Appendix 1: Evidence library

The effects of pornography on children and young people: An evidence scan

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There is considerable concern about adolescents producing, consuming, and distributing sexual materials via mobile phone communication. The purpose of this study was to examine key aspects of peer influence and the peer context in relation to two such practices: sexting and mobile porn use. The results of a high-school survey study (N D 1,943) revealed that 6% of Flemish teens (11–20 years of age) have sent a sext, while 9% use mobile porn. Teens who were more popular with the other sex and with a greater need for popularity were more likely to report both behaviours. Boys’ mobile porn use was also predicted by perceived peer pressure. Same-sex popularity was unrelated to boys’ sexting behaviour and mobile porn use; for girls, a negative relationship was found.

How do Swedish tweens (10–14 years old) understand and experience the writing of their online identities? How are such intertwined identity markers as gender and age expressed and negotiated? To find some answers to these questions, participants in this study were asked to write a story about the use of online web communities on pre-prepared paper roundels with buzzwords in the margins to inspire them. Content analysis of these texts using the constant comparative method showed that the main factors determining how online communities are understood and used are the cultural age and gender of the user. Both girls and boys chat online but girls more often create blogs while boys more often play games. Gender was increasingly emphasised with age; but whereas boys aged 14 described themselves as sexually active and even users of pornography, girls of the same age described themselves as shocked and repelled by pornography and fearful of sexual threats. In this investigation an intersectionalist frame of reference is used to elucidate the intertwined power differentials and identity markers of the users’ peer group situation.

This article contrasts the Megan’s Story campaign, a recent Australian media and policy response to sexting (the act of taking and transmitting naked or semi-naked pictures via mobile phones) with interview responses drawn from an Australian study that has asked young people about mobiles and sexting. It considers local and international responses to sexting as child pornography, raising questions about the adequacy and appropriateness of criminalising young people’s sexual self-representation and communication. Based on young people’s responses to sexting, the authors argue that there is emerging ethics around the issue of consent being developed by young people. However, considerations of consent cannot be accounted for by the laws as they are presently framed, as under-18 year olds currently are not allowed to consent to any form of sexting. This disconnection between the law and uses of technology by consenting teenagers generates problems both for policy, education and legal systems. This paper suggests a response that would recognise the seriousness of incidents of bullying, harassment or abuse, and would also take into account the meaning that sexting has for young people in specific contexts and cultures.

While it’s a difficult domain to penetrate—hard numbers are few and far between—we know for a fact that porn sites are some of the most trafficked parts of the Internet. According to Google’s DoubleClick Ad Planner, which
tracks users across the web with a cookie, dozens of adult destinations populate the top 500 websites. Xvideos, the largest porn site on the web with 4.4 billion page views per month, is three times the size of CNN or ESPN, and twice the size of Reddit.


Sexually explicit material (SEM) (including Internet, video and print) may play a key role in the lives of African-American same-sex sexually active youth by providing the only information to learn about sexual development. There is limited school- and/or family-based sex education to serve as models for sexual behaviors for African-American youth. We describe the role SEM plays in the sexual development of a sample of African-American same-sex attracted (SSA) young adolescent males ages 15–19. Adolescents recruited from clinics, social networking sites and through snowball sampling were invited to participate in a 90-minute, semi-structured qualitative interview. Most participants described using SEM prior to their first same-sex sexual experience. Participants described using SEM primarily for sexual development, including learning about sexual organs and function, the mechanics of same-gender sex, and to negotiate one’s sexual identity. Secondary functions were to determine readiness for sex; to learn about sexual performance, including understanding sexual roles and responsibilities (e.g., “top” or “bottom”); to introduce sexual performance scripts; and to develop models for how sex should feel (e.g., pleasure and pain). Youth also described engaging in sexual behaviours (including condom non-use and/or swallowing ejaculate) that were modelled on SEM. Comprehensive sexuality education programs should be designed to address the unmet needs of young, African-American SSA men, with explicit focus on sexual roles and behaviours that may be inaccurately portrayed and/or involve sexual risk-taking (such as unprotected anal intercourse and swallowing ejaculate) in SEM. This work also calls for the development of Internet-based HIV/STI prevention strategies targeting young African-American SSA men who may be accessing SEM.


This article examines the paradigm shift in pornography theory and research from a focus on “texts and effects” through to work emerging from the late 1980s onwards. The article considers the reconceptualisation of pornography as a category, the location of pornography in relation to cultural hierarchy and form, the changing status of pornography in relation to mainstream representations, the significance of developing technologies and the movement towards more situated accounts of pornographic texts and their audiences as a series of attempts to contextualise the question “what is pornography?”


