

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

YOUTH VIOLENCE
STUDIES

Youth Crime and Violence Trends

Youth violent crime skyrocketed in the late 1980s

- **More violent teens.** Juvenile violent crime rates, relatively unchanged during the 1970s and through the late 1980s, spiked sharply during the 6-year period between 1988 and 1994 – increasing steadily by more than 60 percent.
- **More teen victims.** Although homicide rates among other age groups remained stable or declined during this time period, teen homicide rates rose dramatically. Between 1985 and 1993, the homicide victimization rate for 14 to 17-year olds increased by nearly 150 percent.
- **Firearms to blame.** Nearly all of the increase in the murder of juveniles during this decade was firearms related. Between 1985 and 1995, while non-firearms murders of juveniles increased just 9 percent, the number of juveniles murdered with firearms increased 153 percent. In the peak year of 1994, nearly 80 percent of the homicides committed by juveniles were gun-related.

Youth violent crime falls during the Clinton Administration.

- **Violent youth crime down three years in a row.** Between 1994 and 1997, juvenile violent crime rates dropped by 23 percent.
- **Drop in youth gun murders has led the way.** Between 1993 and 1997, the number of juveniles arrested for murder declined by 39 percent – reversing most of the increase experienced over the previous 7 years. The number of juveniles murdered also dropped by a similar percentage – from 2,900 in 1993 to 2,100 in 1997. These declines are mostly attributable to the drop in youth gun murders.
- **Juvenile gun crime also coming down.** Juvenile arrests for weapons offenses have also dropped 23 percent since 1993.

Youth crime and violence still a serious problem

- **Children more likely victims of violent crime.** Teenagers and young people are more likely to become victims of violent crime than older persons. In 1998, about a third of all violent crime victims were ages 12 to 19 – and almost half were under the age of 25.
- **Too many children murdered.** Between 1976 and 1994 an estimated 37,000 children were murdered in America. That is an average of five children murdered every day – or about 1,945 each year. In 1997, 11 percent of all murder victims were under the age of 18.

- **Youth still likely to commit violent crimes.** In 1995, juvenile offenders were responsible for about 14 percent of all homicides. As a result, 2,300 juvenile offenders were implicated in about 1,900 homicides. Overall, the juvenile arrest rates for violent crime and murder remain 20 to 25 percent higher than in the mid 1980s.
- **Youth gun violence remains high.** In 1996, gunfire killed over 4,600 young people (0 to 19 years of age) -- or an average of 13 youth per day. Of the 2,100 juveniles murdered in 1997, 56 percent were killed with a firearm. Older youth are even more likely to be murdered with a gun: while 18 percent of the juveniles murdered with a gun in 1997 were under 13 years of age, 84 percent of those 13 and older were killed with a firearm.

Crime and violence in our schools

- **Students less likely to be victimized but more likely to feel unsafe.** Although the number of multiple homicide events at schools has increased since 1993 (from 2 to 6 -- and with 4 times as many victims), the overall school crime rate has actually dropped (from 164 crimes per 1,000 students in 1993 to about 128 such crimes in 1996). However, the percentage of students reporting that they felt unsafe at or on their way to school has increased.
- **Most schools safer than community at large.** While the overall level of school and non-school crime is about the same (about 3 million crimes in each setting), students are more than twice as likely to experience serious violent crime while out of school. And the very worst violent victimizations -- murders and suicides -- rarely occur in or near schools. Less than 1% of the 7,357 thousand children who were murdered in 1992-93 -- or 63 -- were killed at school.
- **Serious crime and violence concentrated in a small percentage of schools.** Only about 10% of public schools report serious or violent crimes to their local police departments. Nearly half -- or 47% -- of schools report less serious or non-violent crimes to police, and 43% report absolutely no crimes at all.
- **Violence more likely in larger, urban schools and with older students.** One third of large schools (1,000+ students) report serious violent crimes to police, compared with less than one tenth of small schools. Also urban schools are twice as likely as rural schools to report serious violent crimes, and middle and high schools are 4 times more likely than elementary schools to report such crimes.

- **Fist fights and theft the most common crimes.** Overall, physical attacks and fights without weapons are the crimes most often reported to police by middle and high schools. Theft is the most common school crime overall. In 1996, less than 10% of crimes against students were of a serious or violent nature.
- **Fewer weapons in schools.** About 6% of high school seniors -- less than in recent years -- are carrying firearms and other weapons to schools. Also, the percentage of seniors intentionally injured -- with or without weapons -- has not changed significantly over the past 20 years.
- **Gang presence nearly doubled.** Between 1989 and 1995, the percentage of students reporting the presence of street gangs in their schools increased from 15% to 28% -- including large increases at urban, suburban and rural schools.
- **Violence and drugs linked.** Students who reported being the victims of violent crimes at schools were more likely to report the availability of drugs at school. The presence of gangs and guns is also related to school crime and the victimization of students.
- **Teachers often crime victims.** On average, 3% of teachers are the victims of violent crimes, and nearly 5% are the victims of theft at school.

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Television and Violence

The Scale of the Problem and Where to Go From Here

Brandon S. Centerwall, MD, MPH

IN 1975, Rothenberg's Special Communication in *JAMA*, "Effect of Television Violence on Children and Youth," first alerted the medical community to the deforming effects the viewing of television violence has on normal child development, increasing levels of physical aggressiveness and violence.¹ In response to physicians' concerns sparked by Rothenberg's communication, the 1976 American Medical Association (AMA) House of Delegates passed Resolution 38: "The House declares TV violence threatens the health and welfare of young Americans, commits itself to remedial actions with interested parties, and encourages opposition to TV programs containing violence and to their sponsors."²

Other professional organizations have since come to a similar conclusion, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychological Association.³ In light of recent research findings, in 1990 the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement: "Pediatricians should advise parents to limit their children's television viewing to 1 to 2 hours per day."⁴

Rothenberg's communication was largely based on the findings of the 1968 National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence⁵ and the 1972 Surgeon General's report, *Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence*.⁶ Those findings were updated and reinforced by the 1982 report of the National Institute of Mental Health, *Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Impli-*

cations for the Eighties, again documenting a broad consensus in the scientific literature that exposure to television violence increases children's physical aggressiveness.⁷ Each of these governmental inquiries necessarily left open the question of whether this increase in children's physical aggressiveness would later lead to increased rates of violence. Although there had been dozens of laboratory investigations and short-term field studies (3 months or less), few long-term field studies (2 years or more) had been completed and reported. Since the 1982 National Institute of Mental Health report, long-term field studies have come into their own, some 20 having now been published.⁸

In my commentary, I discuss television's effects within the context of normal child development; give an overview of natural exposure to television as a cause of aggression and violence; summarize my own research findings on television as a cause of violence; and suggest a course of action.

TELEVISION IN THE CONTEXT OF NORMAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The impact of television on children is best understood within the context of normal child development. Neonates are born with an instinctive capacity and desire to imitate adult human behavior. That infants can, and do, imitate an array of adult facial expressions has been demonstrated in neonates as young as a few hours old, ie, before they are even old enough to know cognitively that they themselves have facial features that correspond with those they are observing.^{9,10} It is a most useful instinct, for the developing child must learn and master a vast repertoire of behavior in short order.

