

Children, Young Adults & Pornography: A ‘Smorgasbord’ of Harms

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Introduction

I am neither a social scientist nor a mental health professional. My expertise when it comes to the subject of pornography is in the laws that prohibit and regulate various forms of pornography and the businesses that produce and disseminate pornography.²

But I would have had to be both deaf and blind to have spent almost 30 years fighting pornography without learning a great deal about how pornography affects people. I also know from personal experience how pornography can affect a child and young man. In fact, it is the knowledge of how pornography harms people that has helped keep me going all these years.

¹ Robert Peters served as President of Morality in Media from 1992–2011 and as Assistant Director of MIM’s National Obscenity Law Center from 1987–1992. Mr. Peters is now President Emeritus of MIM.

² See, Robert Peters, “It will take more than parental use of filtering software to protect children from pornography on the Internet,” 31 *N.Y.U. Rev. L. & Soc. Change* 829 (2007); Robert Peters, “Once Again, U.S. Supreme Court thinks it knows better than Congress,” 10 *Nexus J. Op.* 5 (2005).

Historically, much of the debate about pornography has been about whether it “causes” anti-social behavior. Here’s how Nadine Strossen, a former national president of the ACLU, responded to the question, “How can you defend pornography? Isn’t it harmful to women?” (“In Defense of Pornography: A conversation with Nadine Strossen,” *New York Native*, 1/23/95):

“The pro-censorship feminists claim that pornography causes direct harm to women is unsupported by the facts. In writing this book³ I searched the social science literature for evidence that exposure to sexually explicit pornographic material causes . . . violence against women. But I discovered that a causal connection has *never* been established.”

After all these years, I still have problems with Ms. Strossen’s “search” of the social science literature; *and keep in mind that the primary focus of this paper is not women but children*. With children, the *primary*⁴ concern has not been whether exposure (addiction) to pornography “causes” sexual violence against other children or adults.⁵ The *primary* concern has been the impact that exposure (addiction) has on the psychological and moral wellbeing of children.

First, I am not sure what Ms. Strossen meant when she used the word “established.” In most civil cases, a preponderance of evidence is required. In some civil cases, clear and convincing evidence is required; but even in criminal cases, *absolute certainty* is not required. Furthermore, to my knowledge, the social sciences to this day are rarely if ever able to *conclusively* “establish” causation.⁶ Why then would Ms. Strossen or anyone else insist upon this?

Second, in a 1973 adult obscenity case, *Paris Adult Theatre I v. Slaton*,⁷ the Supreme Court responded to an argument similar to or the same as Ms. Strossen’s, as follows:

But it is argued that there are no scientific data which conclusively demonstrate that exposure to obscene material adversely affects men or women or their society... We reject this argument... “We do not demand of legislatures scientifically certain criteria of legislation.’...” Although there is no conclusive proof of a connection between antisocial behavior and obscene material, the legislature... could quite reasonably determine that such a connection does or might exist... From the beginning of civilized societies, legislators and judges have acted on various unprovable assumptions.

Similarly, in a 1968 case involving sex materials deemed “harmful to minors” (as defined in the

³ Nadine Strossen, *Defending Pornography: Free Speech, Sex and the Fight for Women's Rights*, New York: Scribner (1995), at <http://www.amazon.com/Defending-Pornography-Speech-Womens-Rights/dp/0814781497>.

⁴ I don’t mean to minimize the horror of these crimes, but relatively few children commit them.

⁵ See, e.g., Brent Weisberg, “‘Dangerous’ Portland teen rapist gets 28 years,” *KOIN 6*, 11/17/14 (“During the investigation police discovered that [defendant] has ‘a major porn problem,’ court records show.”), at <http://koin.com/2014/11/17/teenage-portland-rapist-gets-28-years/>.

⁶ See, e.g., Gary Gutting, “How Reliable Are the Social Sciences?” *New York Times*, 5/17/12, at http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/17/how-reliable-are-the-social-sciences/?_r=0.

⁷ 413 U.S. 49, 60-61. In a companion case, *Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15, 23 (1973), the Court reiterated that obscene materials (as defined by the Court) are “unprotected by the First Amendment.”

statute) the Supreme Court held that a legislative body does not need “scientifically certain criteria”⁸ to enact laws to prevent children’s exposure to such materials.

Third, while social scientists had failed to prove to Ms. Strossen’s satisfaction that exposure to pornographic material causes violence against women, they had succeeded in providing a substantial body of social science research that pointed to a causal connection between pornography and various harms, including violence against women.⁹

Fourth, why *limit* oneself to social science research when there was so much other evidence in government hearings,¹⁰ court opinions¹¹ and news reports¹² and in the statements of, among others, mental health professionals,¹³ law enforcement personnel¹⁴ and pornography victims?¹⁵

Fifth, from a historical perspective, “censorship” means *prior restraint* of First Amendment rights by government, and enforcement of obscenity laws is *not* censorship because government is not imposing a *prior restraint* on producers or distributors of obscene matter. These businesses can produce and distribute what they want; but if it is obscene, they are, *after the fact*, be punished. In the landmark case, *Near v. Minnesota*,¹⁶ the Supreme Court stated:

In the first place, the main purpose of such constitutional provisions [i.e., the freedom of speech/press provisions] ‘is to prevent all such *previous* restraints upon publication as had been practiced by other governments,’ and they do not prevent the subsequent punishment of such as may be deemed contrary to the public welfare...

⁸ *Ginsberg v. New York*, 390 U.S. 629, 643 (1968).

⁹ See, e.g., Allen M; D’Alessio D; Brezgel K. “A Meta-Analysis Summarizing the Effects of Pornography II: Aggression after Exposure,” *Hum Commun Res.* 1995; 22(2):258–283, at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1995.tb00368.x/abstract>; Diana E. H. Russell, *Against Pornography: The Evidence of Harm*, Berkeley, CA: Russell Publications (1994), at <http://www.dianarussell.com/books.html#porn>; *Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography: Final Report*, United States Department of Justice, 901-1035 (1986), at <http://www.communitydefense.org/lawlibrary/agreport.html>; Mulvey EP; Haugaard, JL. *Report of the Surgeon General’s Workshop on Pornography and Public Health*, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (1986), at <http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/access/NNBCKH.pdf>.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Catharine A. MacKinnon & Andrea Dworkin, *In Harm’s Way: The Pornography Civil Rights Hearings*, Harvard University Press (1997), at http://books.google.com/books/about/In_Harm_s_Way.html?id=SQTjuSdZ1i8C.

¹¹ See, e.g., *Schiro v. Clark*, 963 F.2d 962 (7th Cir. 1992); *Yeck v. State*, 331 S.E.2d 76 (1985).

¹² Robert Peters, *Link Between Pornography and Violent Sex Crimes*, *Morality in Media* (2004), at https://www.academia.edu/10232415/Link_Between_Pornography_and_Violent_Sex_Crimes.

¹³ See, e.g., Patrick Carnes, *Don’t Call it Love: Recovery from Sexual Addiction*, Bantam Book (1991), at <http://www.amazon.com/Dont-Call-It-Love-Addiction/dp/0553351389>.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Bennett RW; Gates DF. “Relationship Between Pornography and Extra-familial Child Sexual Abuse,” *Police Chief*, 1991; 58(2):14, 17, 19-20, at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/publications/abstract.aspx?ID=128322>.

¹⁵ See, e.g., *Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography: Final Report*, U.S. Justice Dept., 765-835 (1986), at <http://www.communitydefense.org/lawlibrary/agreport.html>.

¹⁶ 283 US 697, 714 (1931):

More recently, the focus of debate has shifted from causation to whether “viewing” pornography can become an “addiction.”¹⁷ I placed quotation marks around the word “viewing” because most individuals who habitually view pornography don’t just view it. In the normal course of events, they *also become sexually aroused and masturbate*; and it is the accompanying habitual masturbation that transforms pornography from what most adults still consider morally wrong¹⁸ into a psychological problem that can harm the person who “views” pornography and others.

Frankly, the dispute about “addiction” to pornography somewhat astounds me. I say this because when I was in my twenties I had four bad “habits” – namely, I cursed continually, drank daily, smoked more than a pack of cigarettes a day, and “viewed” pornography on a regular basis.

As a result of a religious conversion, I came to see all four of my “habits” as being undesirable and decided to stop all four. While a curse word still occasionally “slips out” of my mouth, it wasn’t hard to stop cursing for the reason that there was no craving or compulsion to curse.

It took less than a year to stop drinking, but stopping was not easy. For one thing, when I stopped I had a bout of delirium tremens, which quite literally scared the hell out of me. After the DTs, I recall being asked at a dinner on my 24th birthday what alcoholic beverage I wanted to drink. The desire for an alcoholic drink was so strong I could have screamed or cried or both, but I found grace to refuse a drink, and that evening proved to be the turning point for me.

