents hardly monitor their children -- in fact they even join their children while viewing violence on television.

Responsibilities of the parents

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behaviour. They become role models for youth. It is "cool" to carry an automatic weapon and use it to knock off the "bad guys." The typical scenario of using violence for a righteous cause may translate in daily life into a justification for using violence to retaliate against perceived victimisers. Hence, vulnerable youth who have been victimised may be tempted to use violent means to solve problems.

Additionally, children who watch televised violence are desensitised to it. They may come to see violence as a fact of life and lose their ability to empathise with both the victim and the victimiser.

Suddenly, various media have played a significant role for breaking down tradition and cultural bondage in Bangladesh. The rate of Internet browsing by adolescents -- especially in urban areas -- is increasing day by day. They do not rationally think before committing a crime, such as sexual harassment, drug addiction, attraction in pornography, disrespecting senior citizens, smoking in

select books, toys, television programmes and movies that are appropriate for each particular child. Entertainment materials should be fun, engaging and spur creative fantasy. Hopefully, they will not be overly frustrating, and they will not present information or images that are too scary to result in nightmares or too advanced to create or interests that the child is not intellectually or emotionally ready to handle.

Parents may want to help their children and teens select, play and entertainment materials that are balanced in content. Some can be educational while others are just plain fun. It is even thought by some child psychologists that some fantasy video games may help children develop cognitive skills -- ability to plan ahead as well as develop visual and eye-hand coordination skills.

Parents should spend time playing these games with their children and talk about the child's thoughts, feelings and perceptions related to playing the game. They can also engage in a discussion of values that may guide the child down a path that is safe and leads to the development of a sound moral character.

Strategies to decrease violence in media

We should consider some major strategies to decrease the contents in the media and to create "common ground" talks between the FIVE Ps: Politicians, Producers, Pedagogy, Parents, and the future Prosumers (active consumers); second-the development of codes of conduct and self-control tendencies among media professionals; third-the establishment of media education to create awareness among children, adolescents, competent and critical media users. As the citizen of Bangladesh and a developing country, we all have to pay more attention to our children and adolescents in a focused way. We have to try our best to avoid unexpected and unacceptable cultural norms and values which are not consistent with our culture and traditions.

[This write up is an abridged version of a paper under review for publication in a social science journal.]

The writer is a Lecturer, Dept. of Sociology, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU), Gopalganj.

