

WATCHING TV TOO MUCH CAN HARM CHILDREN

- (1) Television programs like the U.S. detective series "Kojak" give small children nightmares, and watching TV too much increases the risk of aggressive behavior, a Swedish study says.
- (2) Inga Sonesson, a communications researcher at Lund University in southern Sweden, is publishing the results of her 10-year study of a group of children on how television affects behavior. In a typical remark, one six-year-old told researcher Inga Sonesson: "It's so frightening when they shoot, I'm afraid they will jump out from the TV."
- (3) Starting in 1975, Sonesson chose at random 200 pre-school children in the coastal city of Malmo, interviewing their mothers and the staff of their day care centers. She followed the group, questioning their parents and teachers on several occasions until they reached ninth grade in 1985. Teachers were asked to grade them on their levels of anxiety, aggressiveness and concentration. The study is being presented in a book called Who Raises Our Children, the Video or Us? It is due for release in Sweden next month.
- (4) According to Sonesson, following the same group for so long made it possible to scale off other factors that could influence the results. She says, "The children are scared. Many spend a lot of time alone in front of the TV. When they have nightmares, **these** are often ignored by their parents."
- (5) When the kids were 9-10 years old, many of them saw "Holocaust," a mini series about the mass killings of Jews during World War II. They were terrified when they saw children being gassed to death and by the fact that it was a real story. Small children were most frightened by television violence. Some had nightmares three times a week. Boys, who generally watch more than girls, were most often left alone in front of TV while their parents were occupied around the house. Parents seem to think that they can handle more violence than girls. According to Sonesson, using the TV as a baby sitter is a common abuse. She thinks parents should sit with their children on the lap when they watch TV and urge **them** to discuss what they see.
- (6) By the time the children were 13-14 years old, some trends were clear. Those who watched television for 30 to 35 hours a week ran a 10 to 15 percent greater chance of lack of concentration than people who watched less. Sonesson claims that 2 1/2 hours of television watching is too much for young children. The problem is a combination of quantity and content. A young child who watches that much TV will automatically see things that are violent.

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Reading Exercise

1. This text comes from _____.
 - a. a general interest magazine
 - b. an encyclopedia
 - c. a school textbook
 - d. a medical reference book

2. The word "**these**" in paragraph 4 refers to _____.
 - a. nightmares
 - b. factors
 - c. children
 - d. her fears

3. The word "**them**" in paragraph 5 refers to _____.
 - a. girls
 - b. parents
 - c. their children
 - d. some trends

4. Which of the following is NOT one of the problems children are likely to face as a result of watching too much TV?
 - a. Lack of concentration.
 - b. Ability to handle violence.
 - c. Development of aggressive behaviour.
 - d. Frightening dreams.

5. Which of the following is TRUE according to the text?
 - a. Many babysitters let children watch TV while they are doing housework.
 - b. Sonesson asked the children to grade TV programs on their levels of aggressiveness.
 - c. Girls do not usually watch TV as much as boys.
 - d. Children should be left alone in front of TV so that they can concentrate more on what they see.

6. It can be understood from the text that _____.
 - a. young children tend to spend more time watching TV than teenagers
 - b. most of the children studied by Sonesson had working mothers
 - c. boys tend to be more aggressive than girls
 - d. many parents let their children watch TV programs regardless of their content

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ANSWER KEY: 1A 2A 3C 4B 5C 6D

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