The increase in exposure to sexually explicit material has been cited as a significant factor influencing adolescent sexuality and health. Concern about the negative impact of this material is increasingly prominent within policy, professional groups, and the media. Little research, however, has been conducted within this area. This article presents findings from the research, which is located at the intersection of public health, sociology, media and cultural studies. It explores young people’s perspectives of sexuality, sexual identity and health within the context of sexualised culture and examines how young people discuss these issues, providing a critical account of young people’s engagement with, and experiences of, sexualised culture as “agents” in their own right. The findings are set against historical debates about the nature and impact of sexualised culture and the development of sexual health policy in the United Kingdom.


Research has demonstrated that adolescents regularly use Internet pornography. This two-wave panel study aimed to test an integrative model in early adolescent boys (M age = 14.10; n = 325) that (a) explains their exposure to Internet pornography by looking at relationships with pubertal timing and sensation seeking, and (b) explores the potential consequence of their exposure to Internet pornography for their academic performance. An integrative path model indicated that pubertal timing and sensation seeking predicted the use of Internet pornography. Boys with an advanced pubertal stage and boys high in sensation seeking more frequently used Internet pornography. Moreover, an increased use of Internet pornography decreased boys’ academic performance six months later. The discussion focuses on the consequences of this integrative model for future research on Internet pornography.
This article reports on the extent to which adolescents report actively seeking sexual content in media, identifies from which media they report seeking, estimates the association between seeking sexual information and romantic and sexual behaviour, and shows that active seeking of sexual content in media sources is explained by an intention to seek such content using the Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction, a reasoned action approach. The data are a national sample of 810 adolescents aged 13-18 years. Results show that 50% of adolescents reported actively seeking sexual content in their media choices, which included movies, television, music, Internet pornography sites and magazines. Males sought sex content more than females, and gender differences were greatest for seeking from Internet pornography sites, movies and television. Path analysis demonstrate that seeking sexual content is well-predicted by intentions to seek, and intentions are primarily driven by perceived normative pressure to seek sexual content.


Published research demonstrates an association between exposure to media sexual content and a variety of sex-related outcomes for adolescents. What is not known is the mechanism through which sexual content produces this “media effect” on adolescent beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. Using the Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction, this article uses data from a longitudinal study of adolescents ages 16 to 18 (n = 460) to determine how exposure to sexual media content influences sexual behaviour. Path analysis and structural equation modelling demonstrated that intention to engage in sexual intercourse is determined by a combination of attitudes, normative pressure and self-efficacy but that exposure to sexual media content only affects normative pressure beliefs. By applying the Integrative Model, we are able to identify which beliefs are influenced by exposure to media sex and improve the ability of health educators, researchers and others to design effective messages for health communication campaigns and messages pertaining to adolescents’ engaging in sexual intercourse.


This article explores children's use of mobile phones in relation to their intimate, sexual relationships and in their development of gendered sexual identities in their everyday lives. Implications of risk and mobile phones are reflected in current media discourse and contemporary public discussions. While the concept of risk remains at the centre of current sociological debate, children have only recently been seen as active social actors within social science. Based on the accounts of 30 young people aged between 11 and 17, the article adopts a social constructivist perspective to explore the relationship between young people’s talk of sexuality and sexual acts in their discussions of mobile phone use, within the wider theoretical debates about risk and self-identity.


This cross-sectional study examined 804 adolescents, boys and girls, aged from 14 to 19 years, attending different types of high schools in the northwest of Italy; the questionnaire “Me and My Health” (Bonino, 1996) was used to collect data. The main goals were: (i) to investigate the relationship between active and passive forms of sexual harassment and violence and the relationship between pornography (reading magazines and viewing films or videos) and unwanted sex among adolescents; (ii) to explore the differences in these relationships with respect to gender and age; and (iii) to investigate the factors (pornography, gender and age) that are most likely to promote unwanted sex. The findings showed that active and passive sexual violence and unwanted sex and pornography were correlated. However, reading pornographic material was more strongly linked to active sexual violence, while being a boy was found to be protective against passive sexual violence. Nevertheless, some effects of viewing pornographic films on passive unwanted sex were also found, especially among girls.


This article examines the limitations of the effects model for feminist anti-pornography work. As a contribution to the ongoing debate about the nature of pornography and its relationship to violence against women, this article aims firstly to identify why traditional effects research, which attempts to establish a causal relationship between pornography and violent behaviour, is a dubious ally for anti-pornography feminism. Secondly, the enduring implications of the effects model for feminist anti-pornography politics are explored. It is argued that anti-pornography feminists need to reject the effects model and return to the crucial question of how some pornographies are produced and consumed in ways that are abusive to women.