Stopping smoking was both easier and harder than stopping drinking. It was easier because I didn’t experience anything like the horrors of delirium tremens, but it was also harder because there were more failures along the way, and it took about a year longer to stop smoking.

But it would take 6-7 years before I stopped going to “adult bookstores” in New York City’s Times Square district to purchase hardcore pornography. It may have taken longer to stop “viewing” pornography than it took to stop drinking and smoking because I began “viewing” pornography on a recurrent basis when I was in grade school,¹⁹ whereas I didn’t start smoking and drinking on a regular basis (and ultimately heavy basis) until I was in college.

Whatever the explanation, I still recall being where I lived in NYC or in the streets and having a *craving* for pornography; *yielding to that craving* by going to an “adult bookstore,” purchasing pornography and “viewing” the pornography; and then hating myself for doing so. I also recall thinking that I was no different from a drug addict, and I still think I was right about that.²⁰

¹⁷ See, e.g., Martin Downs & Louise Chang, MD (reviewer), “Is Pornography Addictive? Psychologists debate whether people can have an addiction to pornography,” *WebMD* (Aug. 2005), at <http://www.webmd.com/men/features/is-pornography-addictive>.

¹⁸ Rebecca Riffkin, “New Record Highs in Moral Acceptability,” *Gallup*, 5/30/14 <http://www.gallup.com/poll/170789/new-record-highs-moral-acceptability.aspx> (64% of U.S. adults, aged 18 and older, say pornography is “morally wrong”). See also, Matthew 5:27-29.

¹⁹ My father foolishly left *Playboy* and other “adult magazines” in the basement in unlocked work cabinets and drawers. The materials weren’t hardcore but were surely hurtful to minors.

²⁰ Back where I grew up, there is a saying, “If it flies like a duck, swims like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it’s a duck.” The saying is pertinent to the concept of “addiction.”

Effects on Brains of All Ages

** “Brain activity in sex addiction mirrors that of drug addiction,” *Cambridge Univ.*, 7/10/14, at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/brain-activity-in-sex-addiction-mirrors-that-of-drug-addiction>

Excerpt:

....

...Excessive use of pornography is one of the main features identified in many people with compulsive sexual behaviour. However, there is currently no formally accepted definition of diagnosing the condition.

In a study funded by the Wellcome Trust, researchers from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Cambridge looked at brain activity in nineteen male patients affected by compulsive sexual behaviour and compared them to the same number of healthy volunteers. The patients started watching pornography at earlier ages and in higher proportions relative to the healthy volunteers.

“The patients in our trial were all people who had substantial difficulties controlling their sexual behaviour and this was having significant consequences for them, affecting their lives and relationships,” explains Dr. Valerie Voon, a Wellcome Trust Intermediate Clinical Fellow at the University of Cambridge. “In many ways, they show similarities in their behaviour to patients with drug addictions. We wanted to see if these similarities were reflected in brain activity, too.”

The study participants were shown a series of short videos featuring either sexually explicit content or sports whilst their brain activity was monitored using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI)...

The researchers found that three regions in particular were more active in the brains of the people with compulsive sexual behaviour compared with the healthy volunteers. Significantly, these...were regions that are also particularly activated in drug addicts when shown drug stimuli...

The researchers also asked the participants to rate the level of sexual desire that they felt whilst watching the videos, and how much they liked the videos. Drug addicts are thought to be driven to seek their drug because they want – rather than enjoy – it...

As anticipated, patients with compulsive sexual behaviour showed higher levels of desire towards the...explicit videos, but did not necessarily rate them higher on liking scores...

Dr. Voon and colleagues also found a correlation between brain activity and age – the younger the patient, the greater the level of activity in the ventral striatum in response to pornography. Importantly, this association was strongest in individuals with compulsive sexual behavior...The age-related findings in individuals with compulsive sexual behaviours suggest that the ventral striatum may be important in developmental aspects of compulsive sexual behaviours in a similar fashion as it is in drug addictions...

“There are clear differences in brain activity between patients who have compulsive sexual behaviour and healthy volunteers. These differences mirror those of drug addicts,” adds Dr. Voon. “Whilst these findings are interesting, it’s important to note, however, that...[m]uch more research is required to understand this relationship between compulsive sexual behaviour and drug addiction.”

....

See also, Hilton DL, “Pornography addiction – A supra-normal stimulus considered in the context of neuroplasticity,” *Socioaffect Neurosci Psychol.* 2013 Jul; 3:20767, at <http://www.socioaffectiveneuroscipsychol.net/index.php/snp/article/view/20767>; Mark Wheeler, “Science supports sex addiction as a legitimate disorder,” *UCLA Newsroom*, 10/18/12, at <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/how-to-prove-a-sexual-addiction-239783>; Olsen, CM. “Natural Rewards, Neuroplasticity, and Non-Drug Addictions,” *Neuropharm.* 2011 Dec; 61(7):1109-1122, at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3139704/>.

And see, Laier C; Pawlikowski M; Brand M. “Sexual picture processing interferes with decision-making under ambiguity,” *Arch Sex Behav.* 2014 Apr; 43(3):473-82, at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10508-013-0119-8>; Laier C; Schulte FP; Brand M. “Pornographic picture processing interferes with working memory performance,” *J Sex Res.* 2013; 50(7):642-52, at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23167900>; Kühn S; Gallinat J. “Brain Structure and Functional Connectivity Associated with Pornography Consumption: The Brain on Porn,” *JAMA Psych.* 2014; 71(7):827-834, at <http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1874574>.

Effects on Children

SEXUAL ADDICTION

** Riemersma J; Sytsma M. “A New Generation of Sexual Addiction,” *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, 2013 Oct; 20(4):306-322, at <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/usac/2013/00000020/00000004/art00006?crawler=true>.

Abstract

Sexual addiction has been an increasingly observed and researched phenomenon within the past 30 years. “Classic” sexual addiction emerges from a history of abuse, insecure attachment patterns, and disordered impulse control, often presenting with cross addictions and comorbid mood disorders. In contrast, a “contemporary” form of rapid-onset sexual addiction has emerged with the explosive growth of Internet technology and is distinguished by “3Cs”: chronicity, content, and culture. Of particular concern is early exposure to graphic sexual material that disrupts normal neurochemical, sexual, and social development in youth...

** Sara Israelsen-Hartley, “Adolescent addiction: When pornography strikes early,” *Deseret News National*, 1/1/14, at <http://national.deseretnews.com/article/802/adolescent-addiction-when-pornography-strikes-early.html>.

Excerpt:

....

At least two or three days a week, for eight hours a day, licensed clinical social worker Matthew Bulkley talks with kids who are struggling with pornography. He helps many work past feelings of guilt and shame, and then teaches them how to manage negative emotions in positive ways — without turning to pornography.

A few are as young as 12, most in their late teens. But recently, his final appointment of the day was an 8-year-old boy whose parents brought him in, horrified to discover his pornography habit...

....

The adolescent brain is not simply a smaller, newer version of the adult brain. Instead, it's more of a "work in progress,"...

"Their brains are not fully developed," said Bertha K. Madras, a professor of psychobiology in the department of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, speaking of adolescent. "Their executive part, the frontal lobe that puts the brakes on impulses, is involved in sizing up situations, assigning a rational response to emotional situations, all of that is simply underdeveloped in the adolescent." Those areas will continue to grow...

Parts of the dopamine circuitry are some of the last things to finish forming. Dopamine is a chemical released in the brain in response to pleasurable activities...

After an enjoyable activity, the brain makes a mental note that it felt good, so it should repeat it, explained Peter Kalivas, professor and chairman of the Department of Neuroscience at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston.

After a few encounters with the same stimuli, the brain no longer produces as much dopamine. But drugs — and pornography, many believe — are so damaging because they produce large amounts of dopamine every time...

"That's thought to be how we get addicted, and whether that happens with biological things like sexual stimuli [or] highly palatable foods, you can become addicted to those other behaviors," Kalivas said.

Teens are at great risk for addiction — defined broadly by Kalivas as compulsive relapse and inability to regulate behavior — because their brains are still developing...

....

Madras has been studying the impact of drugs on the adolescent brain and preliminary data show that the risk of having an addiction as an adult is up to six times greater when adolescents begin using drugs or alcohol before the age of 14 than if they initiated drug or alcohol use after the age of 18. While Madras can't authoritatively generalize her findings to pornography, she believes it might be possible that viewing pornography may have a similar impact on the brain — there's just more research needed.

....

