Research

Effects of Active Video Games in a Weight Management Program 407
Physical inactivity, as well as diet, is an important contributor to childhood obesity. In this randomized trial, Trost and colleagues compared a comprehensive family-based weight management program with and without the addition of active video gaming for overweight or obese children. Those in the group with active video gaming significantly increased their physical activity and had better improvements in their body mass index and the chance of becoming normal weight. While the cost of the gaming system is substantial, the benefit of its use should be considered by families, health care providers, and insurers.

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Peer Victimization, Cyberbullying, and Suicide 435
Surveys indicate that 5% to 20% of school children experience bullying. Van Geel and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis to examine how peer victimization, including cyberbullying, is related to suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. Peer victimization more than doubled the risk for suicidal ideation and suicide attempts, and cyberbullying tripled the risk for suicide ideation, with similar effects seen in both girls and boys. Interventions need to be developed at many different levels and should be appropriate for bullying occurring in various venues including online.

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Hours of Television Viewing and Sleep Duration in Children 458
Prior studies have raised concern about the effect of television viewing on the sleep habits of adolescents. In this longitudinal, multicenter study, Marinelli and colleagues studied the effect of television watching on the sleep habits of 2- to 9-year-old children. Children this age who spent longer periods watching television at baseline had shorter sleep duration at follow-up visits. Conversely, children who decreased their viewing had longer sleep durations. The effect is not simply owing to displaced time but may be related to effects of television viewing on melatonin concentrations and increased excitation.

Early Childhood Electronic Media and Well-being 485
While most of the attention to the effects of electronic media use in young children has been on decreased physical activity and the risk for obesity, the effects on psychological and social well-being may be equally concerning. In this cohort study of 3604 children enrolled at ages 2 to 6 years, Hinkley and colleagues examined the effect of media use on their development over the next few years. The likelihood of emotional problems in children and poorer family functioning were 20% to 100% higher for each additional hour of television viewing or electronic game/computer use. The authors discussed the implications of these findings for children’s longer-term development.