Public and academic debate about porn culture is proliferating. Ironically, what is often lost in these debates is a sense of what is specific about pornography. By focusing on pornography’s mainstream “contemporary commercial products for a heterosexual male audience” Everyday pornography offers the opportunity to reconsider what it is that makes pornography a specific form of industrial practice and genre of representation. Everyday pornography presents original work from scholars from a range of academic disciplines (Media Studies, Law, Sociology, Psychology, Women’s Studies, Political Science), introducing new methodologies and approaches while reflecting on the ongoing value of older approaches. Among the topics explored are: the porn industry’s marketing practices (spam emails, reviews) and online organisation, commercial sex in Second Life, the pornographic narratives of phone sex and amateur videos, the content of best-selling porn videos, how the male consumer is addressed by pornography, represented within the mainstream, understood by academics and contained by legislation. This collection places a particular emphasis on anti-pornography feminism, a movement that has been experiencing a revival since the mid-2000s. Drawing on the experiences of activists alongside academics, Everyday pornography offers an opportunity to explore the intellectual and political challenges of anti-pornography feminism and consider its relevance for contemporary academic debate.


This current study analyses the content of popular pornographic videos, with the objectives of updating depictions of aggression, degradation and sexual practices and comparing the study’s results to previous content analysis studies. Findings indicate high levels of aggression in pornography in both verbal and physical forms. Of the 304 scenes analysed, 88.2% contained physical aggression, principally spanking, gagging and slapping, while 48.7% of scenes contained verbal aggression, primarily name calling. Perpetrators of aggression were usually male, whereas targets of aggression were overwhelmingly female. Targets most often showed pleasure or responded neutrally to the aggression.


Correlates of use and subsequent sexual attitudes and behaviours predicted by exposure to sexually explicit content (i.e., pornography and erotica) in adult magazines, X-rated movies and the Internet were examined in a prospective survey of a diverse sample of early adolescents (average age at baseline = 13.6 years; n = 967). Two thirds (66%) of males and more than one third (39%) of females had seen at least one form of sexually explicit media in the past year. At baseline, being black, being older, and having less-educated parents, lower socio-economic status, and high need for sensation were related to greater exposure for both males and females. Longitudinal analyses showed that early exposure for males predicted less progressive gender role attitudes, more permissive sexual norms, sexual harassment perpetration, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse two years later. Early exposure for females predicted subsequently less progressive gender role attitudes, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse. Implications for healthy sexual socialisation are discussed.


Research indicates that children and young people are accessing pornography at increasing rates, with boys aged 14–17 years being the most frequent underage consumers of pornographic material. The current senate inquiry into the effects of pornography on children comes as a growing number of parents, children, teachers, psychologists and other professionals working with children and young people voice concerns about the ease of access to pornography online, and the proliferation of increasingly violent pornographic content. While pornography is not a new phenomenon, the volume available and the way people are accessing it have changed. For example, improvements to Internet downloading speeds and the use of handheld “smart” devices have made access to pornography easier, faster and more anonymous than ever before. The ease of access to pornography online also contributes to the greater likelihood of children’s accidental exposure.


Most readers of Visual Studies know that “sexting” is a combination of the words “sex” and “texting” and designates the practice of using a camera cell phone to take and send nude (including semi-nude) photographs to other cell phones or Internet sites. First reported in 2005, these photographs are occasionally referred to as “home-made pornographic images”. While these digital photographs can be sent with or without text, the image is the central and most controversial feature. More to the point, sexting creates an uncomfortable combination of legal, social and emotional problems for participants, most unanticipated. Sexters give little or no thought to what other young people might do with the pictures or how adults could react to this practice. Not surprisingly, however, technology continues to develop in ways that outpace what lawmakers have envisioned under our present legal codes (Jacobs & Verniero, 2009).


Despite increasing public interest and concern about young people’s involvement in the self-production of sexual images (or sexting), there remains a dearth of research into their reasons for making and sending images, the processes involved, and the consequences arising from their experiences. This article reviews the motivational, lifestyle and personality factors influencing adolescent sexting practices and explores the research evidence within the wider context of debates around contemporary social and visual media cultures and gender. A systematic search of databases was conducted and 88 records were identified for inclusion in the review. The findings reveal that sexting is remarkably varied in terms of context, meaning and intention, with the potential for consensual and non-consensual aspects of the activity. While sexting can be a means of flirting or enhancing a sexual relationship, it can highlight potential vulnerabilities to victimisation or to participation in risky sexual practices. Sexting is also inextricably linked to social expectations of gendered sexual behaviours, with females often deriving less satisfaction from their experiences and being perceived more negatively by their peers. Further research linking adolescent motivations, wellbeing, relationships and lifestyles with the broader socio-cultural and media landscape will ultimately help drive understanding about the subject forward.