** Radhika Sanghani, “Teenage boys addicted to 'extreme' porn and want help,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 9/20/13, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/sex/better-sex-education/10339424/Teenage-boys-addicted-to-extreme-porn-and-want-help.html>.

Excerpt:

A fifth of boys aged between 16 and 20 told the University of East London they were “dependent on porn as a stimulant for real sex”.

The online sexual imagery study surveyed 177 students and found 97 per cent of the boys had viewed porn. Of those, 23 per cent said they tried to stop watching it but could not, while 13 per cent reported the content they watch has “become more and more extreme”.

Seven per cent said they wanted professional help because they felt their porn habit was getting out of control. Most said they had lost relationships, neglected partners, and cut down on their social lives as a result of their behavioural addiction.

Dr Amanda Roberts, a psychology lecturer at the university who created the study...said: “About a quarter of young boys have tried to stop using it and can’t, which means there’s definitely problematic porn use within this group. It’s because there’s more and more exposure of porn and it’s excessive; it’s everywhere.”

....

Professor Matt Field, adolescent addiction psychologist at University of Liverpool, added: “Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to developing addictions and that’s because of how their brains are developing.”

....

Dr Roberts added: “To become an addict, you have to have a propensity to addiction first but they are all so exposed to it, which makes it so much worse.

....

The study also found 80 per cent of girls aged 16-20 had seen porn. Out of those, eight per cent felt they could not stop watching it, while 10 per cent said the content they watch has become more extreme. While boys watched it mainly for pleasure, girls watched porn out of curiosity or for discovery learning.

....

See also, Robert Peters, “Harm to Children from Online Exposure to Hardcore Adult Pornography” (*Morality in Media*, 2011), at http://pornharmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/MIM_Peters_Children.pdf.

SEXUAL DISTORTION, DEVIANCE & MISBEHAVIOR

** Tracy Parish, “Studies shed light on sexual behaviour of teenagers,” Burnet Institute, 10/9/14, at https://www.burnet.edu.au/news/435_burnet_studies_shed_light_on_sexual_behaviour_of_teenagers.

Excerpt:

In the first-ever Australian study of its kind, Burnet researchers have surveyed the correlation between adolescents' pornography viewing habits and sexual behaviour.

The study to be presented by Burnet's Co-Head of Sexual Health Research, Dr Megan Lim, at the Australasian Sexual Health Conference in Sydney, found that young people who consume pornography from a young age are more likely to engage in sexual behaviour early on.

"Sexual behaviour is incredibly complex, but we are seeing a strong correlation between pornography viewing habits and sexual behaviour," Dr Lim said.

"We need to explore this correlation further to better understand the impact of pornography on young people's sexual health and behaviour."

More than 70 percent of the 469 survey's participants, aged between 15-29 years, indicated that they viewed pornography, with 14 years being the median age of first viewing pornography.

....

The study also found those who first watched pornography when they were younger than 14 years old had a significantly younger age of sexual debut (median 16 years compared to 17 years), and that weekly pornographic viewing was significantly associated with inconsistent condom use with casual partners, engaging in anal intercourse and sexting.

** Press Release, "Online pornography worrying Britain's 18 year olds," Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), 8/20/014, at <http://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/online-pornography-worrying-britain%E2%80%99s-18-year-olds>.

Excerpt:

Eight out of ten 18 year olds say it is too easy for young people to accidentally see pornography online, according to new polling for the think tank IPPR by Opinium. The exclusive polling of 18 year olds shows that seven out of ten say "accessing pornography was seen as typical" while they were at school. They say it became common when they were typically 13-15 years old.

....

The polling shows teenagers engaging in dangerous behaviours:

....

- Almost half (46%) say "sending sexual or naked photos or videos is part of everyday life for teenagers nowadays."
- Seven out of ten (72%) 18 year olds say "pornography leads to unrealistic attitudes to sex" and that "pornography can have a damaging impact on young people's views of sex or relationships" (70%).
- Two thirds of young women (66%) and almost half of young men (49%) agree "it would be easier growing up if pornography was less easy to access..."

It also shows a big gender difference in male and female attitudes among 18 year olds:

- Almost eight out of ten young women (77%) say “pornography has led to pressure on girls or young women to *look* a certain way,” while almost as many (75%) say “pornography has led to pressure on girls and young women to *act* a certain way.”
- Far more young men agree (45%) that “pornography helps young people learn about sex,” compared to young women (29%)...

....

** Zosia Bielski, “This brash porn act is shaping an unhealthy sexual culture among teens,” *The Globe and Mail*, 8/15/14, at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/relationships/this-brash-porn-act-is-shaping-an-unhealthy-sexual-culture-among-teens/article20084111/#dashboard/follows/>.

Excerpt:

....

Dr. Cicely Marston, senior lecturer in social science at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and her colleagues interviewed 130 young women and men in England, asking them about their expectations, attitudes and experiences with anal intercourse. She found an unsettling narrative among her interview subjects, 16- to 18-year-olds entering their sexual lives.

....

“The teenaged women surveyed reported that their own boyfriends were now routinely asking them for anal sex...

....

Some of the young men spoke of emulating what they’d seen in online porn, where the use of condoms and lubricant typically isn’t modelled.

“That might have introduced them to the idea of the practise to some extent,” said Marston, before acknowledging: “We allow porn to be the sex education tool for young people because we don’t provide an alternative discourse...”

So why is mainstream pornography continually downplayed when it comes to specific behaviours – in this case, coercive anal intercourse – crossing over into partnered sex?

“Because we don’t talk about sex, we don’t talk about porn,” says Cindy Gallop, founder of MakeLoveNotPorn.com, which pits porn myths against the more varied realities of human sexuality.

“Porn absolutely plays a role in this,” says Gallop. “In the absence of any healthy, accurate, honest, truthful conversation about sex in the real world, young women and men are getting their sex education from porn. And porn is performance.”

** Louisa Peacock and Emma Barnett, “NSPCC: ‘Girls think they have to act like porn stars to be liked by boys,’” *Daily Telegraph*, 9/3/13, at

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/sex/10282145/NSPCC-Girls-think-they-have-to-act-like-porn-stars-to-be-liked-by-boys.html>.

Excerpt:

Almost a third of school pupils believe online pornography dictates how young people have to *behave* in a relationship, the study of 601 pupils aged 11 to 18 reveals.

....

Claire Lilley, policy advisor at NSPCC, said: "...What pornography teaches boys is that girls are for sexual gratification, whilst girls feel they have to look and perform like 'porn stars' to be liked and valued by boys. This makes children vulnerable to being forced or pressured into behaving sexually."

The comprehensive study, commissioned by *The Daily Telegraph*, highlights the extent to which the growth of online porn is, in many cases, distorting school children's ideas and real-life experiences about what a good relationship looks like.

Some 28 per cent of pupils think porn definitely "influences how young people have to *behave* in a relationship", with a further third saying it "sometimes" affects how young people *act* when with their partner. [*Italics added by RP*]

....

** Horvath M; Alys L; Massey K; Pina A; Scally M; Adler JR. "*Basically...porn is everywhere*" — *Final Report*, Office of the Children's Commissioner for England (2013), at <http://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/10692/1/BasicallyporniseverywhereReport.pdf>.

Excerpt:

....

FORWARD [at page. 4 of the *Report*]

The first year of our Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups revealed shocking rates of sexual violation of children and young people...

The Inquiry team heard children recount appalling stories about being raped by...older males and peers, often in extremely violent and sadistic circumstances, and in abusive situations that frequently continued for years. The majority of victims are female...

....

The use of and children's access to pornography emerged as a key theme during the first year of the Inquiry. It was mentioned by boys in witness statements after being apprehended for the rape of a child, one of whom said it was "like being in a porn movie"; we had frequent accounts of both girls' and boys' expectations of sex being drawn from pornography they had seen; and professionals told us troubling stories of the extent to which teenagers and younger children routinely access pornography, including extreme and violent images. We also found compelling evidence that too many boys believe that they have an absolute entitlement to sex at any time, in any place, in any way

and with whomever they wish. Equally worryingly, we heard that too often girls feel they have no alternative but to submit to boys' demands, regardless of their own wishes. We commissioned this important literature review to deepen our own and others' understanding of the impact on children and young people of viewing pornography, including extreme and violent images. Research in this area is fraught with ethical difficulties. While this report has shed considerable light on this complex and important issue, there is no doubt that much more work needs to be done before definitive statements can be made about causal links between the use of pornography and perpetrators going on to commit sexual abuse or exploitation.

....

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [at pages 6-8 of the Report]

....

Findings

A few robust conclusions can be reached from this REA, but it is apparent that much more research is needed...

What can we confidently conclude?

....