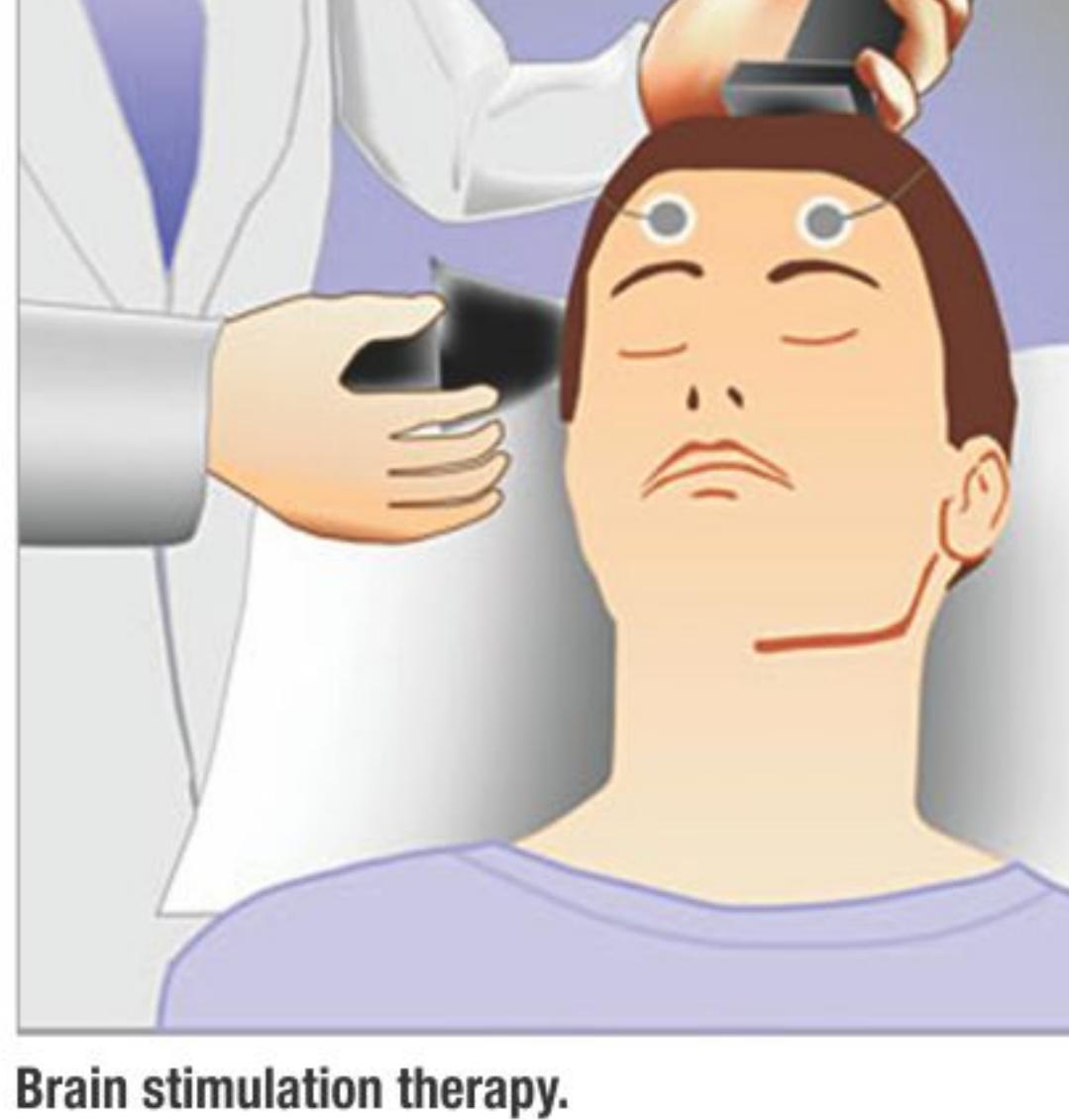
Magnetic cure for drug addiction

S. ASHRAF AHMED

I took me many tricks - psychological, social, and medical - over twelve years before I was able to quit my smoking habit of 28 years! Many people were not as lucky as myself; they died of various lung diseases caused by smoking. Smoking marijuana or cocaine has additional consequences of behavioral, social and professional isolation while still alive.

Cocaine addiction affects the brain, central nervous system (CNS), and rest of the body. The brain effect includes altered responses to the essential neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin, acetylcholine, and GABA. This results in poor judgment, inability to make right decision and control impulses eventually leading to anxiety, dizziness, headache, psychosis, and confusion. The CNS effects include euphoria, excitement, increased energy, and fatigue leading to emotional instability, restlessness, tremors, and muscle jerks. Body effects may include nasal bleeding, bronchitis, chest pain, neck pain, respiratory failure and heart attack. Together, these effects isolate the surviving addicts from normal behavior and make them a social burden.

According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, 22.5 million Americans abused illicit drugs in 2011 costing the nation 11 billion dollars relating to the resulting crime, lost productivity and healthcare. USA has 1.4 million cocaine addicts. Medium treatment-rehabilitation cost per patient is ~\$10,000 per month. No similar statistics was available to me for Bangladesh except that "millions are addicted" to various drugs. An unverifiable cyber resource named Mukti, Prottay, and APON as 3 treatment and



Brain stimulation therapy.

rehabilitation facilities in and around Dhaka, one costing 70,000 taka a patient!

The food and drug administration has not approved any treatment for cocaine addiction. A vaccine that relies on immunological properties of cells, is under development (Arch Gen Psychiatry 66:1116 (2009)). The vaccine produces antibodies against cocaine and captures the drug in the blood stream before it reaches the brain. After trials in monkeys yielded promising results, human trials are awaiting. Two pharmacological approaches offer promises. A common blood pressure medication

that I take daily, has been shown to make experimental mice "forget" the memory of cocaine (Neuropsychopharmacology, 36:1912 (2011)). An anti-seizure drug mix, called topiramate, showed some promise by keeping human addicts free from cocaine crave for two weeks (Biol Psychiatry, 72:943, (2012)).

Now experiments with small animals suggest that a noninvasive use of a magnet one day might cure the problem. This treatment should be rapid, potentially with fewer side effects than the pharmacological and immunological approaches. A research group at the University of California, San Francisco, cured cocaine dependency of addicted mice by generating the equivalent of a magnetic field in the pre-frontal cortex. This region of the brain controls impulses, decision making and behavioral flexibility that are affected by cocaine addiction.