Public, media and political concern has grown in recent years over the practice of children using new media technologies to send or distribute sexually explicit images of themselves or others to their peers, a practice commonly known as “sexting”. Common platforms for such practices include mobile phone messaging and social network sites, such as Facebook, MySpace and YouTube. This article explores current legal frameworks within Australia that may apply to sexting. Most alarmingly, young people engaging in sexting may fall foul of child pornography laws that are ill designed to deal with such practices and from which age provides little protection. Indeed, young people face being placed on sex offender registers for behaviour they may think of as simply having some fun among friends. The article argues that the existing legislation lacks the capacity to discriminate properly between a broad range of activities with divergent motivations, the presence or absence of consent, and differing levels of potential harm. It concludes by suggesting that the current legislative framework has the potential to produce more harms than many of the practices it seeks to regulate.
In this article, the author offers a categorisation of “hetero-sexy” material found on a sample of MySpace profiles maintained by young Australian women, aged between 18 and 21. By “hetero-sexy” (a term discussed below) material they mean imagery, iconography and decorations on the profiles that appear, in terms of aesthetics and the visual appearance of bodies, to reinforce current notions of feminine gender performativity as “sexualised”, and seem to be appealing to a similar gaze economy as that produced in conventional heterosexual pornography. Social network site profiles have been theorised as a kind of identity performance (boyd, 2007; Liu, 2007; Buckingham, 2008; Westlake, 2008; Zhao, 2008; Pearson, 2009). The premise of Do-It-Yourself social media such as MySpace currently appears to be one of an implicit understanding between viewers and viewed: first, that the representations are self-produced and fashioned to express the identities of their creators; and second, that the subjects of representation are themselves making choices about actively participating in and controlling their own representations. The author refers to this as the premise of “self-production” on social network sites. The purpose of this article is to open up some questions about the ways in which this viewing premise of self-production and choice in one’s own mediated representation could, and perhaps should, affect feminist interpretations of these hetero-sexy (new) media representations. Dobson offers a textual analysis of hetero-sexy material from MySpace profiles that draws from feminist performance theory and explores the meaning of hetero-sexy icons as visual representations of women.


This study used a person-centred approach to examine whether different developmental trajectories of boys’ and girls’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) exist, which factors predict these trajectories, and whether sexual behaviour develops differently for adolescents in these trajectories. A combination of latent class growth analysis on SEIM use and latent growth curve analysis on sexual behaviour was used on four-wave longitudinal data of 787 eighth through tenth grade Dutch adolescents. Among boys, four SEIM use trajectories were identified, which were labelled Nonuse/Infrequent Use, Strongly Increasing Use, Occasional Use, and Decreasing Use. Among girls, a large stable Nonuse/Infrequent Use and smaller Strongly Increasing Use and stable Occasional Use trajectories were distinguished. Higher initial levels and/or stronger increases in SEIM use were predicted by demographic, social contextual, personal, and media use characteristics, including a stronger sexual interest, a higher degree of perceived realism regarding sexualised Internet content, and more permissive sexual attitudes. Moreover, initial levels of and, to some extent, developmental changes in sexual behaviour varied for boys and girls in the different SEIM use trajectories. Whereas some adolescents showed concurrent low levels, or parallel strong increases in SEIM use and sexual behaviour, a subgroup of boys decreased their SEIM use while increasing their sexual behaviour.


Although much media attention has been directed towards sexting (transmission of sexual material via phone or Internet), little empirical work exists on the topic. Moreover, the few studies that do exist have been inconsistent in their definition of sexting and measures of sexting behaviour, which makes comparisons between these studies difficult. In this study, the authors provide a granular, descriptive analysis of sexting behaviour within a cohort of young adults, focusing on the content of sex messages, the medium used to transmit these messages, and the relationship context in which these transmissions occur. They found that sexting was fairly common across all types of romantic relationships (committed, casual sex, and cheating), text messaging was the primary medium used to send sex pictures and videos, and the prevalence, motivations and risks associated with sexting varied by relationship context. Considering the complexity and diversity of sexting practices within this cohort, we suggest that those studying sexting and implementing initiatives with young adults use more detailed (rather than general) definitions and questions of sexting behaviour, and that they delineate between these different types of content, transmission media and relationship contexts.


The authors suspect that the young perspective has been left out when online risk and safety are discussed in contemporary research. The aim of this chapter is to give a critical approach to this matter and question fear as a driving force for protecting young people online. Interviews with children about their views of Internet use (Dunkels, 2007) and a study of safe use guides from European countries conducted in 2008 (Lüders et al,

The Internet makes pornography readily available, with the majority of Australia having Internet access in their homes and businesses. While pornography in general contributes to women’s unequal position in society through the use of gendered hierarchies of dominance and submission, much Internet pornography is also violent in nature with many websites depicting rape, torture and sexual abuse in a sexual context. The Internet brings these violent depictions, which encourage and promote sexual violence, into women’s homes like never before.