FINDING 6 (RQ2, P34): Access and exposure to pornography affect children and young people's sexual beliefs. For example, pornography has been linked to unrealistic attitudes about sex; maladaptive attitudes about relationships; more sexually permissive attitudes; greater acceptance of casual sex; beliefs that women are sex objects; more frequent thoughts about sex; sexual uncertainty (e.g. the extent to which children and young people are unclear about their sexual beliefs and values); and less progressive gender role attitudes (e.g. male dominance and female submission). Children and young people learn from and may change their behaviour due to exposure and access to pornography.

FINDING 7 (RQ2, P36): Access and exposure to pornography are linked to children and young people's engagement in "risky behaviours" (e.g. engagement in sexual practices from a younger age, engaging in riskier sexual behaviours such as unprotected anal or oral sex, and the involvement of drugs and alcohol in sex). For example, young people who used pornography were more likely to report having had anal sex, sex with multiple partners and using alcohol and drugs during sex (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009). However, the majority of the research that has found this is cross-sectional and/or correlational, therefore causal relationships cannot be established. "Sexting" (which should be considered as comprising a range of activities) has recently emerged as another "risky behaviour" because it can lead to various negative outcomes for children and young people, including through its potential use within bullying and exploitation. The majority of the harassment that is a consequence of sexting is directed by young men towards young women (Ringrose et al., 2012).

** Lisa Chedekel, "Study Targets Group Sex Among Teens: SPH study: exposure to pornography a factor," *BU Today*, 1/17/12, <http://www.bu.edu/today/2012/group-sex-among-teens-a-growing-trend/>.

Excerpt:

One in 13 girls, some as young as 14, taking part in a School of Public Health study reported having group sex, a trend that researchers say poses risks to their sexual and reproductive health.

Emily Rothman, an SPH associate professor of community health sciences, and her colleagues surveyed 328 females ages 14 to 20 who had visited a Boston-area community or school-based health clinic, to explore whether they had ever had sex with multiple partners—either consensual or forced. The authors call this...“multiperson sex,” or MPS, to underscore that it refers to any group sex experience, from gang rape to sex parties.

Of the 7.3 percent of girls who said they had had group sex, more than half reported being pressured to participate, and 45 percent said that no condoms were used during the most recent encounter. Participants also were more likely to report cigarette smoking, being the victim of dating violence, or being diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease. The study was published in the *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*.

In addition, the authors note a “strong association between exposure to pornography, having been forced to do things that their sex partner saw in pornography, and MPS.” In the study, those who had seen pornography in the past month were approximately five times as likely as those who had not to report having had a group-sex experience.

....

Citation for above study: Rothman EF; Decker MR; Miller E; Reed E; Raj A; Silverman JG. “Multi-person Sex among a Sample of Adolescent Female Urban Health Clinic Patients,” *Journal of Urban Health*. 2012 Dec; 89(1):129-137, at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11524-011-9630-1>

See also, Hald GM; Kuyper L; Adam PCG; de Wit JBF. “Does Viewing Explain Doing? Assessing the Association Between Sexually Explicit Materials Use and Sexual Behaviors in a Large Sample of Dutch Adolescents and Young Adults,” *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 2013 Dec; 10(12):2986-2995, at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jsm.12157/abstract>; Mattebo M; Tydén T; Häggström-Nordin E; Nilsson KW; Larsson M. “Pornography consumption, sexual experiences, lifestyles and self-rated health among male adolescents in Sweden,” *J Dev Behav Pediatr*. 2013 Sept; 34(7):460-8, at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23899659>; Sinkovic M; Stulhofer A; Bozie J. “Role of Pornography Use and Exposure in Predicting Sexually Risky Behaviors: The role of early exposure to pornography and sexual sensation seeking,” *Journal of Sex Research*, 2013; 50, 633-641, at <https://mادميمي.com/s/4d8315>; Wright PJ; Randall AK. “Internet pornography exposure and risky sexual behavior among adult males in the United States,” *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2012 Jul; 28(4): 1410-1416, at <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2207355>; Svedin CG; Akerman I; Priebe G. “Frequent users of pornography. A population based epidemiological study of Swedish male adolescents,” *J Adolesc*. 2011 Aug; 34(4):779-88, at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20888038>; Braun-Courville DK; Rojas M. “Exposure to Sexually Explicit Web Sites and Adolescent Sexual

Attitudes and Behaviors,” *J Adolesc Health*, Aug 2009, 45:156-162, at [http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(08\)00658-7/abstract](http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(08)00658-7/abstract).

And see, Robert Peters, “Harm to Children from Online Exposure to Hardcore Adult Pornography” (*Morality in Media*, 2011), at http://pornharmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/MIM_Peters_Children.pdf.

DAMAGED RELATIONSHIPS

** Jonathan Blake, “Mobile porn access 'damaging' children and teenagers,” *BBC Newsbeat*, 2/11/14, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/26122390>.

Excerpt:

Around half of 15 to 17-year-olds have accessed pornography on a smartphone or tablet, according to a survey seen by Newsbeat.

The poll, carried out by the mental health charity Young Minds, also suggests a third of 11 to 14-year-olds had watched porn on a mobile device.

The survey questioned 2,000 people aged 11 to 25.

....

The survey, published on Safer Internet Day, suggests many people who watch porn think it has affected their relationships. Overall, 13% of those questioned said watching porn "definitely" had an effect. A further 12% answered "occasionally" and 14% said their relationship was "slightly" affected.

....

Other findings of the survey include:

- Over half of 11 to 14-year-olds who had viewed pornography said that it had affected their relationships.
- Four out of ten 15 to 17-year-olds who had viewed pornography said that it had affected their relationships.

....

- A quarter of 11 to 14-year-olds had viewed pornography with a group of friends.

Slightly more males questioned had accessed porn on a smartphone or tablet with 59% saying they had, compared to 44% of females.

....

The survey also asked how watching porn made people feel, with the most common answer being "excited".

....

Consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, Dr Eileen Vizard, said that repeated viewing of porn can have a damaging effect.

"With children, whose brains are still developing, there could be long lasting effects on the way their brains function."

She added that young people watching porn can often turn to more extreme types of material.

"They tend to escalate the seriousness of what they want to look at, sexual material that involves coercive acts towards women or maybe children."

....

** Release, "Nearly 80% of teenage males have seen sexual images online," University of East London, 9/30/13, at <http://www.uel.ac.uk/news/press-releases/2013/09/uelpornsurvey.htm>

Excerpt:

The UEL survey, specially commissioned for the Channel 4 programme *Porn on the Brain*, looks at teen porn habits and reveals some shocking results about the impact porn is having on young people's perception of sex and relationships today.

The ongoing study is being led by Dr Amanda Roberts and Dr John Turner from UEL's School of Psychology. To date, more than 350 participants, male and female between the ages of 12 and 20, have responded to an online survey disclosing why they access porn, what types of images they view and with what frequency, and how the sexual imagery makes them feel.

....

Within the age group 12 to 16 year olds, boys were far more likely than girls to have viewed sexual images. Nearly 80 per cent of boys had watched people having sex online in contrast to just 33 per cent of girls. Whilst some girls had never watched porn, all the boys surveyed had done so, with over half (51 per cent) looking quite a few times and nearly a third (27 per cent) admitting to looking a lot.

Among 16 to 20 year olds, nearly all the boys (97 per cent) and almost 80 per cent of the girls had seen sexual images. Whilst both sexes were similarly comfortable with viewing such imagery, nearly three times as many boys than girls felt their use of porn was impacting on their relationships or becoming a dependency. Over seven per cent of boys felt their viewing was getting out of control.

....

** Norman Dodge, "Brain scan of porn addicts: What's wrong with this picture?" *The Guardian*, 9/26/13, at <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/26/brain-scans-porn-addicts-sexual-tastes>

Excerpt:

....

Teenagers' brains are especially plastic. Now, 24/7 access to internet porn is laying the foundation of their sexual tastes. In Beban Kidron's *InRealLife*, a gripping film about the effects of the internet on teenagers, a 15-year-old boy of extraordinary honesty and

courage articulates what is going on in the lives of millions of teen boys. He shows her the porn images that excite him and his friends, and describes how they have moulded their "real life" sexual activity. He says: "You'd try out a girl and get a perfect image of what you've watched on the internet ... you'd want her to be exactly like the one you saw on the internet ... I'm highly thankful to whoever made these websites, and that they're free, but in other senses it's ruined the whole sense of love. It hurts me because I find now it's so hard for me to actually find a connection to a girl." The sexual tastes and the romantic longings of these boys have become dissociated from each other. Meanwhile, the girls have "downloaded" on to them the expectation that they play roles written by pornographers. Once, porn was used by teens to explore, prepare and relieve sexual tension, in anticipation of a real sexual relationship. Today, it supplants it.

