

Human Aggression (Part 10)

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4.1.1 Bio-behavioral Interventions

Many neurological deficits or neurotoxins implicated in violent behavior arise from events that could be prevented or treated: Perinatal exposure to alcohol and drugs, prenatal and perinatal injuries, environmental exposure to lead, hormonal abnormalities, child abuse, accidental head injuries (Huesmann et al, 1997). Once the deficits occur, however, attempts to remove or remedy the biological cause may need to be supplemented by active physiological treatment (Huesmann et al, 1997).

4.1.2 Socialization

We need to determine which techniques are most effective in helping parents, teachers, and others to mold appropriate behaviors and thinking in high-risk children (Huesmann et al, 1997). What is the best way to teach young parents how to discipline their children appropriately? How do we best teach children alternative ways of dealing with stress, insults, anger, and family disputes? How do we best counteract the pernicious socializing influence of violence in the mass media? At what age are preventive interventions most effective in altering the course of antisocial socialization in these children?

4.1.3 Cognitions, Attitudes and Beliefs

Violent behavior is often most immediately the consequence of attributions, attitudes, beliefs, scripts, and other cognitions that are learned by children (Huesmann et al, 1997). We need to test more carefully a variety of techniques that have been proposed for preventing the formation of these violence-promoting cognitions and for changing them once they are formed. We need to see if early school based interventions of this type can successfully counteract the influence of poor preschool socialization.

4.1.4 Environmental Changes

No matter how much we learn about the socialization process, and no matter how well we learn to change attitudes, beliefs, and other cognitions, we are unlikely to prevent violence unless we can alter the environmental factors in a child's life that promote aggression (Huesmann et al, 1997). Consequently, we need to examine how we can change neighborhoods, schools, and families so that they are less conducive to the development of violent behaviors (Huesmann et al, 1997). What kind of intervention with a child's family would best prevent the violence between family members that has the potential for increasing the child's aggressive tendencies? Almost everyone agrees that eliminating poverty would reduce violence, but other, more achievable social changes could perhaps mitigate the aggression-promoting effects of impoverished environments (Huesmann et al, 1997). What kinds of community actions are most efficacious at diminishing the attractiveness of violent gangs to youth, at reducing the alienation of impoverished youth, and in counteracting the development of a dangerous code of the streets?

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