The Internet provides remarkable opportunities for children’s learning and development. Nevertheless, it is unregulated and hard to control, which potentially places children at risk of exploitation. This study examined 5–8 year old children’s understanding of dangers associated with the Internet, management strategies and sources of their understanding. Children in small groups answered questions relating to what they consider dangerous interactions or materials connected with the Internet, management strategies they would employ if confronted with these, and who taught them what they knew. Many children reported prior negative experiences on the Internet. Although they identified several risk categories, when presented with potentially dangerous Internet interactions almost half were not able to identify the associated risks. Most children identified appropriate management strategies; however, it was evident that children could not safely employ these because they were unable to recognise potential dangers. Just under half of the children indicated they had not been taught Internet safety. Internet risks for children can be reduced through education in their recognition of potential dangers, recall and management strategies, indicating a need for schools to incorporate Internet safety into curricula.


The effects of pornography, whether violent or non-violent, on sexual aggression have been debated for decades. The current review examines evidence about the influence of pornography on sexual aggression in correlational and experimental studies and in real-world violent crime data. Evidence for a causal relationship between exposure to pornography and sexual aggression is slim and may, at certain times, have been exaggerated by politicians, pressure groups and some social scientists. Some of the debate has focused on violent pornography, but evidence of any negative effects is inconsistent, and violent pornography is comparatively rare in the real world. Victimisation rates for rape in the United States demonstrate an inverse relationship between pornography consumption and rape rates. Data from other nations have suggested similar relationships. Although these data cannot be used to determine that pornography has a cathartic effect on rape behaviour, combined with the weak evidence in support of negative causal hypotheses from the scientific literature, it is concluded that it is time to discard the hypothesis that pornography contributes to increased sexual assault behaviour.


Exposure to pornography is routine among children and young people, with a range of notable and often troubling effects. Particularly among younger children, exposure to pornography may be disturbing or upsetting. Exposure to pornography helps to sustain young people’s adherence to sexist and unhealthy notions of sex and relationships. And, especially among boys and young men who are frequent consumers of pornography, including of more violent materials, consumption intensifies attitudes supportive of sexual coercion and increases their likelihood of perpetrating assault. While children and young people are sexual beings and deserve age-appropriate materials on sex and sexuality, pornography is a poor, and indeed dangerous, sex educator.


This article explores the social impact of new information and communication technologies (ICTs). It argues that they are best understood, not as heralding a substantially new “information society”, but as significant technologies emerging in but inherently part of late modernity. This argument is developed by examining themes from post-materialism, globalisation and information society theories. It is suggested there are two types of technology, those changing and extending existing processes and those facilitating wholly new activities, and that recent innovations in information and communication technology are rather better construed as the former. By examining empirically questions of identity, inequality, power and change the recent and future impact of ICTs is explored, and it is argued that current trends suggest increasing convergence (economic and organisational as much as technological), differentiation and deregulation.


Russell (Dangerous relationships: Pornography, misogyny and rape, 1988) argued that essential features of pornography were the inclusion of more female than male nakedness and the portrayal of men in dominant roles. Utilising a sample of 45 Internet adult websites, a content analysis was conducted to see if free and easily available Internet adult videos may generally be described as pornography in line with Russell’s (1988) work. A majority of videos in our sample portrayed more female than male nakedness as well as much higher representations of men in sexually dominant positions. The prevalence of violence in this sample of video and the presence of various acts (name calling, ejaculating on the face, submission, and eagerness to participate in any sex act) were also content analysed and used to establish prevalent themes. We found a significant difference in the likelihood of a video having a theme of exploitation or domination and whether or not the video portrayed one of these acts. If the video had a theme of exploitation or domination, 92% of the videos also included a minimum of one of these acts while those videos that had themes of reciprocity or autoeroticism were significantly less likely to contain such acts. This study contributes to the literature on gender and pornography by examining issues of degradation and power relations within the context of a rapidly expanding cybersex industry.


Over the years, young people have typically come across or sought out sexually explicit material in the form of photographs, books and magazines. However, contemporary “electronic” society means sexually explicit material is now even more available, easily accessible, cheap and quick. Unfortunately, many young people are exposed to a culture and environment saturated with sexualised images not easily controlled by parents or schools and can readily view pornography without age-related barriers.


This report presents initial findings from an Australian survey of children and their parents designed to provide a unique insight into the balance of opportunities and risks experienced by these children as a result of their Internet use. A random stratified sample of 400 9–16 year olds who use the Internet, and one of their parents/carers, was interviewed between November 2010 and February 2011. The AU survey was conducted in parallel with a 25 nation survey carried out by EU Kids Online (see Annex 1) and funded by the EC’s Safer Internet Programme. The questionnaire was designed by the EU Kids Online network, coordinated by the London School of Economics and Political Science. Ipsos MORI and its international affiliates conducted the research in all 26 countries.