....

See also, Robert Peters, "Harm to Children from Online Exposure to Hardcore Adult Pornography" (Morality in Media, 2011), at http://pornharmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/MIM_Peters_Children.pdf.

‘SEXTING’

** Van Ouytsel J; Ponnet K; Walrave M. "The associations between adolescents' consumption of pornography and music videos and their sexting behavior," *Cyberpsychol Behav Soc Netw*. 2014 Dec; 17(12):772-8, at <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/cyber.2014.0365>.

Abstract

Several scholars have argued that adolescents' sexting behavior might be influenced by their media use. However, to date, empirical evidence of the link between media socialization and engagement in sexting behavior remains scarce. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether music video and pornography consumption are able to predict a range of sexting behaviors among a sample of 329 adolescents with a mean age of 16.71 years (SD = 0.74). The results demonstrate that sexting behaviors were significantly associated with the consumption of pornography, when controlling for age, gender, school track, and Internet use. Taking into account the gender of the adolescents, the significant relationship between engagement in the four types of sexting behavior and pornography use held true for both boys and girls....

See also, Daniel Schwartz, "Sexting, pornography findings in youth survey a new warning," *CBC News*, 5/29/14, at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/sexting-pornography-findings-in-youth-survey-a-new-warning-1.2657708>.

** David Klein, "Sexting study raises concerns," *The Triangle* (a student newspaper), 6/27/14, at <http://thetriangle.org/news/drexel-study-research-teen-sexting/>

Excerpt:

According to a study led by David DeMatteo, the director of the joint degree program in law and psychology at Drexel University, the exchange of sexually explicit text messages and images among minors is more prevalent than previously imagined.

The study, “Youth Sexting: Prevalence Rates, Driving Motivations, and the Deterrent Effect of Legal Consequences,” was...based o[n] responses from 175 college students (ages 18-22, who had access to a cell phone as a minor) about their “sexting” practices when they were younger than 18...More than half the respondents admitted to sexting as minors; however, few were aware of the steep legal consequences that certain types of sexts between minors could carry.

“We found that 54 percent of the sample acknowledged sending sexts ... under the age of 18, and 28 percent of the sample acknowledged sending photographic sexts,” DeMatteo said. “We also found that girls and boys did not differ in the prevalence rate of sending textual sexts, but that girls sent photographic sexts twice as often as boys.”

While many of the respondents felt that such activity was relatively harmless, in many states they can be prosecuted harshly for sending sexts between minors, especially photographic ones, under existing child pornography laws.

The study also found that 59 percent of the respondents who were unaware of the legal consequences as a minor said that if they had known it was considered child pornography under the law, it would have deterred them from sexting...

....

RP editor’s note: The above study was published in *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 2014 Sep; 11(3):245-255, at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs13178-014-0162-9>. See also, Eraker EC. “Stemming Sexting: Sensible Legal Approaches to Teenagers' Exchange of Self-Produced Pornography,” *Berkeley Technology Law Journal*, 2010 Jan; 25(1):555-596, at <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1837&context=btlj>

SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

1. Adolescent Sex Offenders

** Wesley Johnson, “Children, some aged five, commit thousands of child sex offences,” *The Telegraph*, March 4, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/9905727/Children-some-aged-five-commit-thousands-of-child-sex-offences.html>.

Excerpt:

More than 5,000 child sex offences, including rape and other serious sex attacks, were recorded by police in the last three years where the abuser was under 18...At least three forces...showed abusers as young as five.

The NSPCC, which has worked with five-year-old children showing “precocious sexual behaviour”, said it was often the case they were mimicking things they simply should not have seen at such a young age.

The children may have seen pornography on an older brother’s computer, shared a bedroom with teenagers and witnessed inappropriate behaviour, or could have been allowed in a room while parents were watching sex scenes on the television. Others may have been abused themselves, the children’s charity said.

....

A total of 4,562 young people, 98% of them boys, were recorded as the abuser by police in some 5,028 offences between 2009/10 and 2011/12, but the true figure could be even higher as nine forces, including the three largest...could not provide the relevant figures. Claire Lilley, policy adviser at the NSPCC, said Britain needed to do more to shield children from an “increasingly sexualised society”...

....

“While more research needs to be done..., we know that technology and easy access to sexual material is warping young people’s views of what is ‘normal’ or acceptable...”

....

The charity’s warning comes after a report last month found teachers and social workers were failing to report child sex offending because they cannot face having to confront it. Staff are either in denial or dismissing signs of sexual deviancy...

....

** John Woods, “Jamie is 13 and hasn't even kissed a girl. But he's now on the Sex Offender Register after online porn warped his mind...” *Daily Mail* (UK), 4/26/12, at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2135203/Jamie-13-kissed-girl-But-hes-Sex-Offender-Register-online-porn-warped-mind-.html#ixzz2wGyw1fa9>

Excerpt:

...Jamie’s story is not unique. He is just one of the growing number of young patients referred by social services, youth offender services and police to the Portman Clinic — where I work as a psychotherapist...I have come to the conclusion this is no longer just a private problem. It is a public health problem.

For the past 70 years our services...have been available to anyone who has committed any kind of offence. But an increasingly large part of our caseload is taken up with young people whose behaviour has become out of control due, largely, to compulsive internet porn use.

This year alone, this has included 50 referrals of children under 18, and that’s just for North London, where we are based.

....

Our patients are the young people for whom seeing thousands upon thousands of sexually explicit images is still not enough.

I regularly see boys as young as 12 who have convictions for looking at child porn because they did not realise they had crossed the line.

I also treat children who are so frustrated at being unable to live out their fantasies in everyday life — and so confused by the message of endless sexual availability on the web — that they have committed rapes or sexual assaults.

....

** Adrian Lowe, "Porn blamed for children's problem sexual behavior," *The Age*, 1/14/12, at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/porn-blamed-for-childrens-problem-sexual-behaviour-20120113-1pzhh.html>

Excerpt:

VICTORIAN children as young as five are being referred to specialist programs to address sexually abusive behaviour - and the number of minors exhibiting such behaviour is exploding.

The availability of pornography through portable devices drastically affects a child's understanding of acceptable sexual behaviour, according to experts, and is being blamed for the rapid escalation in cases.

....

CASA statewide convener Carolyn Worth said the problems had worsened in the past year and many areas, particularly rural centres, needed more funding...

Many of the program's participants were boys, Ms Worth said, but there were some girls, including an 11-year-old who was sexting (where a person sends sexually explicit picture messages of themselves).

"Clearly it [pornography] desensitises you, it probably gives them a strange idea of what's an appropriate way to interact with, mostly, women," Ms Worth said.

"If they've spent a lot of time watching it, they don't have any idea of how you actually negotiate having sex with somebody. They just don't understand it."

....

She said behaviour typical of a 10-to-14-year-old participant included touching other children inappropriately and forcefully, forcing other children to conduct inappropriate acts on them, or acting threateningly and aggressively to younger children. For 15-to-17-year-olds, it was sexual assault or involved other young children.

....

** Ybarra ML; Mitchell KJ; Hamburger M; Diener-West M; and Leaf PJ. "X-rated material and

perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior among children and adolescents: Is there a link?" *Aggress Behav.* 2011 Jan- Feb; 37(1):1-18, at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ab.20367/abstract.jsessionid=0FE4AF30EA0E5D320A61538E35CFC573.f04t03> .

Abstract

Longitudinal linkages between intentional exposure to x-rated material and sexually aggressive behavior were examined among youth 10-15 year olds surveyed nationally in the United States. At Wave 1 in 2006, participants (n = 1,588) were queried about these exposures and outcomes in the preceding 12 months. Wave 2 data (n = 1,206) were collected approximately 12 months after Wave 1 and Wave 3 data (n = 1,159) were collected approximately 24 months after Wave 1. Thus, data for this project represent a 36-month time frame. A marginal model with generalized estimating equations was used to represent the population-average odds of sexually aggressive behavior over the 36 months as a function of exposure to x-rated material over the same time and to account for clustering in the data within person over time. An average of 5% of youth reported perpetrating sexually aggressive behavior and 23% of youth reported intentional exposure to x-rated material. After adjusting for other potentially influential proximal (i.e., sexual aggression victimization) and distal characteristics (e.g., substance use), we found that intentional exposure to violent x-rated material over time predicted an almost 6-fold increase in the odds of self-reported sexually aggressive behavior..., whereas exposure to nonviolent x-rated material was not statistically significantly related... Associations were similar for boys and girls...

See also, Robert Peters, "Harm to Children from Online Exposure to Hardcore Adult Pornography" (*Morality in Media*, 2011), at http://pornharmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/MIM_Peters_Children.pdf.