Whereas infants have an instinctive desire to imitate observed human behavior, they do not possess an instinct for gauging a priori whether a behavior ought to be imitated. They will imitate anything,¹¹ including behaviors that most adults would regard as destructive and antisocial. It may give pause for thought, then, to learn that infants as young as 14 months of age demonstrably observe and incorporate behaviors seen on television (Fig 1).^{12,13} (Looking ahead, in two surveys of young male felons imprisoned for committing violent crimes, eg, homicide, rape, and assault, 22% to 34% reported having consciously imitated crime techniques learned from television programs, usually successfully.¹⁴)

As of 1990, the average American child aged 2 to 5 years was watching over 27 hours of television per week.¹⁵ This might not be bad, if young children understood what they are watching. However, up through ages 3 and 4 years, many children are unable to distinguish fact from fantasy in television programs and remain unable to do so despite adult coaching.¹⁶ In the minds of such young children, television is a source of entirely factual information regarding how the world works. Naturally, as they get older, they come to know better, but the earliest and deepest impressions were laid down when the child saw television as a factual source of information about a world outside their homes where violence is a daily commonplace and the commission of violence is generally powerful, exciting, charismatic, and efficacious. Serious violence is most likely to erupt at moments of severe stress—and it is precisely at such moments that adolescents and adults are most likely to revert to their earliest, most visceral

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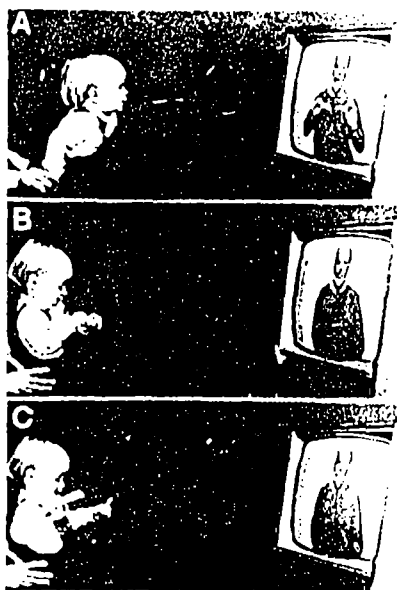


Fig 1.—This series of photographs shows a 14-month-old boy learning behavior from a television set. In photograph A the adult pulls apart a novel toy. The infant leans forward and carefully studies the adult's actions. In photograph B the infant is given the toy. In photograph C the infant pulls the toy apart, imitating what he had seen the adult do. Of infants exposed to the instructional video, 65% could later work the toy, as compared with 20% of unexposed infants ($P < .001$) (reprinted with permission from Meltzoff¹²).

sense of what violence is and what its role is in society. Much of this sense will have come from television.

Not all laboratory experiments and short-term field studies demonstrate an effect of media violence on children's behavior, but most do.^{17,18} In a recent meta-analysis of randomized, case-control, short-term studies, exposure to media violence caused, on the average, a significant increase in children's aggressiveness as measured by observation of their spontaneous, natural behavior following exposure ($P < .05$).¹⁹

NATURAL EXPOSURE TO TELEVISION AS A CAUSE OF AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE

In 1973, a small Canadian town (called "Notel" by the investigators) acquired television for the first time. The acquisition of television at such a late date was due to problems with signal reception rather than any hostility toward television. Joy et al²⁰ investigated the impact of television on this virgin community, using as control groups two similar communities that already had television. In a double-blind research design, a cohort of 45 first- and second-grade students were observed prospectively over a period of 2 years for rates of objectively measured noxious physical aggression (eg, hitting, shov-

ing, and biting). Rates of physical aggression did not change significantly among children in the two control communities. Two years after the introduction of television, rates of physical aggression among children in Notel had increased by 160% ($P < .001$).

In a 22-year prospective study of an age cohort in a semirural US county ($N=875$), Huesmann²¹ observed whether boys' television viewing at age 8 years predicted the seriousness of criminal acts committed by age 30. After controlling for the boys' baseline aggressiveness, intelligence, and socioeconomic status at age 8, it was found that the boys' television violence viewing at age 8 significantly predicted the seriousness of the crimes for which they were convicted by age 30 ($P < .05$).

In a retrospective case-control study, Kruttschnitt et al²² compared 100 male felons imprisoned for violent crimes (eg, homicide, rape, and assault) with 65 men without a history of violent offenses, matching for age, race, and census tract of residence at age 10 to 14 years. After controlling for school performance, exposure to parental violence, and baseline level of criminality, it was found that the association between adult criminal violence and childhood exposure to television violence approached statistical significance ($P < .10$).

All Canadian and US studies of the effect of prolonged childhood exposure to television (2 years or more) demonstrate a positive relationship between earlier exposure to television and later physical aggressiveness, although not all studies reach statistical significance.⁸ The critical period of exposure to television is preadolescent childhood. Later variations in exposure, in adolescence and adulthood, do not exert any additional effect.^{23,24} However, the aggression-enhancing effect of exposure to television is chronic, extending into later adolescence and adulthood.²⁵ This implies that any interventions should be designed for children and their caregivers rather than for the general adult population.

These studies confirm what many Americans already believe on the basis of intuition. In a national opinion poll, 43% of adult Americans affirm that television violence "plays a part in making America a violent society," and an additional 37% find the thesis at least plausible (only 16% frankly disbelieve the proposition).²⁶ But how big a role does it play? What is the effect of natural exposure to television on entire populations? To address this issue, I took advantage of an historical experiment—the absence of television in South Africa prior to 1975.²⁷

TELEVISION AND HOMICIDE IN SOUTH AFRICA, CANADA, AND THE UNITED STATES

The South African government did not permit television broadcasting prior to 1975, even though South African whites were a prosperous, industrialized Western society.⁸ Amidst the hostile tensions between the Afrikaner and English white communities, it was generally conceded that any South African television broadcasting industry would have to rely on British and American imports to fill out its programming schedule. Afrikaner leaders felt that that would provide an unacceptable cultural advantage to the English-speaking white South Africans. Rather than negotiate a complicated compromise, the Afrikaner-controlled government chose to finesse the issue by forbidding television broadcasting entirely. Thus, an entire population of 2 million whites—rich and poor, urban and rural, educated and uneducated—was nonselectively and absolutely excluded from exposure to television for a quarter century after the medium was introduced into the United States. Since the ban on television was not based on any concerns regarding television and violence, there was no self-selection bias with respect to the hypothesis being tested.

To evaluate whether exposure to television is a cause of violence, I examined homicide rates in South Africa, Canada, and the United States. Given that blacks in South Africa live under quite different conditions than blacks in the United States, I limited the comparison to white homicide rates in South Africa and the United States and the total homicide rate in Canada (which was 97% white in 1951). Data analyzed were from the respective government vital statistics registries. The reliability of the homicide data is discussed elsewhere.⁸

Following the introduction of television into the United States, the annual white homicide rate increased by 93%, from 3.0 homicides per 100 000 white population in 1945 to 5.8 per 100 000 in 1974; in South Africa, where television was banned, the white homicide rate decreased by 7%, from 2.7 homicides per 100 000 white population in 1943 through 1948 to 2.5 per 100 000 in 1974 (Fig 2). As with US whites, following the introduction of television into Canada the Canadian homicide rate increased by 92%, from 1.3 homicides per 100 000 population in 1945 to 2.5 per 100 000 in 1974 (Fig 3).

For both Canada and the United States, there was a lag of 10 to 15 years between the introduction of television and the subsequent doubling of the ho-

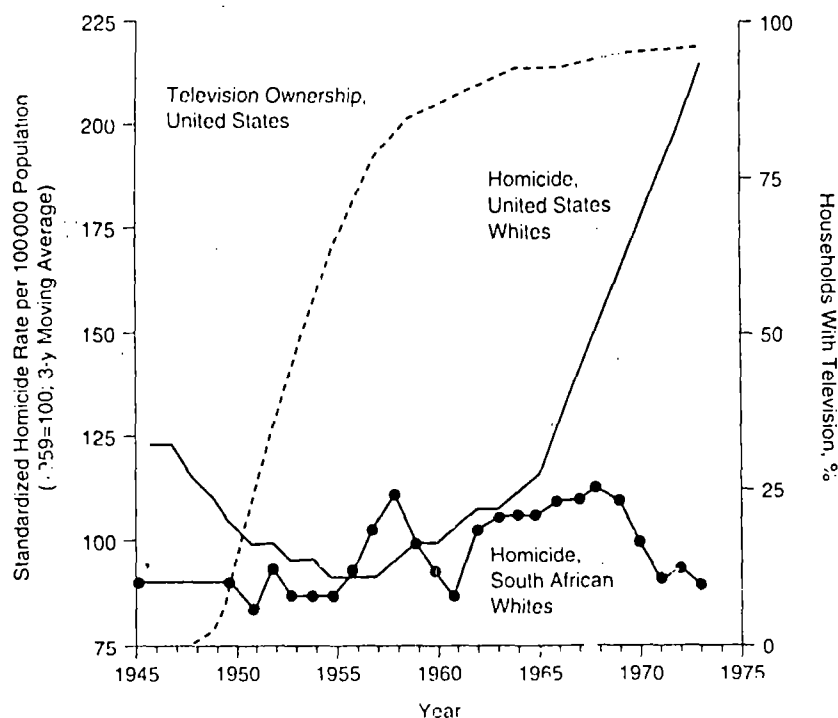


Fig 2.—Television ownership and white homicide rates, United States and South Africa, 1945 through 1975. Asterisk denotes 6-year average. Note that television broadcasting was not permitted in South Africa prior to 1975 (from Centerwall¹⁸ and reprinted by permission of Academic Press).