The scientists introduced two light-gathering proteins called rhodopsin into the nerve cells in the pre-frontal cortex. Focusing a laser beam on this protein turned the nerve cells on or off. Compulsive behavior of the cocaine addiction was wiped out by turning on the cells, while addiction was created by turning them off. The results appeared online in the British journal Nature (April 3, 2013). These studies in animals suggest that a similar strategy might be applicable to cocaine-addicted humans.

Because a laser beam could be harmful, the same "on and off" effects could be generated on human subjects by an electromagnetic stimulation, called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), outside the scalp.

The writer, a former Dhaka University teacher, is a biomedical scientist working in the USA.

THE CULPRIT!

Glacier melt causes sea level rise

Melting glaciers around the world, discrete from the polar ice sheets, accounted for 29 percent of sea level rise from 2003 to 2009, scientists report in the May 17 Science. That's almost as much sea level rise as the ice sheets themselves contributed during that time.

Glaciers, including those in Greenland and Antarctica that aren't part of the ice sheets, lost 259 billion tons of ice per year, raising sea level 0.71 millimeters annually. Alex Gardner of Clark University in Worcester, Mass., and colleagues calculated the ice losses using satellite data and ground measurements of glaciers. Most of the melting occurred in Alaska, the Canadian Arctic, Greenland, the southern Andes and the Himalayas and other high mountains of Asia.

The team estimates that, together, the glacier and ice sheet losses explain 60 percent of sea level rise from 2003 to 2009. Other sources include expansion of the ocean as its waters warm.

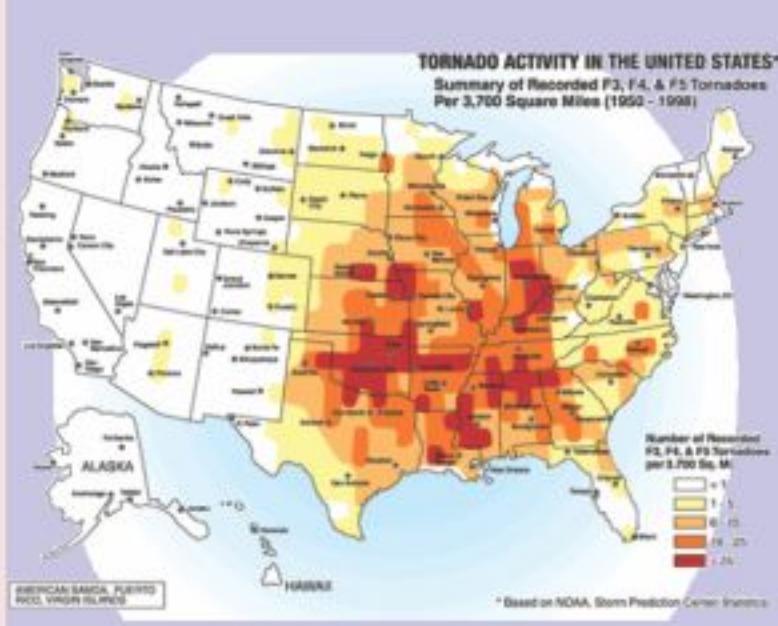


Thawing ice contributes nearly as much water to oceans as massive sheets at poles do.

DID YOU KNOW?

What is Tornado Alley?

Tornado Alley is a colloquial term for the area of the United States where tornadoes are most frequent. Although an official location is not defined, the areas in between the Rocky Mountains and Appalachian Mountains are the areas usually associated with it. Tornadoes are most common here because it is the region where warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico meets cold, dry air from the Rocky Mountains and Canada, creating intense, tornado-producing thunderstorms known as supercells.



Tornado activity in the United States.



Glow-in-the-dark cockroach

A glowing cockroach, a monkey with a blue behind and a meat-eating sponge snagged spots on a list of top 10 new species named in 2012, scientists announced today (May 23).

In its sixth year, the Top 10 New Species list is compiled by the International Institute for Species Exploration at Arizona State University and is announced on the anniversary of the birth of Carolus Linnaeus. An 18th-century botanist, Linnaeus created the modern system for naming and classifying species.

The panel plucked the top 10 new species

from more than 140 nominations; to be considered, the species had to have been officially named in 2012 and described with the appropriate code of nomenclature.

"We look for organisms with unexpected features or size and those found in rare or difficult to reach habitats," Antonio Valdecasas, a biologist and research zoologist with Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales in Madrid, Spain, said in a statement. "We also look for organisms that are especially significant to humans — those that play a certain role in human habitat or that are considered a close relative," added Valdecasas, who is committee chair for the top 10 species list.

CRYPTOQUIP