2. Adult Sex Offenders

RP editor's note: "Adult pornography" is also a factor in sexual exploitation of children crimes involving *adult offenders*. Not only do *adult offenders* show "adult pornography" to children to "groom" them for sexual abuse, *adult offenders* also view "adult pornography" to sexually arouse themselves. Furthermore, for many adults, there is a progression from viewing hardcore "adult pornography" to viewing child pornography. In addition to the sources below, see Robert Peters, "How Adult Pornography Contributes to Sexual Exploitation of Children" (*Morality in Media*, 2009), at <http://pornharmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/HOW-ADULT-PORNOGRAPHY-HARMS-CHILDREN-RP-article-with-appendices-3.pdf>.

** Patrick McNamara, "Child-porn prosecutions climb...as Internet begets a new kind of offender," *Arizona Daily Star*, 6/15/14, at http://tucson.com/news/blogs/police-beat/child-porn-prosecutions-climb-in-pima-county-as-internet-begets/article_75128eae-af68-562f-90b3-f4594d5b6a3b.html.

Excerpt:

....

In decades past, collectors of child pornography were almost always child molesters, said Dr. Paul Simpson, a Tucson-based criminal forensic psychologist who has treated sex

offenders for more than 30 years and conducts mental-health evaluations of defendants for Pima County Superior Court. . . But the Internet has helped create a new class of sex offender: one without a history of abusing children. With pornography readily available to anyone with an Internet connection, Simpson said many people find child pornography almost by accident. While noting that understanding the behavior does not excuse the potential harm offenders cause, Simpson said some of the answers could be found in how the human brain functions. As pornography consumption becomes compulsive, users often fall into a pattern of escalation. . . “If treated early, there is a good chance of successful treatment,” he said. But left untreated, he said, the likelihood increases that these offenders, too, will escalate their behavior and eventually molest a child.

....

** Seigfried-Spellar, KC; Rogers, MK. “Does deviant pornography use follow a Guttman-like progression?” *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2013 Sept; 29(5):1997–2003, at www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563213001210.

Abstract

This study investigated whether deviant pornography use followed a Guttman-like progression in that a person transitions from being a non-deviant to deviant pornography user. In order to observe this progression, 630 respondents from Survey Sampling International’s (SSI) panel Internet sample completed an online survey assessing adult-only, bestiality, and child pornography consumption. Respondents’ “age of onset” for adult pornography use was measured to determine if desensitization occurred in that individuals who engaged in adult pornography at a younger age were more likely to transition into deviant pornography use. Two hundred and 54 respondents reported the use of non-deviant adult pornography, 54 reported using animal pornography, and 33 reported using child pornography. The child pornography users were more likely to consume both adult and animal pornography, rather than just solely consuming child pornography. Results suggested deviant pornography use followed a Guttman-like progression in that individuals with a younger “age of onset” for adult pornography use were more likely to engage in deviant pornography (bestiality or child) compared to those with a later “age of onset”. Limitations and future research suggestions are discussed.

** Gabriela D. Manero, “Introducing Grooming as ‘Other Acts’ Evidence,” *Child Sexual Exploitation UPDATE*, Sept. 2012; 23(7), at http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/UpdateV23_N7.pdf.

Excerpt:

....

Grooming is “the process of cultivating trust with a victim and gradually introducing sexual behaviors until reaching the point where it is possible to perpetrate a sex crime against the victim.” It can also be explained as “the process of eroding a victim’s boundaries to physical touch and desensitizing them to sexual issues.”

....

In *State v. Castine*, the child victim testified that the defendant began showing her adult pornographic magazines when she was 8 or 9 years old, specifically calling her attention

to pictures depicting oral sex. Over time the defendant's behavior advanced from merely showing the victim the magazines, to placing her hand on his penis and showing her pornographic videotapes. The fondling progressed to demands for fellatio culminating in weekly assaults of the child...

....

...In a case out of the Seventh Circuit, *United States v. Chambers*, the defendant was convicted under 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b), of attempting to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce an individual under the age of eighteen to engage in a sexual activity, after spending over a year chatting online with undercover officers posing as a 14 year-old girl named Kendal. He appealed, arguing in pertinent part that his failure to have face-to-face contact with Kendal after fourteen months of chatting with her indicated a lack of intent to meet her. The Court looked to the evidence, including numerous sexually explicit chats..., e-mailed adult and child pornography, instructions...on how to sexually arouse herself...

....

** Webster S, et al. "European Online Grooming Project," *Final Report - Executive Summary*, European Commission SaferInternet Plus Programme, March 2012, at <http://www.europeanonlinegroomingproject.com/>.

Excerpt:

The sexual abuse of young people via the Internet is an international problem...The European Online Grooming Project research consortium is comprised of experts from across Europe and was tasked with meeting the following research objectives:

- Describe the behaviour of both offenders who groom and young people who are 'groomed',
- Describe how information, communication technology (ICT) may facilitate online grooming,
- Identify how young people are selected and prepared by online groomers for abuse online,

....

FEATURES OF ONLINE GROOMING

....

Intensity

- Online groomers intensified contact using three desensitisation techniques.

Visual: Visual desensitisation involved sending young people *adult-pornography* and/or indecent images of children. Where online groomers talked about a gradual process of offence intensity and escalation, images were used to instigate sexual discussion. Use of images also intensified the abuse process for the offender. For example, it was not uncommon for some offenders to describe masturbating to ejaculation whilst discussing images with young people. [*Italics added*]

....

OFFENDER MAINTENANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

....

Maintenance

- Offence maintenance occurred in three, interlinked ways.

....

Dissonance: Cognitive dissonance is the discomfort of holding conflicting cognitions simultaneously. Three features of dissonance were evident. The first was the influence of *adult* and child images. *Adult pornography* use was a recurrent theme, with some users searching for adult models that were 18 or 19 years old, but looked younger - labeled and marketed as a 'barely legal' category. Collections of indecent images of children ranging from none to collections in excess of 20,000 were also described by some men...As well as maintaining or supporting online sexual offending, for some online groomers viewing *adult pornography* and indecent images of children was discussed as having a role in escalating deviant behaviour by: [*Italics added*]

Saturation: some men did not become so easily aroused when masturbating to a particular type of image. Consequently they moved from images they saw as mild to material that was ever more explicit and thus arousing again.

....

Effects on Young Adults

A SEXUAL SCRIPT FOR YOUNG MEN

** Sun C; Bridges A; Johnason J; Ezzell M. "Pornography and the Male Sexual Script: An Analysis of Consumption and Sexual Relations," *Arch Sex Behav.* 2014 Dec. [Epub ahead of print], at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25466233?dopt=Abstract>.

Abstract

Pornography has become a primary source of sexual education. At the same time, mainstream commercial pornography has coalesced around a relatively homogenous script involving violence and female degradation. Yet, little work has been done exploring the associations between pornography and dyadic sexual encounters: What role does pornography play inside real-world sexual encounters between a man and a woman? Cognitive script theory argues media scripts create a readily accessible heuristic model for decision-making. The more a user watches a particular media script, the more embedded those codes of behavior become in their worldview and the more likely they are to use those scripts to act upon real life experiences. We argue pornography creates a sexual script that then guides sexual experiences. To test this, we surveyed 487 college men (ages 18-29 years) in the United States to compare their rate of pornography use with sexual preferences and concerns. Results showed the more pornography a man watches, the more likely he was to use it during sex, request particular pornographic sex acts of his partner, deliberately conjure images of pornography during sex to maintain arousal, and have concerns over his own sexual performance and body image. Further, higher pornography use was negatively associated with enjoying sexually intimate behaviors with a partner. We conclude that

pornography provides a powerful heuristic model which is implicated in men's expectations and behaviors during sexual encounters.

See also, Willoughby BJ; Carroll JS; Nelson LJ; Padilla-Walker LM. "Associations between relational sexual behaviour, pornography use, and pornography acceptance among US college students," *Culture Health & Sexuality*, 2014; 16(9):1052-69, at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25023726>; Morgan EM. "Associations between young adults' use of sexually explicit materials and their sexual preferences, behaviors, and satisfaction," *J Sex Res.* 2011 Nov-Dec; 48(6):520-30, at http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=psych_facpubs; Nisha Lilia Diu, "How porn is rewiring our brains," *The Telegraph*, 11/15/13, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/10441027/How-porn-is-rewiring-our-brains.html>.

YOUNG WOMEN ADDICTED TO PORNOGRAPHY

** Keith Perry, "Sex: Women 'just as easily hooked on online porn as men.'" *Daily Telegraph*, 8/6/14, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/11016874/Sex-Women-just-as-easily-hooked-on-online-porn-as-men.html>.