micide rate (Figs 2 and 3). Given that homicide is primarily an adult activity, if television exerts its behavior-modifying effects primarily on children, the initial "television generation" would have had to age 10 to 15 years before they would have been old enough to affect the homicide rate. If this were so, it would be expected that, as the initial television generation grew up, rates of serious violence would first begin to rise among children, then several years later it would begin to rise among adolescents, then still later among young adults, and so on. And that is what is observed.²

In the period immediately preceding the introduction of television into Canada and the United States, all three countries were multiparty, representative, federal democracies with strong Christian religious influences, where people of nonwhite races were generally excluded from political power. Although television broadcasting was prohibited prior to 1975, white South Africa had well-developed book, newspaper, radio, and cinema industries. Therefore, the effect of television could be isolated from that of other media influences. In addition, I examined an array of possible confounding variables—changes in age distribution, urbanization, economic con-

ditions, alcohol consumption, capital punishment, civil unrest, and the availability of firearms.² None provided a viable alternative explanation for the observed homicide trends. For further details regarding the testing of the hypothesis, I refer the reader to the published monograph³ and commentary.²⁵

A comparison of South Africa with only the United States (Fig 2) could easily lead to the hypothesis that US involvement in the Vietnam War or the turbulence of the civil rights movement was responsible for the doubling of homicide rates in the United States. The inclusion of Canada as a control group precludes these hypotheses, since Canadians likewise experienced a doubling of homicide rates (Fig 3) without involvement in the Vietnam War and without the turbulence of the US civil rights movement.

When I published my original paper in 1989, I predicted that white South African homicide rates would double within 10 to 15 years after the introduction of television in 1975, the rate having already increased 56% by 1983 (the most recent year then available).² As of 1987, the white South African homicide rate had reached 5.8 homicides per 100,000 white population, a 130% increase in the homicide rate from the

rate of 2.5 per 100,000 in 1974, the last year before television was introduced.²⁷ In contrast, Canadian and white US homicide rates have not increased since 1974. As of 1987, the Canadian homicide rate was 2.2 per 100,000, as compared with 2.5 per 100,000 in 1974.²⁸ In 1987, the US white homicide rate was 5.4 per 100,000, as compared with 5.8 per 100,000 in 1974.²⁹ (Since Canada and the United States became saturated with television by the early 1960s [Figs 2 and 3], it was expected that the effect of television on rates of violence would likewise reach a saturation point 10 to 15 years later.)

It is concluded that the introduction of television in the 1950s caused a subsequent doubling of the homicide rate, ie, long-term childhood exposure to television is a causal factor behind approximately one half of the homicides committed in the United States, or approximately 10,000 homicides annually. Although the data are not as well developed for other forms of violence, they indicate that exposure to television is also a causal factor behind a major proportion—perhaps one half—of rapes, assaults, and other forms of interpersonal violence in the United States.² When the same analytic approach was taken to investigate the relationship between television and suicide, it was determined that the introduction of television in the 1950s exerted no significant effect on subsequent suicide rates.²⁰

To say that childhood exposure to television and television violence is a predisposing factor behind half of violent acts is not to discount the importance of other factors. Manifestly, every violent act is the result of an array of forces coming together—poverty, crime, alcohol and drug abuse, stress—of which childhood exposure to television is just one. Nevertheless, the epidemiologic evidence indicates that if, hypothetically, television technology had never been developed, there would today be 10,000 fewer homicides each year in the United States, 70,000 fewer rapes, and 700,000 fewer injurious assaults.^{25,30}

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

In the war against tobacco, the tobacco industry is the last group from whom we expect any meaningful action. If someone were to call on the tobacco industry to cut back tobacco production as a matter of social conscience and out of concern for the public health, we would regard that person as being at least simple-minded, if not frankly deranged. Oddly enough, however, people have persistently assumed that the television industry operates by a higher standard of morality than the tobacco industry—that it is useful to appeal to its social

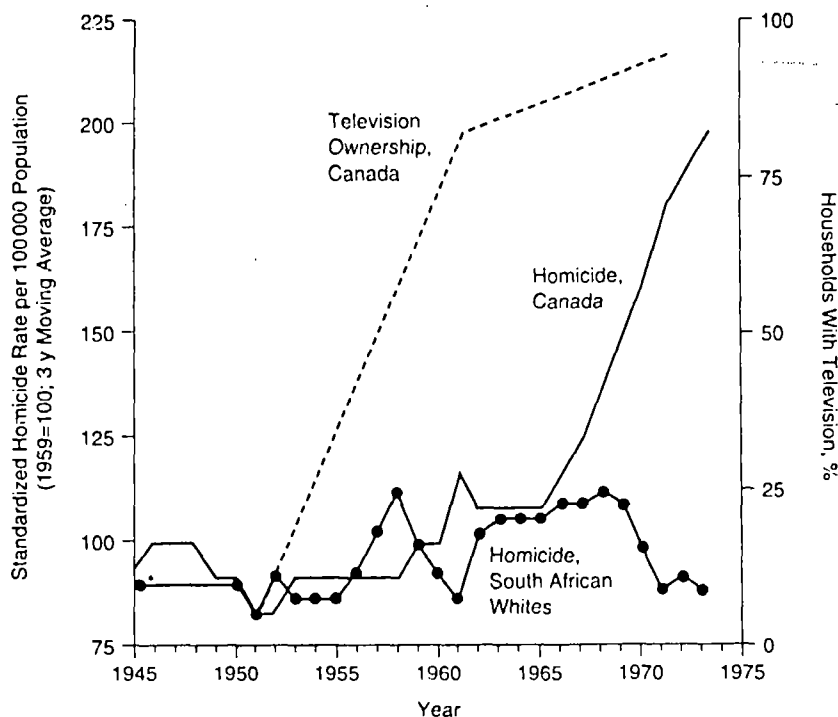


Fig 3.—Television ownership and homicide rates, Canadians and white South Africans, 1945 through 1973. Asterisk denotes 6-year average. Note that television broadcasting was not permitted in South Africa prior to 1975 (from Centerwall¹⁸ and reprinted by permission of Academic Press).

conscience. This was true in 1969 when the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence published its recommendations for the television industry.³² It was equally true in 1989 when the US Congress passed a television antiviolence bill that granted television industry executives the authority to confer on the issue of television violence without being in violation of antitrust laws.³³ Even before the law was fully passed, the four networks stated that they had no intention of using this antitrust exemption to any useful end and that there would be no substantive changes in programming content.³⁴ They have been as good as their word.

Cable aside, the television industry is not in the business of selling programs to audiences. It is in the business of selling audiences to advertisers. Issues of "quality" and "social responsibility" are entirely peripheral to the issue of maximizing audience size within a competitive market—and there is no formula more tried and true than violence for reliably generating large audiences that can be sold to advertisers. If public demand for tobacco decreases by 1%, the tobacco industry will lose \$250 million annually in revenue.³⁵ Similarly, if the television audience size were to de-

crease by 1%, the television industry would stand to lose \$250 million annually in advertising revenue.³⁶ Thus, changes in audience size that appear trivial to you and me are regarded as catastrophic by the industry. For this reason, industry spokespersons have made innumerable protestations of good intent, but nothing has happened. In over 20 years of monitoring levels of television violence, there has been no downward movement.^{36,37} There are no recommendations to make to the television industry. To make any would not only be futile but create the false impression that the industry might actually do something constructive.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pediatricians advise parents to limit their children's television viewing to 1 to 2 hours per day.⁴ This is an excellent point of departure and need not be limited to pediatricians. It may seem remote that a child watching television today can be involved years later in violence. A juvenile taking up cigarettes is also remote from the dangers of chronic smoking, yet those dangers are real, and it is best to intervene early. The same holds true regarding television-viewing behavior. The instruction is simple: For children, less TV is better, especially violent TV.

