Today’s piece was prepared by Rebecca Kolsky, MD, based on a story in the New York Times, entitled “Eye Specialists Question Nintendo's Warning on 3-D Technology and Children”

<http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/05/eye-specialists-question-nintendos-warning-on-3-d-technology-and-children/?scp=1&sq=children%20Nintendo&st=cse>

In December 2010, Nintendo issued a warning that children under 6 years old should not use their new 3D video game mode because of the risk of abnormal eye development. Nintendo claimed that young children's eyes are not fully developed and that prolonged exposure to 3D images could interfere with proper growth in a ways that might not affect an adult's eyes. The New York Times article referenced above seeks to address this concern and gather related data-based information, citing expert opinions including those of pediatric ophthalmologists at Washington University and UCSD, as well as the ophthalmologist-in-chief at Boston Children’s Hospital. Both report that based on animal models and other research, that there is no effect on development of vision or the eye. The article concludes that there is very little evidence supporting the warning about 3D video games specifically and ophthalmic problems. It does, however, note that over-use of video games may cause fatigue, and may be associated with increased incidence of attention deficit disorders, reinforcing the AAP’s recommendation to limit daily screen time to less than two hours.

This article was quite responsible in its effort to uncover the evidence about 3D video games and ophthalmic development. It was somewhat concerning that Nintendo was unable to offer any concrete evidence supporting their warning to prohibit children less than 6 years old from using this type of technology, leaving readers without clarity on the justification for the warning. The article did present a reader-friendly brief summary statement of early research findings on monkeys from the department at Washington University. In the end, most experts cited in this article did agree that while 3D games specifically do not seem to affect development, certainly overexposure to media (TV, computer, video games) can have measureable effects on development, specifically attention problems. It would have been a nice opportunity to offer some data supporting limited use, as cited in some of the resources below.

Resources on appropriate video game use and general media exposure:

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/july0510studies.htm>

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/pediatrics;104/2/341>

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/>

<http://www.cmch.tv/>

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