Excerpt:

Women are just as susceptible to becoming addicted to online pornography as men, according to new research.

[Women] who regularly surf pornographic websites are as much at risk of developing cybersex addiction as the gender to which it's traditionally aimed.

Previous research had suggested as many as 17 per cent of women describe themselves as "addicted" to online porn.

....

The study involved 102 young women, half of whom were internet porn users and the others not, and assessed their addiction to sex.

An experiment also analysed their levels of arousal when shown 100 pornographic pictures - as well as their cravings for sex.

Prof Brand said: "Results indicated internet porn users rated pornographic pictures as more arousing and reported greater craving due to pornographic picture presentation compared with non-users.

"Moreover craving, sexual arousal rating of pictures, sensitivity to sexual excitation, problematic sexual behaviour and severity of psychological symptoms predicted tendencies toward cybersex addiction in internet porn users."

Factors such as being in a relationship, the number of sexual contacts and their

satisfaction with them and use of interactive cybersex were not associated with the condition.

Prof Brand said: "These results are in line with those reported for heterosexual males in previous studies."

Citation for above study: Laier C; Pekal J; Brand, M. "Cybersex Addiction in Heterosexual Female Users of Internet Pornography Can Be Explained by Gratification Hypothesis," *Cyberpsychol Behav Soc Netw*. 2014 Aug; 17(8):505-511, at <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/10.1089/cyber.2013.0396?journalCode=cyber>.

See also, Tanith Carey, "Why More and More Women Are Using Pornography," *The Guardian*, 4/7/11, <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2011/apr/07/women-addicted-internet-pornography>

‘HOOKING UP’

** Braithwaite SR; Coulson G; Keddington K; Fincha FD. "The Influence of Pornography on Sexual Scripts and Hooking Up Among Emerging Adults in College," *Arch Sex Behav*. January 2015; 44(1):111-123, at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10508-014-0351-x>

Abstract

The explosive growth in access to the Internet has led to a commensurate increase in the availability, anonymity, and affordability of pornography. An emerging body of research has shown associations between pornography and certain behaviors and attitudes; yet, how pornography actually influences these outcomes has not been documented. In two studies (Study 1 N = 969; Study 2 N = 992) we examined the hypothesis that pornography influences potentially risky sexual behavior (hooking up) among emerging adults via sexual scripts. Our results demonstrate that more frequent viewing of pornography is associated with a higher incidence of hooking up and a higher number of unique hook up partners. We replicated these effects both cross-sectionally and longitudinally while accounting for the stability of hook ups over the course of an academic semester. We also demonstrated that more frequent viewing of pornography is associated with having had more previous sexual partners of all types, more one occasion sexual partners ("one night stands"), and plans to have a higher number of sexual partners in the future. Finally, we provided evidence that more permissive sexual scripts mediated the association between more frequent pornography viewing and hooking up...

See also, Baker P; Crew BK; Leicht KT. "The Gendered Way of Hooking Up among College Students," *UNiversitas*, 2013-2014; 9, at <http://www.uni.edu/universitas/article/gendered-way-hooking-among-college-students>; Wright PJ. "Americans' Attitudes toward Premarital Sex and Pornography Consumption: A National Panel Analysis," *Arch Sex Behav*. January 2015; 44(1):89-97, at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25273378>;

IMPACT ON MARRIAGE

** Malcolm M, Naufal G, "Are Pornography and Marriage Substitutes for Young Men?"

Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Study Paper No. 8679, November 2014, published at <http://ftp.iza.org/dp8679.pdf>

Abstract

Substitutes for marital sexual gratification may impact the decision to marry. Proliferation of the Internet has made pornography an increasingly low-cost substitute. We investigate the effect of Internet usage, and of pornography consumption specifically, on the marital status of young men. We show that increased Internet usage is negatively associated with marriage formation. Pornography consumption specifically has an even stronger effect. Instrumental variables and a number of robustness checks suggest that the effect is causal.

For a news report of this study, see <http://www.westernjournalism.com/shocking-new-study-finds-link-pornography-declining-marriage-rates/#b1ZEwfj0rSzXe2em.99>;

See also, Doran, K; Price J. "Pornography and Marriage," *J Fam Econ Issues*, 2014 Dec; 35(4): 489-498, at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10834-014-9391-6>; Gwinn, AM; Lambert NM; Fincham FD; Maner JK. "Pornography, Relationship Alternatives, and Intimate Extradynamic Behavior," *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2013 Nov; 4(6):699-704, at <http://spp.sagepub.com/content/4/6/699.abstract>; Olmstead SB; Negash S; Pasley K; Fincham FD. "Emerging adults' expectations for pornography use in the context of future committed romantic relationships: a qualitative study." *Arch Sex Behav*. 2013 May; 42(4):625-35, at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10508-012-9986-7>; Lambert NM; Negash S; Stillman TF; Olmstead SB; Fincham FD. "A Love That Doesn't Last: Pornography Consumption and Weakened Commitment to One's Romantic Partner," *J Soc Clin Psychol*. 2012; 31(4):410-438, at <http://www.fincham.info/papers/2012-porn.pdf>; Morgan EM. "Associations between young adults' use of sexually explicit materials and their sexual preferences, behaviors, and satisfaction," *J Sex Res*. 2011 Nov-Dec; 48(6):520-30, at http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=psych_facpubs; Mass M. "The Influence of Internet Pornography on College Students: An Empirical Analysis of Attitudes, Affect and Sexual Behavior," *McNair Scholars Journal*, 2010; Vol. 11:137-150, at http://www.csus.edu/McNair/_ALL-Scholars-Articles-Photos-Webpage/11_2009_2010/journal_2009-10/megan_maas_csus_mcnair_2010-11.pdf; Carroll JS et al. "Generation XXX: Pornography Acceptance and Use Among Emerging Adults," *J Adolesc Res*. 2008 Jan; 23(1):6-30, at <http://jar.sagepub.com/content/23/1/6.abstract>.

See also, Davy Rothbart, "He's Just Not That Into Anyone," *NY Magazine*, 1/30/11, at <http://nymag.com/news/features/70976/>; David Amsden, "Not Tonight, Honey. I'm Logging On," *NY Magazine*, 10/20/03, at http://nymag.com/nymag/features/coverstory/n_9349/index1.html.

SEXUAL AGGRESSION

** Foubert, JD; Brosi MW; Bannon, RS. "Pornography Viewing among Fraternity Men: Effects on Bystander Intervention, Rape Myth Acceptance and Behavioral Intent to Commit Sexual Assault," *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 2011; 18(4): 212-231, at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10720162.2011.625552#.VLGJH2sfrtQ>.

Abstract

College men's exposure to pornography is nearly universal, with growing viewing rates nationwide. Substantial research documents the harmful effects of mainstream, sadomasochistic, and rape pornography on men's attitudes and behavior related to sexual assault. The present study surveyed 62% of the fraternity population at a Midwestern public university on their pornography viewing habits, bystander efficacy, and bystander willingness to help in potential rape situations. Results showed that men who view pornography are significantly less likely to intervene as a bystander, report an increased behavioral intent to rape, and are more likely to believe rape myths.

See also, D'Abreu LCF; Krahe B. "Predicting sexual aggression in male college students in Brazil," *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 2014 Apr; 15(2):152-162, at <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2013-27678-001/>; Yang D; Youn G. "Effects of Exposure to Pornography on Male Aggressive Behavioral Tendencies," *The Open Psychology Journal*, 2012; 5:1-10, at <http://benthamopen.com/topsyj/articles/V005/1TOPSYJ.pdf>

See also, Mary Anne Layden, "Pornography and Criminal Behavior and Attitudes Research Results," *Morality in Media* (2013), at <http://pornharmresearch.com/2013/12/talking-points-pornography-and-criminal-behavior-and-attitudes-research/>

Concluding Thoughts

When I began working on this paper, it was my intention to update again a paper I wrote in 2010 entitled, "Harm to Children from Online Exposure to Hardcore Adult Pornography."²¹ But as is often the case when I write on the topic of pornography, the final product differs substantially from what I had originally intended and took much longer than I had originally anticipated.

I would therefore encourage those who are concerned about the proliferation of hardcore pornography on the Internet and about how this is affecting *children in particular* to read both this paper and the earlier one. This paper does not quote sources quoted in the earlier one.

I am under no delusion to think that the two papers conclusively "establish" that exposure to pornography "causes" this or that harm to children. Clearly, more social science research is needed.²² But it would be a mistake to think that only social science research can and should be considered. There are many other voices that also need to be heard from including mental health professionals, law enforcement agents, victims of pornography, parents and teachers, and yes, *the children themselves*,²³ and society needs to hear from these individuals not just when child

²¹ Robert Peters, "Harm to Children from Online Exposure to Hardcore Adult Pornography," *Morality in Media* (2011), at http://pornharmresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/MIM_Peters_Children.pdf.