Symbolic gestures are important, too. The many thousands of physicians who gave up smoking were important role models for the general public. Just as many waiting rooms now have a sign saying, "This Is a Smoke-Free Area" (or words to that effect), so likewise a sign can be posted saying, "This Is a Television-Free Area." (This is not meant to exclude the use of instructional videotapes.) By sparking inquiries from parents and children, such a simple device provides a low-key way to bring up the subject in a clinical setting.

Children's exposure to television and television violence should become part of the public health agenda, along with safety seats, bicycle helmets, immunizations, and good nutrition. One-time campaigns are of little value. It needs to become part of the standard package: Less TV is better, especially violent TV. Part of the public health approach should be to promote child-care alternatives to the electronic baby-sitter, especially among the poor who cannot afford real baby-sitters.

Parents should guide what their children watch on television and how much. This is an old recommendation³⁸ that can be given new teeth with the help of modern technology. It is now feasible to fit a television set with an electronic lock that permits parents to preset which programs, channels, and times they wish the set to be available for; if a particular program or time of day is locked, the set won't turn on for that time or channel.³⁹ The presence of a time-channel lock restores and reinforces parental authority, since it operates even when the parents are not at home, thus permitting parents to use television to their family's best advantage. Time-channel locks are not merely feasible, but have already been designed and are coming off the assembly line (eg, the Sony XBR).

Closed captioning permits deaf and hard-of-hearing persons access to television. Recognizing that market forces alone would not make closed-captioning technology available to more than a fraction of the deaf and hard-of-hearing, the Television Decoder Circuitry Act was signed into law in 1990, requiring that, as of 1993, all new television sets (with screens 33 cm or larger, ie, 96% of new television sets) be manufactured with built-in closed-captioning circuitry.⁴⁰ A similar law should require that eventually all new television sets be manufactured with built-in time-channel lock circuitry—and for a similar reason. Market forces alone will not make this technology available to more than a fraction of households with children and will exclude poor families, the ones who suffer the most from violence. If we can make

television technology available that will benefit 24 million deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans,³⁹ surely we can do no less for the benefit of 50 million American children.⁴⁰

Unless they are provided with information, parents are ill-equipped to judge which programs to place off-limits. As a final recommendation, television programs should be accompanied by a violence rating so parents can gauge how violent a program is without having to watch it. Such a rating system should be

quantitative and preferably numerical, leaving aesthetic and social judgments to the viewers. Exactly how the scale ought to be quantified is less important than that it be applied consistently. Such a rating system would enjoy broad popular support: In a national poll, 71% of adult Americans favor the establishment of a violence rating system for television programs.⁴⁰

It should be noted that none of these recommendations impinges on issues of freedom of speech. That is as it should

be. It is not reasonable to address the problem of motor vehicle fatalities by calling for a ban on cars. Instead, we emphasize safety seats, good traffic signs, and driver education. Similarly, to address the problem of violence caused by exposure to television, we need to emphasize time-channel locks, program rating systems, and education of the public regarding good viewing habits.

Figure 1 was provided by A. N. Meltzoff, University of Washington, Seattle.

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In Atlanta, an uproar over legal challenge to affirmative action

By Larry Copeland
USA TODAY

ATLANTA — This city, long a national symbol of black economic pride, faces a stiff legal challenge this week to the constitutionality of its affirmative action program, regarded by many African-Americans here as the impetus that helped make this a so-called Black Mecca.

The challenge is expected in the form of a lawsuit from the Southeastern Legal Foundation, a 23-year-old, conservative organization that has helped overturn other affirmative action programs across the South.

In some cases, after foundation lawyers announced intended challenges, government entities voluntarily altered their programs to ensure that they were constitutionally sound, says Matt Glavin, president of the foundation.



Mayor Bill Campbell, Atlanta's third black mayor, vowed a "fight to the death" to save affirmative action and compared the legal foundation to the Ku Klux Klan. He led an impassioned rally of 2,000 supporters of the program in late July.

Not here. When Glavin notified the city earlier this summer that he intended to challenge Atlanta's affirmative action program, he touched off a firestorm of rhetoric that threatened to destroy the city's vaunted boast as "the city too busy to hate."

Mayor Bill Campbell, Atlanta's third black mayor, vowed a "fight to the death" to save affirmative action and compared the legal foundation to the Ku Klux Klan. He led an impassioned rally of 2,000 supporters of the program in late July.

Seven members of the legal foundation's board of trustees and its legal advisory board resigned after some black political leaders threatened to lead boycotts of their companies.

The affirmative action effort, which city officials insist is not a set-aside program, has a goal of allocating 30% to 35% of city contracts and subcontracts to minority- and female-owned companies. The city makes

contracts worth about \$100 million a year.

Glavin says his group was rebuffed when it suggested ways that the city could make its affirmative action program pass constitutional muster. "This is not about race," Glavin says. "This is about the city of Atlanta breaking the law. The residents of this city, black and white, can't break the law. The city should not be able to break it either."

Affirmative action programs around the nation, many modeled on Atlanta's program, begun by the city's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, in 1975, have faced repeated challenges since a Supreme Court ruling in 1989. That ruling said so-called "set-aside" programs,

which set aside a certain percentage of public contracts for minorities and women, were unconstitutional because they discriminated on the basis of race and gender.

Atlanta says its own program is legal because it does not set aside a fixed portion of the contracts but only sets certain general goals.

Even among African-Americans, though, there is no consensus on whether affirmative action has outlived its usefulness here. "This is not the same city as it was in 1975," says Teresa Chappell, head of the Republican Vanguard, a black political action committee.

"The very laws we fought so hard for and died for, you can't turn around now and ask the government to keep someone out."

Meanwhile, as Glavin's lawyers prepare to file court papers, supporters of the city's affirmative action program are preparing for another rally to night.

This time, they're holding it at Ebenezer Baptist Church, known nationally as the pulpit where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preached.

3 studies, 1 result: School bullying worsening

By Marilyn Elias
USA TODAY

BOSTON — Bullying is rampant in U.S. schools and may be stoking adolescent anger that can erupt into violence, three studies reported over the weekend suggest.

The most frequent targets are students who appear different — racially, in body size or clothing, University of Illinois psychologist Dorothy Espelage told the American Psychological Association meeting.

About 81% of students said they had bullied classmates during the last month, in a new

study funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at a suburban Indianapolis middle school. Typical behaviors: ridiculing, threatening to hurt, pushing, shoving, slapping and kicking.

The finding supports other recent reports, including one that found 75% of adolescents nationally had been bullied during their school years.

Turnabout is fair play for many. In Espelage's report on 81 middle-school students at three Midwest schools, 75% of bullies said they'd been taunted themselves. "The majority say they're uncomfortable bully-

ing, but they do it to go along with the crowd," she says. Most incidents occur out of sight and hearing of teachers.

In another school study done by University of Nebraska psychologists, teachers failed to identify two-thirds of self-acquainted male bullies and two-thirds of female victims.

"Victims of bullying may go largely unnoticed," says study director Susan Swearer.

In the CDC report, the higher a student's anger level, the more bullying he did. "We don't know if these kids will go on to become physically aggressive, but there is evidence that some

of them do," Espelage says.

Boys typically engage in the worst bullying, and a link with anger doesn't surprise Harvard Medical School psychologist William Pollack.

"Anger is the only OK emotion for boys to have," says Pollack, author of *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*.

"Studies here and in England show bullies tend to be the most depressed boys," but a macho, stoic code forbids showing sadness, Pollack says. For boys, acting out misery is viewed as more masculine.

