Reviewer’s report

Title: Association between television viewing and language development in Thai infants and toddlers

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Reviewer: Victor C Strasburger

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This is an interesting and laudable attempt to investigate the impact of early TV viewing on infants. It follows in the footsteps of many recent studies -- including 1 from Bangkok, Thailand!!! (See Acta Paediatrica, May 2, 2008 -- Chonchaiya & Pruksananonda: Television viewing associates with delayed language development). I reviewed many of the studies in my commentary in the Journal of Pediatrics (2007; 151:334-336), but in addition to the Acta Paediatrica study, there is at least 1 more recent study -- Schmidt, Pempek, Kirkorian, Lund, & Anderson: The effects of background television on the toy play behavior of very young children, Child Development 2008; 79:1137-1151. So there are several important studies omitted from the author's citations.

I have several major concerns about the way the authors have analyzed their data and wonder if a statistician couldn't suggest ways to improve this study. There were so few language delayed babies who watched > 2 hrs/day (only 4) that a different statistical technique might well be needed.

I'm concerned that the authors relied on parents' self-reports (notoriously inaccurate, tending to under-reporting). They might have at least used viewing diaries. Unfortunately, the authors are not alone in this regard -- it's an all-too-common practice. In addition, no data were recorded for 6 month olds, just broad frequencies. I would also need the opinion of a child development expert on the use of CLAMS and the criteria for language development -- only 1 of 10 pictures identified and no combined words. These criteria seem rather loose to me. Again, the data might be re-analyzed trying to find any correlation between total # of pictures identified or total # words vs. total TV time.

I'm not against "negative" studies, but this would be the first!

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests.