



What's New in Ophthalmology Today?

Action packed video games enhance visual attention

“Action packed video games like Halo and Call of Duty can enhance visual attention, the ability that allows us to focus on relevant visual information,” reports Science Daily. Dr. Daphne Bavelier et al from the U of Rochester reported their findings in this month’s WIREs Cognitive Science. Visual attention is what we need when we are searching for a face in a crowd or when driving the car.

It is the ability to filter out the extraneous peripheral vision and focus on what is important in the line of sight. Bjorn Hubert-Wallander, one of the authors of this paper explains: “Just as drivers have to focus on the road, other cars, and potential obstacles while ignoring other information, modern action games place heavy attentional demands on players. These games require players to aim and shoot accurately in the center of the screen while continuously tracking other enemies and fast moving objects.” Non-gamers did poorer than gamers on tests measuring visual attention. The interesting thing is that when the non-gamers started playing action video games their visual attention abilities improved. So, the 68% of American households playing video or computer games are developing an important visual skill, perhaps it is time for the rest of us?

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