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**For immediate release**

**TVs age-graded "family" (G) rating cuts down on violence  
 but opens door to alcohol**

In 1997, the networks unveiled their first season of programming adorned with violence rating labels. (which, incidentally, few viewers responding to surveys say they see or observe). Prime time television shows are rated either TV-G (suitable for all ages), TV-PG (may be unsuitable for younger children) and TV-14 (material unsuitable for children under 14).

Under the direction of George Gerbner, Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunication at Temple University in Philadelphia, the Cultural Indicators Research Project has compiled and analyzed a sample of 50.5 of major network dramatic program hours from the fall 1997 season. The analysis shows that while observing the ratings helps reduce violence, it actually increases alcohol scenes from 2.5 per hour (TV-G) to 3.4 per hour (TV-PG) and 4.4 per hour (TV-14).

(A scene of violence is any scene among the same set of speaking characters that contains one or more presentations or credible threats of hurting and/or killing among the same characters. An alcohol scene is any verbal or visual depiction while the same set of characters is on screen. Titles, commercials, promotions are not included.)

As shown in Figure (1) and Table (1), if parents wish their children watch only G-rated shows, they will exclude over 80% of prime time dramatic programming. However, by allowing only G-rated tv shows, parents will succeed in reducing their children's exposure to violent programming by about 30% compared to a random sampling of shows of all different ratings., or to an average of 2.4 violent scenes per hour. Scenes of alcohol use also occurs less frequently in G-rated shows.

Figure 1.

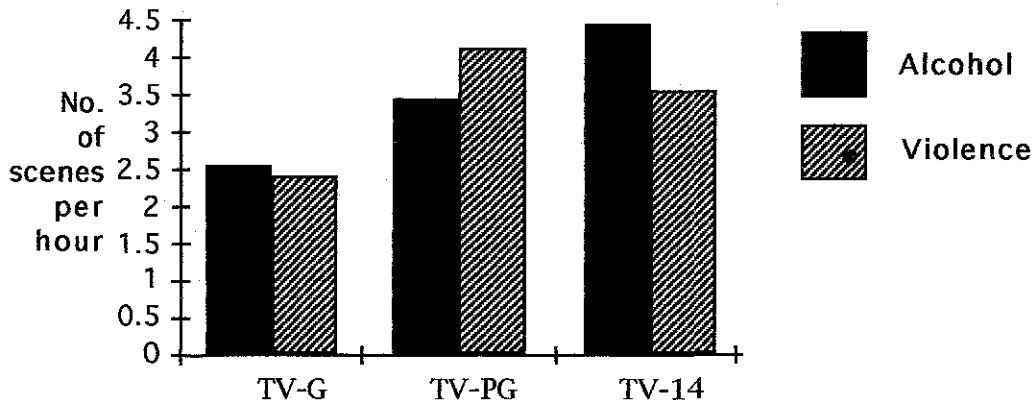


Table 1.

Rating label	TV-G	TV-PG	TV-14
% of sample with rating	18%	64%	18%
Alcohol scenes per hour	2.5	3.4	4.4
Violence scenes per hour	2.4	4.1	3.6

CONTENT LABELS

In response to lobbying by citizen action groups throughout 1996 and 1997, content labels were used in the ratings of programs by ABC, CBS, and FOX. Shows are marked for violence (V), language (L), sex (S), and adult themes (D).

Prime time dramatic programming with a "V" label presents scenes of violence every 11 minutes, compared with every 38 minutes for shows without any content label.

In Figure (2) and Table (2), shows are grouped into those with no content label, those with D or S or L (but no V), and those with a V. (NBC, which initially opted out of the content labelling procedure, is not represented.) It can be seen that depictions of alcohol on prime time appear to be coupled with adult themes, adult language, and sex.

Figure 2

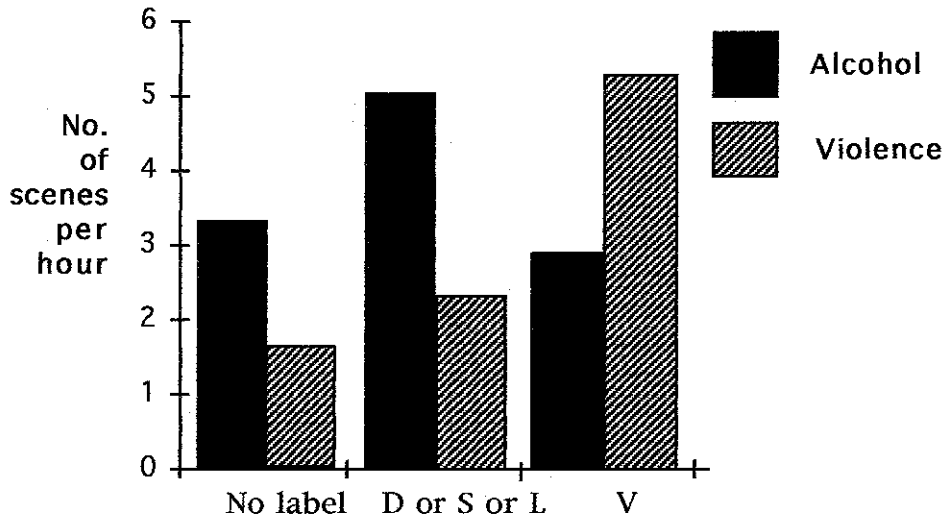


Table 2.

Content labels	(none)	D,S,L	V
% of sample with label	41%	30%	30%
Alcohol scenes per hour	3.3	5.0	2.9
Violence scenes per hour	1.6	2.4	5.3

## ABOUT CULTURAL INDICATORS

Cultural Indicators Research project is a data base and a series of reports relating recurrent features of the world of television to viewer conceptions of reality. Its cumulative data archive contains observations on over 3,000 programs and 35,000 characters coded according to many thematic, demographic and action categories. CI research began in 1967-68 with a study for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.

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CI research began in 1967-68 with a study for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. It continued under the sponsorship of the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, the National Institute of Mental Health, The White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, the American Medical Association, the Administration on Aging, the National Science Foundation, the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the Screen Actors Guild, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the National Cable Television Association, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the Turner Broadcasting System, the Ark Trust, Inc., the Mental Health Initiatives, Inc., the Women's Initiative of the American Association for Retired Persons, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, an agency of the U.S. Public Health Service, the Sloan Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the National Institute of Health.

The Violence Profile has been published periodically since 1972, based mostly on prime-time and weekend-daytime dramatic programs. Cable-originated dramatic programs, the Fox network, news, commercials, daytime serials, and game shows have been included in some of the studies. In each case, the focus of the investigation is the contribution of recurrent, stable, and pervasive features of the world of television to viewer conceptions and actions.

Although violence-related findings and indicators have been published most widely, the approach was broadly based from the beginning to collect observations on the role and functions of many aspects of life presented on television. Studies have focused on television's contributions to images of women and minorities; sex-role stereotypes; occupations; political orientation; aging; disability; mental illness; death and dying; school achievement and aspirations; health-related issues such as drugs, safety, nutrition, and medicine; science and scientists; family life; religion; adoption, portrayals of animals, expressions of anger, and other issues.