A request from the National Academies to prepare a presentation for a Workshop on Non-Technical Strategies to Protect Youth from Inappropriate Material on the Internet occurred before much was known about children, youth, and the Internet. The author’s strategy was to investigate websites that cater to children and adolescents.
The developmental issue of consumer socialisation was raised by a visit to the Disney website. In contrast, the developmental issues of sexuality, aggression and intergroup relations were raised by visits to chatrooms hosted by two different Internet Web portals. Examination of existing research literature, in conjunction with visits to the websites, led to the following conclusions: (1) Many parents are aware of the problems of making children the targets of commerce; however, they are quite unaware of the kind of social and cultural worlds young people are creating online. (2) Children and adolescents are not simply the targets of adult Internet creations; they are active participants in creating their own cybercultures, for example in teen chatrooms. (3) The nature and norms of these cultures can be very much influenced by adult rules, regulations and participatory monitoring. (4) The important developmental issues raised by this new medium are not unique to the Internet. For example, each psychosocial phenomenon from consumerism to sexuality to aggression has important manifestations in the culture at large.


Perhaps the most fundamental divide in risk research is that between proponents of two contradictory concepts of risk. Some take risk as objectively given and determined by physical facts, whereas others see risk as a social construction that is independent of physical facts. These two views are scrutinised, and it is concluded that neither is tenable. Risk is both fact-laden and value-laden, and it contains both objective and subjective components. It is argued that both the objectivist and the subjectivist view of risk are failed attempts to rid a complex concept of much of its complexity. The real challenge is to identify the various types of factual and valuational components inherent in statements about risk and to understand how they are combined. The two oversimplifications both stand in the way of a more sophisticated analysis of risk.


Presentation of self (via Goffman) is becoming increasingly popular as a means for explaining differences in meaning and activity of online participation. This article argues that self-presentation can be split into performances, which take place in synchronous “situations,” and artefacts, which take place in asynchronous “exhibitions.” Goffman’s dramaturgical approach (including the notions of front and back stage) focuses on situations. Social media, on the other hand, frequently employs exhibitions, such as lists of status updates and sets of photos, alongside situational activities, such as chatting. A key difference in exhibitions is the virtual “curator” that manages and redistributes this digital content. This article introduces the exhibitional approach and the curator and suggests ways in which this approach can extend present work concerning online presentation of self. It introduces a theory of “lowest common denominator” culture employing the exhibitional approach.


This article explores young people’s attitudes toward pornographic material. How do young people in general relate to and view pornography? Are there any clear gender differences? On the basis of empirical results from an extensive Swedish survey study, we discuss and analyse how gender differences are articulated. We are specifically interested in what kinds of attitudes young men and young women develop. A common conception of gender and the consumption of pornography is that men and boys are generally the consumers, whereas women dislike pornography. Results from the present study partly support these claims. However, we argue that it is important to analyse differences within the categories “men” and “women.” Here, we find that many young men actually hold negative attitudes toward pornography, whereas some young women are positively disposed toward and enjoy pornography. These findings are discussed within the framework of gender theory and theories of masculinity.

Studies have described the phenomenon of voluntary sexual exposure among youth online but only a few focus on the typical young person who has this experience. The purpose of this study was to investigate Swedish youth with experience of voluntary sexual exposure online, with regard to Internet behaviour, social background and psychosocial health including parent-child relationships. A representative sample of 3,503 Swedish youths in their third year of high school completed a survey about Internet behaviour, Internet-related sexual harassment, sexuality, health and sexual abuse. Out of those taking part in the survey, 20.9% (19.2% boys and 22.3% girls) reported experiences of voluntary sexual exposure online. Multivariate analysis showed a significant association between voluntary sexual exposure online and a number of different forms of harassment online. Neither poorer psychosocial health nor problematic relationships with parents remained significant in the final model. The results underlined the fact that voluntary sexual exposure online is associated with vulnerability on the Internet among both boys and girls and that there is a need for parents and professionals to better understand what young people do on the Internet and the risks they may incur.


This study evaluates empirically the proposition implicit in much recent gender and CMC research that expressions of gender distinctness among teens in online environments are becoming less frequent and less traditional. Gender preferences were analysed in linguistic features and communication styles in synchronous text messages, along with self-presentation in user profile pictures, drawing on data from popular English-language teen chat sites collected in 2010. Significant differences were found in speech acts, message tone, and in physical stance, dress, and social distance in profile pictures that generally conform to traditional gender stereotypes. These findings are interpreted in light of previous gender and teen CMC research, adolescent development and socialisation patterns, mass media representations, and trends towards media convergence in chat platforms.