Victims of bullying can ex-

plode, too. The two Columbine shooters "were teased mercilessly," says Ohio University psychologist Raymond Lorion. "I'm not justifying what they did, but this kind of thing can cross over into violence."

Many schools offer bullying prevention programs, but few have been evaluated to see if they work, Espelage says.

Parents whose kids are bullied should tell school officials before or after school, so classmates don't see, Espelage advises. "Act early on," she says, since there's evidence chronic bullying fosters depression and social isolation in children.

COULD VOL—
Studies

Mid-Atlantic drought isn't critical — yet

More than 75% of the waterways are at or near record lows, but reservoirs still have ample water

By Paul Hoversten
USA TODAY

Throughout the mid-Atlantic states, rivers and streams are looking both weird and worrisome, the result of a lingering drought that's become the region's third-worst this century.

► Salty seawater is creeping up the Hudson River because there's not enough fresh water flowing down to hold it back. The salt front is just 5 miles downstream from intakes that process drinking water for Poughkeepsie, N.Y. For the moment, the salt, which could be harmful to people on salt-restrictive diets, is being kept away by releases from reservoirs farther upriver.

► Maryland's biggest fish kill in a decade is being blamed on the drought. Nearly 1 million menhaden died last month because of low oxygen levels from lack of rain on a tributary of the Pocomoke River near the Maryland-Virginia border.

► Kayakers normally paddle freely on the Potomac River at Great Falls, Md. But now the sun shines on Drought Rock, which last saw the sun during devastating dry spells in 1930 and 1966.

It makes for an apocalyptic picture: More than three-fourths of the mid-Atlantic region's streams and rivers are at record or near-record lows.

But federal officials aren't ready to panic just yet. They say there's an ample supply of water in huge reservoirs throughout the region. The reservoirs, built after the last big drought in the 1960s, feed into

major rivers that supply water to populated areas.

As long as those reservoirs are in good shape — and most are at 60% or more of capacity — there should be enough water to meet critical needs of homes and businesses.

"The small tributaries are the ones taking the beating," says Christopher Roberts of the Delaware River Basin Commission, an interstate and federal agency that manages water resources in the 13,539-square-mile watershed within Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

"What we've got is serious, but not critical, except where you have ground-water wells," Roberts says. "Those wells are going dry, no question."

The situation is much the same within the Susquehanna River basin, which covers a 27,510-square-mile drainage area in New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. The Susquehanna starts at Cooperstown, N.Y., and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Md., where it meets the Chesapeake Bay.

"We have two large reservoirs, and we're basically OK," says Susan Obleski of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. Still, she says, "Everybody's going to have to tighten their belts until we get through this drought."

The Susquehanna and Delaware reservoirs, along with those that feed the Potomac and the James River in Virginia, are being tapped judiciously, managers say, because there is no way to replenish them without rain.

And with this drought now in its third year and predicted to continue next year, extra care is being taken to release only water that is needed.

Reservoir managers are caught in a delicate balancing act between safeguarding the supply within the reservoirs and using the water for the

health and safety of the public. But environmentalists have argued for greater releases, citing threats to native fish and wildlife in waterways that are going low.

"Our aquatic species are three to 15 times more endangered than any land animals," says Rebecca Wodder of American Rivers, a nonprofit environmental group in Washington, D.C. "When a drought comes along, it turns up the heat, and you can see the toll it takes on a river."

The toll can be jarring, as Philadelphia residents learned last week when they woke to find the Schuylkill River covered by a thick, green carpet of duckweed, which can choke out other wildlife. It thrives in drought conditions of heat, sun and slow-moving water.

"It's rather dramatic to look at, and it's a concern, but not really a crisis, says Stuart Neff, an aquatic entomologist at Temple University. "Despite what the river looks like, we're not in real trouble yet."

Elsewhere, wildlife from the south Atlantic is migrating to the Chesapeake Bay as its water becomes saltier from a lack of fresh rainfall. Pompano and crevalle jack, popular food and game species of subtropical fish, have been caught off Maryland's St. Mary's County. In other parts of the Chesapeake, bottlenose dolphin and leatherback turtles have been spotted hundreds of miles from their normal habitats.

In some cases, the drought has been beneficial.

Although most waterways are well below their normal flow levels, they also have less rain-borne pollution washing into them from farms and cities. That can improve water quality in rivers and streams.

Things could reach a danger point if little or no rain comes from tropical storms this fall, snow is light this winter and rain is scarce next spring. Hurricane Bret is expected to bring no rain to the region.

Bob Hirsch, chief hydrologist at the U.S. Geological Survey in Baltimore, says the persistent drought could become worse than the notable dry spells in 1930 and 1966.

Hydrologists compare the current supply and demand of water to a shopper who, having exhausted all the cash in the checking account, begins to draw money from savings.

"We're at the point where we're hitting our long-term savings account," says Gary Fisher, a hydrologist with the Geological Survey. "If we get normal rains, we'll be fine. But if we don't, and we don't watch what we're doing as far as conserving water, then we're going to be in trouble next year."

YOUTH VIOLENCE -

CODE

STUDIES

Violence Among Teens Appears to Be Waning

By RON WINSLOW

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Contrary to the gruesome images that often fill the media, teenagers are fighting less often and carrying fewer lethal weapons, according to a new study.

The findings are based on large national surveys of students by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Researchers said data from the report, being published today in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, reflect a broader fall-off in youth-related homicides and other serious crimes. The study also suggests law-enforcement efforts, new regulations, and dozens of community-based efforts launched during the past decade to reduce violent behavior are having a beneficial effect.

The study, covering 1991-1997, doesn't include data from the past two years, when several school shootings garnered tremendous media attention—including the one in April at Columbine High School in Colorado, which left 15 people dead.

Thomas R. Simon, a CDC researcher and a co-author of the report, acknowledges it is possible new data from a recently completed but yet-to-be analyzed 1999 survey will show a rise in the violent behavior he and his colleagues tracked. But such a change would conflict with established trends across a range of studies that violence among adolescents is on the wane. "The type of behaviors that we studied are a better reflection of what's happening with adolescents than the tragedies such as Columbine that we've seen on school property," Dr. Simon says.

The study in the latest issue of *JAMA* found that the number of high-school students who reported they recently carried a weapon at some point during the day de-

clined 30% from 1991 to 1997, while those saying they took a weapon to school fell 28% from 1993 to 1997. Prevalence of fighting, both on and off school grounds, also dropped.

"Youth homicide rates and violent crime rates have been dropping substantially in recent years," he says. "That hasn't been receiving a lot of attention." The stability of the findings among these reports leaves him "cautiously optimistic" that the declining trends will continue.

Indeed, Dr. Simon says other research shows the homicide rate in 1997 among 15 to 19-year-olds was 13.64 per 100,000 people in that age group, down 33% from 1993 when the rate was 20.5 per 100,000. Moreover, he adds, less than 1% of violent deaths among school-age children occur on school property. "When they do occur, they get a lot of attention," he adds. "That inflates our perception of how prevalent they really are."

Still, he says, 18% of high-school students reported carrying a weapon such as a gun, knife or club within 30 days of answering the survey in 1997; nearly 9% had carried one on school property that year. Even with the generally positive trends, he says, "the percentage of youth engaging in these behaviors remains unacceptably high."

The study didn't examine reasons for the trends, but researchers speculated the strong economy and improved job prospects, a decline in the crack-cocaine market, and changes in laws and regulations and law-enforcement practices all may have contributed to a decline in violent behavior.

In another article in the journal, Garen J. Wintemute, director of the Violence Prevention Research Program at University

of California, Davis, cited a comprehensive law-enforcement effort aimed at gang members in Boston that was associated with a 60% decrease in juvenile homicide and a reduction in the practice of carrying weapons.

The CDC report also suggested a large number of community-based youth-violence-prevention programs—including some that seek to teach adolescents constructive ways to express anger and to improve communication and discipline within families—may be bearing fruit.

Dr. Simon cautioned that even with the progress described in the study, homicide remains the second-leading cause of death among adolescents between 15 and 19 years old—after unintentional causes, such as car accidents.

