Seven-year-olds’ aggressive choices in a computer game can be predicted in infancy

# Details

## Year

2017

## DOI

10.1111/desc.12576

## Issued

2017

## Language

English

## Volume

21

## Issue

3

## Start Page

## End Page

## Authors

Hay D.;Johansen M.;Daly P.;Hashmi S.;Robinson C.;Collishaw S.;van Goozen S.

## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Developmental Science

## Publisher

Wiley

## Topics

## Sample

266 7-year-old children from a nationally representative longitudinal sample in the UK

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

# Abstract

Concerns about the relationship between computer games and children’s aggression
have been expressed for decades, but it is not yet clear whether the content of such
games evokes aggression or a prior history of aggression promotes children’s interest in
aggressive games. Two hundred and sixty-six
7-year-
old
children from a nationally representative
longitudinal sample in the UK played a novel computer game (CAMGAME) in
which the child’s avatar encountered a series of social challenges that might evoke aggressive,
prosocial or neutral behaviour. Aggressive choices during the game were predicted
by well-known
risk factors for aggressive conduct problems and the children’s own
early angry aggressiveness as infants. These findings suggest that children who are predisposed
to aggression bring those tendencies to virtual as well as real environments.

# Outcome

"• Our study tested the hypothesis that children’s aggression in the context of computer games can be predicted by their own aggressive tendencies years earlier.
• We created a novel computer game with embedded social challenges that could elicit aggression or alternative behaviour.
• Children’s angry aggressiveness in infancy predicted their aggressive choices in the game at age 7 years.
• Angry aggressiveness in infancy also predicted how often children played games but that did not explain the link between early aggressiveness and aggressive choices." (Hay et al, 2017: 1)