Recently, national and local media across North America have warned against the risks of “sexting”—the practice of sending, posting or possessing sexually suggestive text messages and images via cell phones or the Internet. In response to this phenomenon, Pennsylvania District Attorney Skumanick threatened to bring child pornography charges against teenagers who had been caught sexting and who refused to attend a gender-based “re-education” program designed to teach them about its dangers. Three girls refused the ultimatum, resulting in Miller v. Mitchell [2010], the first case to challenge the constitutionality of prosecuting teens for their digital sexual expression. This article critically considers dominant and intersecting cultural and legal narratives about sexting and troubles the predominant construction of teenage female sexters as dupes of the “pornification” of a generation and as “self-sexually exploiting.” The cultural and legal disavowal of girls’ narratives about digital sexual expression is considered through Judith Butler’s post-structural analysis of sexuality, speech and censorship. Drawing on two online studies of sexting, contributions to an online forum on the topic, and third-wave feminist writings on a generational re-envisioning of risk, respectability and privacy, I argue that that
the foreclosure of the “domain of the sayable” within which girls seek to speak works paradoxically to further render them fetishised sexual objects, thus engendering the very harm that criminal law seeks to remedy.


Bioecological systems theory provides a framework to understand how factors in the child's environment contribute to parent–child differences in estimations of how often children are helped by their Internet use. A national sample survey of 456 matched parent–child pairs investigated how parents– child relational factors, parental attitudes toward the Internet, and the bioecology of the child, are related to differing perceptions of the frequency of using the Internet to seek help with homework assignments, to aid in identity development, and to find health information. While previous research shows that parents underestimate risky online behaviours, we investigate whether parent–child differences will emerge in regards to how often the child engages in the behaviours under investigation here. The findings show that parents overestimate these online activities, suggesting they are biased in their estimations. Parent–child relational factors emerged as predictors of parental overestimation for each of these online activities, with trust perceptions as the most consistent predictor. Parental attitudes toward the Internet predicted parent–child differences in perceptions of how frequently the child used the Internet for help with homework and identity development, while the bioecology of the child was only predictive in the case of using the Internet for help with homework.


Developmental theories assume that at the beginning stages of adolescence, young people’s developmental tasks and the instability of their “selves” motivate them to experiment with their identities and self-presentation. There is growing evidence that adolescents use the Internet to experiment in this way, especially on social networking sites (SNS) (Calvert et al., 2003; Valkenburg et al., 2005; Williams & Merten, 2008). This experimentation should gradually decrease as children get older and fulfil their developmental tasks, that is, younger children should experiment more than older ones (Valkenburg et al., 2005; Livingstone, 2008)—the closer to the goal, that is, being adult, an adolescent is, the stronger should be his/her motivation to complete a developmental task.


Despite considerable controversy and speculation regarding sexting behaviour and its associated risks, to date there has been no integration and analysis of empirical literature on this topic. To collect and synthesise findings of the prevalence of sexting, its correlates, and the context in which it occurs, a systematic search of databases was conducted. Thirty-one studies, reporting on sexting prevalence and a diverse range of related variables, met inclusion criteria. The estimated mean prevalence weighted by sample size was calculated, with trends indicating sexting is more prevalent amongst adults than adolescents, older age is predictive of sexting for adolescents but not adults, and more individuals report receiving sexts than sending them. The correlates of sexting behaviour were grouped in terms of demographic variables, sexual and sexual risk behaviours, attitudes towards sexting, perceived outcomes of sexting, motivations for sexting, mental health and wellbeing variables, and attachment dimensions. Findings are discussed in terms of the trends indicated by the data, which provided substantiation that sexting behaviour is associated with numerous behavioural, psychological and social factors. Limitations of the current research literature and future directions are also presented.


Social networking has changed many people’s everyday lives, and in an extraordinarily short time. Children and young people, especially, are adopting social networking as a part of their social relationships, learning, consumption and creative practices. What defines children and young people as social beings is happening more and more often in social networking sites (SNS), which are online spaces where people can communicate, play, watch video clips, look at photographs and share their feelings and thoughts with others. They are manifestations of “public culture”, the term that Appadurai and Breckenridge (1995) suggest as an alternative to “popular culture” or “mass culture”. Public culture links engagement in popular culture to the practices of participation in the public sphere. Ito and colleagues (2010, p. 19) understand public culture as indicating a change from
audiences purely consuming media to the “active participation of a distributed social network in the production and circulation of culture and knowledge.” They refer to “networked publics”, which facilitate the development of public identities and friendship-driven practices on the Internet.