The study's findings were based on nationally representative data gathered in surveys of 11,000 to 16,000 high-school students in 1991, 1993, 1995 and 1997. Nancy D. Brener of the CDC's division of adolescent and school health was lead author of the report.

In a separate study in the same issue of *JAMA*, Duke University researchers calculated that total U.S. medical costs to treat gunshot injuries in 1994 came to \$2.3 billion. About half of that was paid by government programs such as Medicaid.

The researchers used 1994 hospital discharge data from New York and Maryland and 1997 emergency-room records from South Carolina in making their estimates. They found that the average gunshot injury leads to \$17,000 in lifetime medical costs. The study found taxpayers financed 49% of the costs of such injuries while private insurance paid 18% and victims themselves 19%; payment for the remaining 14% came from other sources.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1999

More Clinical Tests of Humans Exposed To Chemicals Are Urged in U.S. Study

By JOHN J. FIALKA

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON—A long-awaited government study calls for more clinical tests of humans exposed to pesticides and other chemicals in the environment that have proved harmful to animals to see whether they may be causing lower sperm counts in men, breast cancer in women and other problems believed to be related to abnormal hormonal activity.

The four-year study, likely to influence spending in federal health research programs for years to come, revealed deep divisions on a 16-member panel of experts assembled by the National Research Council, an arm of the National Academy of Sciences.

The study notes that while there is much research on poisons, much more must be learned about chemicals in the environment that appear to cause harm by stimulating or retarding the production of hormones—so-called hormonally active agents—in animals and humans. Hormones regulate a number of bodily functions, including the reproductive system.

Ernst Knobil, a physiologist who headed the panel, said it became "extraordinarily difficult" to get the scientists to agree, especially over the possibility that some chemicals in the environment are causing declining sperm counts in men and damage to human reproductive organs.

However, several scientists on the panel said the evidence from the study will help future scientists fill in the many unknown areas, largely requiring long-term studies that follow humans exposed to chemicals from birth to maturity to see whether and when cancers, lowered IQs and other problems develop.

An official at the Environmental Protection Agency, one of the sponsors of the

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study, said the research will help shape the agency's testing program, already under way, to screen hundreds of pesticides and water-purification chemicals it regulates to see if they are hormonally active. Eventually, he said, government and companies may have to test thousands of industrial chemicals now in the environment.

The experts were in relative agreement that DDT, paper plant sewage and polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, have caused considerable harm to animals, especially fish and seagulls in the Great Lakes area and alligators around Lake Apopka in Florida. The effects included enlarged thyroids and smaller eggs and sex organs.

"Until we can prove otherwise, we must assume that humans are as much at risk as other species on the planet," asserted Shanna Helen Swan, a panel member and an expert on the human reproductive system at the University of Missouri. "Our re-

ceptor mechanisms aren't all that different [from animals]." Her studies have shown declining sperm counts among men in the U.S. and Europe since 1970, along with unexplained regional differences such as sperm counts that are lower among men in California than in New York.

"I'm probably closer to the end of the spectrum of this panel that sees no huge environmental problem," said James C. Lamb IV, a toxicologist who works for a Reston, Va., consulting firm. He believes that not enough is known about how the chemicals harm animals, let alone humans.

"We have agreed to disagree," said Frederick S. vom Saal, who teaches reproductive biology at the University of Missouri. He noted that one study of children in the Great Lakes area took 11 years to complete. "We need to begin a more systematic collection of human information. This is definitely going to be a long process."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1999

Pediatricians Urge Limiting TV Watching

AI

By LAWRIE MIFFLIN

Children under 2 years old should not watch television, older children should not have television sets in their bedrooms, and pediatricians should have parents fill out a "media history," along with a medical history, on office visits, according to recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Saying television viewing can affect the mental, social and physical health of young people, the academy for the first time has laid out a plan for how pediatricians and parents can better manage children's use of television.

"As pediatricians," said Dr. Marjorie Hogan, the lead author of the report, "we are taking all the research concerns into account and trying to raise the bar a bit, as suggestions for optimal parenting." The report appears in the August issue of Pediatrics magazine, published on Monday.

No reliable research has been done on how television viewing affects children younger than 2, Dr. Hogan said. But the academy based its recommendations for such children on knowledge of what babies need for proper brain development — notably close-up interaction with older people — and the common-sense notion that if they are watching television, babies are not getting those other essential stimuli.

Violence in movies and television has been linked to aggressive behavior in young people in studies by the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association,

Continued From Page A1

tion, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the National Institute of Mental Health.

So while the academy may appear to be venturing into sociological territory with little direct connection to medical health issues, the study's authors say the influence of mass media is a public health concern.

"For example, media violence," said Dr. Miriam Bar-on, chairwoman of the academy's committee on public education, which wrote the policy. "A bullet in the body is a physical health issue. Children who spend a lot of time in front of the TV set tend to gain weight; obesity is a physical health issue."

The academy is distributing to its members a sample "media history" checklist for their young patients. It includes questions about movies, video and computer games, music videos and the Internet, as well as about the radio and books.

Also available to the 55,000 members are brochures with suggestions about how to guide families toward positive uses of media. The academy suggests that televisions and com-

puters not be kept in children's bedrooms but in common rooms, where parents can monitor children's use of them.

Many parents interviewed yesterday agreed that television's influence was a proper concern for pediatricians, but said it was unrealistic to set arbitrary limits, and unnecessary for doctors to intervene unless a child already had social or emotional problems that might be related to media exposure.

Lari Mills of Nashville, who has an 8-month-old baby as well as a 7-year-old and a 9-year-old, said: "I understand the theory, but practically I think it's not very do-able. The little one is often around the TV when the older ones are watching, but he's not really watching it."

In Chicago, Valerie Barney said her 2-year-old son watched "Barney" and "The Teletubbies" on PBS, and she saw no harm in it as long as an adult was watching with him.

"He interacts very well with the TV," Ms. Barney said. "He sees someone fall down, he falls down."

"Teletubbies," a British import on PBS featuring a group of cooing, brightly colored creatures who babble baby talk, is the only show on

American television specifically made for children under 3. Many pediatricians see little merit in it.

John F. Wilson, senior vice president for programming for PBS, said: "We don't put it on in order to attract a younger and younger audience. But we know from research that there is an audience of children under 2 watching television, for better or for worse, and at least we have something on the air that is developmentally appropriate for them."

Mr. Wilson said many working parents might be helped by "taking this information to whoever is watching their child during the day, and letting them know they should find something else to do besides watch TV."

Brown Johnson, senior vice president for Nick Jr., the preschool programming portion of the children's network Nickelodeon, said she favored any policy that encouraged parents to spend time with children.

"Television or videos will be used in some form," Ms. Johnson said, "to give parents a break to make dinner or whatever, so I'm not sure it's realistic to say no television ever. But if the A.A.P. has to make this kind of a declaration to have people

really sit up and listen, that's fine."

The academy spent more than two years developing the latest policy statement, but it has been involved in research and communications about media influences on children for much longer. In 1990, it issued a recommendation that children not watch more than two hours of "quality" television a day.

In 1997, it began a "Media Matters" campaign to educate pediatricians and the public about how media can influence children.

Robert Lichter, president of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, a nonprofit research group in Washington, agreed that the delineating of recommendations for pediatricians to give parents was a new step.

"This is part of a drive by health professionals to view certain social problems as public health problems," Mr. Lichter said, noting also the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recent efforts to treat gun use as a public health issue. "It's not a bad thing for health professionals to remind parents that they need to be aware of the risks."

"If you're worried about what your kid eats, you should worry about what your kid's watching."

YOUTH VIO-

STUDIES

Brutal Bands of Rwandans Bar Way to Peace in Congo

A1

By IAN FISHER

GOMA, Congo, July 30 — The search for peace in Congo depends on disarming the very men who attacked a young woman named Alima Asami a week ago. Her scalp looks like a baseball coming unseamed, with brown stitches holding together three slices from a machete. Two fingers on her right hand, and one on her left, were hacked off.

"Because I was a woman and had a baby I could not escape," she said, sitting on a hospital bed here.

