Today’s piece was prepared by Fabiola Movius, MD, based on a story from The Christian Science Monitor [How should children’s violent ‘media diet’ be managed?](http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2016/0719/How-should-children-s-violent-media-diet-be-managed)

This article critiques the [AAP’s July 2016 policy statement on the detrimental impact of violent media](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2016/07/14/peds.2016-1298.full.pdf) content on children’s behavior, frequently citing the opinions of Steven Schlozman, associate director of the Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds at MGH.

By stating “the AAP concludes that media violence causes aggression.  Research has not shown that viewing violent content causes violent behavior,” and then immediately citing Schlozman as correctly identifying a statistically significant correlation between violent content and behavior, the article is confusing and potentially misleading.

The article erroneously claims that the AAP statement describes the relationship between media violence and aggression as causal.  The AAP policy statement is very careful in describing such a relationship, for example “there is broad scientific consensus that virtual violence **increases** aggressive thoughts, feelings and behaviors…” or “a sizable majority of media researchers believe that existing data show **a significant link** between virtual violence and aggression,” and finally “there is a **connection** between virtual violence and real-world aggression.”

Also, Sabri’s writing ignores the policy statement’s careful and purposeful definitions that highlight the difference between violence and aggression.  Research has not shown that viewing violent content causes violent behavior but it has shown an increase in aggressive behavior.  Last, by quoting Scholzman, the article attempts to highlight the difference between causation and correlation, and attempts to identify Scholzman as an expert who can carefully distinguish between the two.

The article appeals to emotion by suggesting that AAP statement, by encouraging legislation that prohibits easy access to violent media for minors, is also promoting infringement on constitutional first amendment rights, and quotes Schlozman’s worries about “anything that limits in an unthoughtful way access to creative content.”  The article fails to cite evidence that demonstrates how the AAP statement is “unthoughtful.”  By citing the opinions of a single person, the article does exactly what the AAP policy statement criticizes: it creates “the misperception that research data and scientific consensus are lacking.”

**RESOURCES ON VIRTUAL VIOLENCE**:

[AAP Guide for parents on dealing with violent media content](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Virtual-Violence-Impacts-Childrens-Behavior.aspx) *AAP*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!