²² See, e.g., Owens EW; Behun RJ; Manning JC; Reid RC, "The Impact of Internet Pornography on Adolescents: A Review of the Research," *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 2012; 19:99-122, at [http://www.psych.utoronto.ca/users/tafarodi/psy427/articles/Owens%20et%20al.%20\(2012\).pdf](http://www.psych.utoronto.ca/users/tafarodi/psy427/articles/Owens%20et%20al.%20(2012).pdf)

²³ See, e.g., "Generation Rx.com: How Young People Use the Internet for Health Information" (at page 12), Kaiser Family Foundation (2001), at <https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2001/11/3202-genrx-report.pdf>.

pornography is found. Not only is hardcore “adult pornography” contributing to sexual misbehavior involving children, it is also contributing to adult/child sexual abuse.²⁴

But even assuming there was a consensus among social scientists and others about how exposure (addiction) to hardcore “adult pornography” affects children it would have little impact if researchers and others didn’t speak out or if the news media didn’t report what they say.

Personally, I think the American people have been lulled into a false sense of security when it comes to children and Internet pornography. In good measure, I think this has happened because after the Supreme Court killed the Child Online Protection Act of 1998 (COPA),²⁵ the secular media in the United States by and large lost interest in the problem of children being exposed to hardcore “adult” pornography on the Internet and how this affects children.

This shouldn’t come as a surprise. After all, the secular media opposed COPA from day one and never stopped beating the drum about parents being not only the first line of defense when it comes to protecting children from Internet pornography, but the only line of defense.

When the Supreme Court ultimately agreed²⁶ with the nonsense about *parents alone* being able to protect children from exposure to online pornography, the secular media could return to business as usual. After all, when the secular media and Supreme Court are in agreement about parents being up to the task, they couldn’t both be dead wrong – or could they?

I take my hat off to the British press for uncovering the truth about children and Internet pornography, and the truth is that *parents alone* have failed miserably when it comes to protecting children from the floodtide of Internet pornography and that children are paying a horrible price for society’s failure to protect them from this floodtide. If even one major secular media entity in the U.S. has been doing what the British press is doing, I am unaware of it.

I can speak with some authority about New York City’s three largest daily newspapers, the *New York Daily News*, *New York Post* and *New York Times*. If all I knew about children’s exposure to Internet pornography was from what I had read in these three papers in recent years, I would have to conclude that none of the following are *significant* problems in New York City:

- Young children who imitate what they view in Internet pornography
- Children who become addicted to Internet pornography
- Children who act out what they view in Internet pornography
- Girls who view Internet pornography to learn how to please boys
- Children who send sexually explicit photos/videos of themselves to other children
- Children who send sexually explicit photos/videos of themselves to adults

²⁴ *Supra*, at 20-23 (Adult Sex Offenders).

²⁵ COPA would have required those who commercially distribute on the World Wide Web sex materials deemed harmful to minors to take reasonable steps to restrict children’s access to the materials.

²⁶ *Ashcroft v. ACLU*, 535 U.S. 564 (2002), *aff’d on remand*, 322 F.3d 240 (3d Cir. 2003), *aff’d and remanded*, 542 U.S. 656 (2004), *judgment entered*, *ACLU v. Gonzales*, 478 F.Supp.2d 775 (E.D. Pa. 2007), *aff’d sub nom. ACLU v. Mukasey*, 534 F.3d 181 (3rd Cir. 2008), *cert. den.*, 129 S.Ct. 1032 (2009).

- Children who progress from viewing “adult pornography” to child pornography
- Adults who show “adult pornography” to children to groom them for sexual abuse

There are three reasons why I think the above are significant problems in NYC. First, if these problems are happening in Great Britain and elsewhere, why wouldn't they also be happening here? Second, with all the news about sexual assaults on college campuses and in the military, does anyone think the same or similar problems aren't also occurring among youth? Third, four years ago *New York Magazine*²⁷ shined a small light on how “adult pornography” was affecting youth in NYC. It wasn't a pretty picture, and if anything, I'll bet things are worse today.

The U.S. Supreme Court, of course, also contributed to the lulling when it too decided to side with the pornographers and their adult customers. In declining to uphold the Child Online Protection Act of 1998, the High Court also went along with the nonsense that parents didn't need government's help to protect children from online pornography. All that is required to protect children, the Court told the American people, is for parents to use filters.

Parental oversight of their children's use of computers should of course be the “first line of defense” when it comes to protecting children from Internet pornography. But many parents don't and will not use filtering technology as part of that oversight. The reasons include:

- Overburdened and exhausted
- Naïve or too trusting
- Fearful of being too strict or of upsetting their children
- Upset about filters blocking legitimate websites
- Technologically challenged or unable to afford technology
- Unable to read or understand the instructions
- Physically or mentally disabled
- Abusive or neglectful of their children

Furthermore, no filters are foolproof and all filters under-block; and as children get older they have opportunities to access the Internet from devices that their parents have no control over.²⁸ In her statement before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, former Senator Blanche Lincoln summed up the reality for most parents today:²⁹

As the mother of two young boys, this issue hits home...[W]ithout a doubt, I know...that parents are truly the first line of defense. Parents must monitor their children's activities online and elsewhere. They must educate them about potential dangers, whether it's sexual predators or inappropriate materials on adult Web sites. But I have to emphasize: They can't do it alone. Parents in today's world cannot do that alone.

²⁷ Alex Morris, “They Know What Boys Want,” *New York Magazine*, 1/30/11, at <http://nymag.com/news/features/70977/>.

²⁸ See, e.g., Jonathan Blake, “Mobile porn access 'damaging' children and teenagers,” *BBC Newsbeat*, 2/11/14, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/26122390>;

²⁹ *Protecting Children on the Internet: Hearing Before the U.S. Senate Comm. on Commerce, Science, and Transportation*, 109th. Cong. 2–3 (2006).

The Supreme Court should have upheld the Child Online Protection Act.³⁰ This is not to say that COPA alone would have provided complete protection, but the COPA approach was sound.³¹ If there were gaps in the protection that COPA would have provided, new laws could have been enacted. The United States could also have taken a leadership role in promoting amendments to international treaties intended to curb cross-border distribution of obscene materials.³²

The United States was not well-served by a Supreme Court far more concerned about any embarrassment or trepidation that some grown-ups may experience if required to provide proof of age to view or purchase pornography than it was about the impact on children of hardcore pornography that depicts, among other things, anal sex, bestiality, bondage, gangbangs, group sex, incest, marital infidelity, prostitution, rape, “rough sex” (choking, slapping, verbal abuse, etc.), she-males, teen sex, torture, urination and defecation, and unsafe sex galore.

As a much wiser Supreme Court stated in a 1968 case, *Ginsberg v. New York*.³³

The legislature could properly conclude that parents and others, teachers for example, who have this primary responsibility for children's well-being *are entitled to the support of laws designed to aid discharge of that responsibility...*

The State also has an independent interest in the well-being of its youth. The New York Court of Appeals squarely bottomed its decision on that interest in *Bookcase, Inc. v. Broderick*, *supra*...Judge Fuld...also emphasized its significance in the earlier case of *People v. Khan*...In his concurring opinion...he said:

While the supervision of children's reading may best be left to their parents, the knowledge that parental control or guidance cannot always be provided and society's transcendent interest in protecting the welfare of children justify reasonable regulation of the sale of material to them... [Italics supplied]

I will close with a true story. Several years ago, I was invited to speak to high school students about pornography. When I walked into the room, I thought for a moment that I was in the wrong room because while high school students were present, much if not most of the audience consisted of mothers with young children. After I spoke, a mother approached me and said that her neighbor had caught her 6-year-old son and his friend in the basement watching pornography on a computer. I then understood why the moms with young children had come. Do you?

³⁰ For an in-depth assessment of the Supreme Court's role in invalidating COPA, see, Robert Peters, “It will take more than parental use of filtering software to protect children from pornography on the Internet,” 31 *N.Y.U. Rev. L. & Soc. Change* 829 (2007).

³¹ COPA would have placed the primary responsibility for protecting children from Internet where it belongs – namely, not on parents but on pornography distributors. It would have also by-passed problems associated with filters both under-blocking and over-blocking.

³² International treaties on obscene publications were signed in 1910 (amended in 1949) and in 1923 (amended in 1947). The U.S. signed the 1910 treaty and ratified the 1949 protocol in 1950. These treaties need updating to address trans-border distribution of obscenity.

³³ 390 U.S. 629, 639-640.