The men demanded money. Three of them raped her, she said. They killed her little girl, Shakuru, who was 4, along with 22 other people on their way to a market not far from here. Ms. Asami had wanted to buy beans.

She said the attackers, who spoke with Rwandan accents, appeared to be Hutu former soldiers or militiamen, groups of whom killed at least 500,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu in Rwanda in 1994 before fleeing to neighboring countries to carry out raids on their homeland.

Now they have become the key element in the cease-fire plan to end the war in Congo but an unpredictable one that, many experts on Africa say, represents the biggest threat to peace.

"They are the wild card at this point," said Hannelie de Beer, senior researcher at the Institute for Strategic Studies in South Africa.

The peace accord, drafted in mid-July, optimistically calls for the warring parties in Congo to disarm these groups, some of the most violent guerrillas fighting in some of the world's harshest terrain. The United Nations has pledged peacekeepers in the region, but almost no one believes their mandate will include the dangerous job of disarming.

"It will be very difficult to disarm them, if not impossible," Ms. de Beer said. "If you disarm them, what are you going to promise them? How are they going to fit in?"

Among the many problems, Ms. de Beer and other experts say, is that given the groups' status as international outlaws, there is no way to provide incentives in the cease-fire for them to stop their war against the Tutsi-led Government of Rwanda. Rwanda, in fact, wants to bring the leaders back to stand trial.

And perhaps paradoxically, the guerrillas — known here as the interahamwe — may be even more potent now than they were a year ago, when the most recent war in Congo broke out. The reason is that the President of Congo, Laurent Kabila, recruited thousands of Hutu guerrillas to help him fend off rebels who rose up against his new Government. He gave the Hutu arms and military training.

"That has undoubtedly strengthened them, in terms of equipment and training," a Western diplomat said.

Rwandan Government officials say that Zimbabwe, one of Mr. Kabila's allies in the Congo war, has also provided training and arms, and may be unwilling to disarm them.

"If Zimbabwe is committed, this is going to be a very easy process," said Emmanuel Ndahiro, a top defense official in Rwanda. But he

said: "Zimbabwe has already indicated that it is not obliged. If people think signing an agreement is enough, that's a mistake."

Zimbabwe is one of six nations with troops in Congo that signed the cease-fire agreement, along with Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Namibia and Congo itself. The cease-fire agreement — despite Mr. Ndahiro's accusations — obliges each country to track down members of the interahamwe as well as members of other rebel groups. But the cease-fire has not gone into effect because rebel groups are still deciding whether to sign.

The war in Congo is in part the latest chapter of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Among the most dedicated killers of Tutsis then were the interahamwe (the word is often translated from the Kinyarwanda language as "those who attack together"). Along with Hutu soldiers in the Rwandan Army, they fled across the border into Congo as the 1994 war ended. But they still made attacks into Rwanda.

That prompted the new Tutsi-led Government of Rwanda to oppose a powerful ally of the Hutu, Mobutu Sese Seko, the dictator of the nation then known as Zaire. They backed a rebellion against him in 1996.

The cycle of bloodshed and revenge wore on. The rebels in Zaire, led by Mr. Kabila, and the Rwandans were accused of massacring Hutus inside Congo. Raids into Rwanda continued.

A year ago, Rwanda covertly supported a second rebellion, this time aimed at overthrowing Mr. Kabila, who by then had made his own alliance with the Hutu guerrillas. Rwanda said its intention was not to change the Government, but only to stop the attacks.

"If that is accomplished, our role in Congo will be significantly diminished," Mr. Ndahiro said. "We need Congo as a state, not as a situation of anarchy."

Estimates of the number of Hutu guerrillas and former Rwandan Army soldiers in Congo vary widely, ranging from 5,000 to 25,000. Rwanda says several hundred have been trained in Zimbabwe.

Few experts doubt that they have fought around Congo against the rebels trying to overthrow Mr. Kabila. Maj. Gen. Augustin Bizimungu, the Hutu defense chief at the time of the mass killings, is reported to be the commander of Hutu troops in the diamond-producing city of Mbuji-Mayi, a key target for the rebels.

Critics of Rwanda say that there can be no real solution to the interahamwe until the Rwandan Govern-

ment greatly expands power sharing with the Hutu majority. The United States also comes under heavy criticism in the region — and much suspicion in Congo itself — for its close friendship with the Rwandan Government.

These critics say that by setting the second rebellion into motion, Rwanda strengthened the interahamwe not just militarily but in popular support and organization.

Many Congolese are convinced that Rwanda wants to annex eastern Congo, and that has created the sense that the Hutu guerrillas "are a resistance force, that they are trying

to stop the expansion of this empire," said one aid official with long experience in the region.

"These forces in the field don't represent very much," said the official. "But the question we should be asking ourselves is: has this war allowed these extremist forces to develop a political structure, if not an ideology?"

There is recent evidence that the

Hutu guerrillas may be simply too violent to sustain that support — a development that may help the peace agreement.

Several experts said local Congolese fighters known as the Mayi Mayi — allies of the Hutu guerrillas because of their shared hatred for Tutsis — may be now distancing themselves. This would be a problem for the guerrillas because they have depended on the Mayi Mayi to forge good will with local Congolese who provide money and food.

That perception was supported by a man from the city of Bukavu, in eastern Congo, who sought out reporters recently saying that he spoke on behalf of Mayi Mayi groups looking for greater legitimacy.

The man, a local politician who asked to be identified by part of his name, Mukange, said that the guerrillas' philosophy seemed to be, "You meet somebody and you kill them."

"The Mayi Mayi didn't want to be like that," he said.

The aid official said he believed that the international community should send more money to eastern Congo instead of disarming the guerrillas. The money could rebuild roads or markets — projects to pull local people away from war and, thus, the guerrillas.

In the hospital here, just outside the ward where Ms. Asami lay, a man on crutches named Bagenga Sanvula, 22, needed no convincing. Five months ago, a group of 15 guerrillas attacked a car he was driving in with his two brothers, he said. They asked for money.

"We didn't have any," Mr. Sanvula said. "They said, 'Since you don't have any money, we are going to kill you.' Then they shot."

His two brothers were killed. He survived with a bullet in his left leg.

"They must go back to Rwanda," Mr. Sanvula said, "and let peace happen here."

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YOUTH VIOLENCE

STUDIES

Youth Violence Declines

CDC's National Study Paints a Promising Picture

By KENNETH J. COOPER
Washington Post Staff Writer

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The amount of violence committed by teenagers—both in and out of school—has declined significantly since the early 1990s, according to a study whose findings run counter to the widespread public impression of escalating juvenile violence.

A biennial survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed sharp decreases in several categories of violent activity by teenagers—such as carrying a weapon or fighting—between 1991 and 1997, the most recent year for which data is available. In other categories—such as being threatened with a weapon or having property stolen—the survey found no appreciable change.

"None of the behaviors we studied showed any sign of going up," said Thomas R. Simon, co-author of the study, which surveyed 16,000 students in grades 9 through 12 and was published in today's edition of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

That overall finding clashes with a public perception of teenagers as increasingly dangerous, a view driven in part by a series of high-profile school shootings over the past two years. That view has pressured lawmakers and prosecutors to crack down on juvenile offenders, often by trying more of them as adults. After the April shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo.,

for example, the House and Senate rushed to pass long-delayed juvenile justice bills.

Nonetheless, for several years, Justice Department reports have shown decreases in crime committed by youth. The CDC study extends that good news to violent behaviors that do not reach the attention of the criminal justice system.

The most dramatic drops recorded in the study involved teenagers carrying guns and other weapons. About 18 percent of the those surveyed in 1997 reported carrying a weapon—defined as a gun, knife or club—in the previous month, down from 26 percent in 1991. About 9 percent admitting carrying a weapon at school during the same period, down from almost 12 percent in 1993—the first year that question was asked.

The frequency of fighting also declined, though less precipitously. Of those teenagers surveyed in 1997, 37 percent reported being in a physical fight in the previous year, down from 43 percent in 1991. Students injured in fights seriously enough to need medical attention also declined to below 4 percent, a decline of nearly a percentage point.

