Today’s piece was prepared by Dennis Pang, MD based on a New York Times article [We know it harms kids to see smoking on TV. What about rape?](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/12/well/family/we-know-it-harms-kids-to-see-smoking-on-tv-what-about-rape.html)

Netflix recently announced that it will avoid showing smoking in its programs for younger viewers after an anti-smoking group released a study implicating Netflix’s originals such as “Stranger Things” as heavy puffers. In addition, Netflix removed a scene of suicide from its teen drama “13 Reasons Why” in response to audience calls to protect adolescent mental health. Written by a psychologist who focuses on education and child development, this article discusses the merits of also encouraging popular media not to depict rape or sexual assault in shows aimed at teenagers.

Citing studies from psychology literature, the author builds the case that depictions of sexual assault can cause viewers trauma that lingers for years, desensitize males to violence against women, and unmask attraction to sexual aggression. Solutions such as trigger warnings that are commonly used in universities were not found to decrease the distress of viewing disturbing scenes.

Overall, the author nicely uses evidence-based claims to advocate for a change in popular media programmers’ practices. This presents a potential advocacy avenue for pediatricians interested in adolescent development given the wide cultural reach of networks and studios.

It’s useful to consider that censorship does not equate to promoting education about sexual assault or prevent the reinforcement or distortion of ideas about what represent or constitute healthy sexual relationships as portrayed on TV and within other media sources. Families can discuss healthy sexual relationships, as well as model healthy relationships in general. The resources below may be useful.

**RESOURCES ON MEDIA:**
[Common Sense Media](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/) *Potentially inappropriate content in movies/TV is catalogued in a stringently meticulous fashion.*
[AAP’s Family Media Use Plan](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx) *Tool for parents to create a family media use plan.*

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