There was no statistically significant decrease, however, in the 12 percent of teenagers surveyed who had carried a weapon other than a gun in the previous month. Similarly, there was no change in the proportion who said they had skipped school in the previous month because they felt unsafe (4 percent), who were threatened or injured by a weapon at school (7 percent) or who had their property stolen or damaged at school (33 percent).

The study's authors did not offer their own reasons for the decline in so many categories of youth violence, but cited other research that has focused on the nation's prospering economy, ebbing warfare between gangs that deal in crack cocaine, the shift to community policing, adoption of tougher school discipline policies and an expansion of violence prevention programs. "It's likely we're seeing a payoff," Simon suggested.

Jack Levin, a sociology professor who directs the Brudnick Center on Violence at Northeastern University, emphasized the impact of broad police-community partnerships formed in recent years to attack the problem in many big cities, where juvenile crime has been more prevalent than in suburbs or rural areas. He pointed to a model community partnership that Boston formed in 1992 after clergy were out-

raged by gang members stabbing rivals at a funeral. Levin said the partnership has led to local business leaders generating 11,000 summer jobs, more college students tutoring in the schools, parents volunteering to supervise after-school programs and ministers providing spiritual guidance to gang members.

"For 25 years, we asked our teenagers to raise themselves, and they didn't do a very good job of it," Levin said. "That's why [youth violence has] gone down—the adults are back."

Pamela L. Riley, executive director of the Center for the Prevention of School Violence based in Raleigh, N.C., emphasized the role of anti-violence policies in the schools, noting the increasing number of police officers assigned to schools and a 1995 anti-crime

law that forced schools, in exchange for federal aid, to expel for a year any student caught with a gun. Under that law, 6,100 students were expelled in the 1997-1998 school year.

Despite the encouraging trends, the CDC study warns that "the prevalence of youth violence and school violence is still unacceptably high."

Further breakdowns of the survey results highlighted a few areas of ongoing concern. For example, the study found declining participation in fistcuffs by black and white students, but no such decline among Hispanic students. Both boys and girls were fighting less, but the decrease was sharper among girls. And compared to whites, more blacks and Hispanics were involved in fights.

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Tough Curbs on Water Use Urged in Maryland

For Local Farmers, Parched Conditions Wilting a Livelihood

By DAN EGGEN
and JESSIE MANGALIMAN
Washington Post Staff Writers

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The 130 or so dairy cows that marched through the Williams brothers' milking barn yesterday afternoon were thinner and slower than usual. The worst drought in more than half a century was taking its toll.

The yearlong dry spell means that each cow gives 10 fewer pounds of milk a day, amounting to \$5,000 less each month for the 70-year-old Loudoun County farm. A few have even died unexpectedly, apparent victims of the heat.

The dangerous lack of rainfall also has slashed the amount of hay available for farm animals in Loudoun and throughout the mid-Atlantic, making it even more expensive to keep a herd alive. Corn, soybeans and other crops wither while farm wells are drying up.

If it keeps up much longer, the Williams brothers and other farmers say, they may just have to sell everything and walk away. Some already have.

"The feeding costs haven't gone down," said Donald Williams, 55, chewing on a cigar as he thrust a mechanical milker onto one of his cows. "The labor costs haven't gone down. That money's got to come from somewhere, and that means our pockets. It takes a real bite after a while."

As most Washington residents and suburbanites fret about their dry lawns and dirty cars, those in the countryside whose livelihoods depend on moist, fertile land are beginning to wonder whether they will make it through the year.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman has declared West Virginia and all bordering counties in Maryland and Virginia disaster areas because of the prolonged heat and drought.

Yesterday, Virginia Gov. James S. Gilmore III (R) asked federal agriculture officials to designate three more Virginia counties—Warren, Louisa and Montgomery—as disaster areas, following a similar request Monday by Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D) to add 14 counties to that state's disaster list.

"The drought is laying a heavy hand on the state," said Roy Seward, spokesman for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Apples, corn, hay, peaches, soybeans, wheat and pine trees were among the hardest hit crops in Virginia. If dry weather persists, farmers statewide face an estimated \$343.7 million in crop losses, according to USDA spokesman Matt Kilbourne.

In Maryland, more than half of the crops are lost already, and farmers in Frederick County are reporting losses of as much as 90 percent. In Southern Maryland, the drought has taken its toll on corn and soybeans—the main crops in the region—but it also has caused tobacco plants to wilt in the heat.

Tobacco plants weather droughts well, and rebound when rains finally come. But a continuing dry spell is likely to affect the quality of leaves, meaning poor prices at the market.

"I have some plants that are scorched, and those are a loss," said Betty Russell, who farms 200 acres of vegetables, tobacco, corn and rye in Clements in St. Mary's County.

Russell irrigated part of her 22 acres of tobacco fields with water from a pond. But the ponds, too, are drying up, farmers said.

Maryland's Emergency Board met yesterday to finalize inclusion of the entire state in the drought disaster area, said Connie Byler-Hsu, program specialist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency's Maryland office in Columbia. Byler-Hsu said the declaration will make available

emergency loans to farmers across the state affected by the drought.

But, she said, "there is help for farmers who are hurting now, without the disaster declaration," such as other types of loans and federal farm subsidies.

In Virginia, agricultural extension agents and USDA workers are preparing damage assessments for 21 counties and hope to have some completed as early as this week.

Don Davis, executive director of Virginia's USDA Farm Service

Agency, said Shenandoah, Page and Rockingham counties are among the hardest hit statewide.

"It's the most severe disaster we've ever had in that area of Virginia," Davis said. "We have pastures where you could strike a match and it would burn."

Still, despite the damage being done, many farmers in the region don't plan to apply for the emergency, low-interest loans offered by the federal government as part of its disaster relief effort. Most are jittery at forecasts of continued dry conditions through next year, worrying

that taking on more debt now—even at low rates—will only spell more trouble in the end.

"Why do that? You're just going in the hole," said Moke Anderson, 66, who has been a farmer in Loudoun for most of his adult life. "If it's dry next year, then what? Before long, you're losing the farm and the house and everything else. That's not a real solution."

For Anderson and many others, the solution may be to sell their herds in order to cut their losses.

At Wheatland Farms, where Anderson works, the land yielded half as much hay as usual, and the relentlessly dry summer means no later cutting in most places. At the same time, Anderson and others are feeding more hay than usual to their cattle because they can't graze in parched pastures. The vicious cycle will come to a head this fall and winter.

"We're probably going to have to sell the cows," said Al Burgess, 59, who manages Wheatland. "Otherwise we'll run out of feed, if we don't run out of water first."

In Chaptico in St. Mary's County, farmer Luther Wolfe is losing 300 acres of corn and 300 acres of soybeans to the lack of rain.

Wolfe said the disaster declaration is likely to help many farmers, but he doesn't plan to apply for low-interest emergency loans. "It's made me as contrary as can be," Wolfe joked. "That's what my wife says."

But Mike Russell, who farms 800 acres in Clements, said he plans to

take advantage of the emergency loans, and hopes for emergency farm subsidies as well. Russell said he's losing 60 percent of his corn and soybean crops to drought. He did manage to salvage his 40 acres of tobacco with irrigation water from his ponds.

"Running any business is stressful, and when you have to depend on weather, it's even more stressful," said Russell, who has been farming for 22 years. "I'm relying on past years' savings to stay in business. Without farm subsidies, I'd be out of business."

The drought could have an additional impact in Loudoun, a rapidly developing fringe suburb that ranks as one of the fastest-growing areas in the country. Many say the extended dry spell only increases the pressure on farmers to sell their land for subdivisions. The four Williams brothers, for example, may soon make way for a wave of tract subdivisions encroaching on the north side of their land.

"For traditional farms, for corn and cattle guys, this is an extremely serious situation," said Warren Howell, a Loudoun haymaker who has already sold out his entire year's stock.

"This is going to be the straw that breaks a lot of families' backs," Howell said. "They just can't make a living anymore."

Staff writer Maria Glod contributed to this report.

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