What has been problematically termed “sexting” has attracted considerable legal, political, public, media and academic attention. Concern has focused on sexting between young people who may experience emotional and reputational damage and are at risk of being charged with child abuse or pornography offences in many jurisdictions. Recent research has rightly highlighted sexting’s gendered dynamics. Accordingly, a discourse has developed that imagines the common sexting scenario involves girls feeling pressured into sending boys sexual images. This article develops an analytic framework of pressure and critically reviews research into sexting. It suggests that while such scenarios occur, they do not reflect the experiences expressed by the majority of girls who actually engage in sexting, who are more likely to express motivations associated with pleasure or desire.


This article explores the criminalisation and governance of sexting among young people. While the focus is on Australian jurisdictions, the article places debates and anxieties about sexting and young people in a broader analysis around concerns about new technologies, child sexual abuse, and the risks associated with childhood sexuality. The article argues that these broader social, cultural and moral anxieties have created an environment where rational debate and policy-making around teen sexting has been rendered almost impossible. Not only has the voice of young people themselves been silenced in the public, political and media discourse about sexting, but any understanding about the differing behaviours and subsequent harms that constitute teen sexting has been lost. All the while, sexting has been rendered a pleasurable if somewhat risky pastime in an adult cultural context lending weight to the argument that teen sexting is often a subterranean expression of activities that are broadly accepted. The article concludes that the current approaches to regulating teen sexting, along with the emergence of sexting as a legitimate adult activity, may have had the perverse consequence of making teen sexting an even more attractive teenage risk taking activity.


This report explores the new contours of friendship in the digital age. It covers the results of a national survey of teens ages 13–17; throughout the report, the word “teens” refers to those in that age bracket, unless otherwise specified. The survey was conducted online from 25 September through 9 October 2014, and 10 February through 16 March 2015, and 16 online and in-person focus groups with teens were conducted in April 2014 and November 2014.


“While we recognise that the computer and the Internet are a powerful source of information and entertainment, we must also recognise that there is potential for malicious behaviour and harmful effects.” Senator Stephen Conroy. There would be few who would disagree with this statement from Senator Stephen Conroy, who became Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital economy after Labor won the November 2007 federal election. Yet a fierce debate rages in Australia over the best way to tackle the problem of harm, both real and potential, from Internet use. Leave the “protection” of children to the supervision of parents and teachers? Make adoption of content filters voluntary? Use home-based filters or those at the Internet service provider (ISP) level? Invest more in the policing of illegal activities (such as child pornography and identity theft)? Increase education programs for children, parents and teachers about online safety? A combination of these things? Nothing at all?


When technology integration is accomplished successfully in early childhood education settings, children tend to interact more with one another and exchange information related to computer tasks as well as the overall classroom on-going curriculum themes. Therefore, to explore how young children are interacting in computer areas when using computers as integrated tools for learning is valuable. Accordingly, the research questions were as follows: (1) What factors support young children’s social interaction in technology integration? and (2)
What factors hinder young children's social interaction in technology integration? The supporting factors were found as the connection with classroom themes, user-friendly software design, working pairs and open-ended software programs. The hindering factors were summarised as teacher interruption, closed-software programs and environmental limitations.


Despite being distinct, online social spaces are governed by norms and conventions reminiscent of those that govern offline social spaces. Our research into the ways young people’s “private” or “quasi-private” spaces are managed indicates that the strategies used to exert a sense of control over sites like Facebook borrow heavily from the strategies employed to manage offline private spaces like the teenage bedroom. In this article, we explore these continuities and then consider the limitations of applying a bedroom metaphor to online social spaces. We then consider how these strategies of control are related to a process of “marking out” the narrative of “growing up” both in online and offline social spaces.


UK Children Go Online (UKCGO) aims to offer a rigorous and timely investigation of 9–19 year olds’ use of the Internet. The project balances an assessment of online risks and opportunities in order to contribute to developing academic debates and policy frameworks for children and young people’s Internet use. The research was funded by an Economic and Social Research Council grant under the “e-Society” Programme, with co-funding from AOL, BSC, Childnet-International, Citizens Online and ITC. This report presents key findings from a major national, in-home, face-to-face survey, lasting some 40 minutes, of 1,511 9–19 year olds and 906 parents of the 9–17 year olds, using Random Location sampling across the UK. It complements the project’s recent qualitative report on young people’s experiences of the Internet.


Taking the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a starting point for evidence-based policy regarding children’s rights in the digital age, the authors offer a global research agenda designed to produce evidence of value for policy-makers working to promote children’s rights. Informed by research reviews and interviews with international stakeholders, four priorities for theory and evidence are identified: (1) the provision of opportunities that confer benefit, recognising that this may be defined diversely according to the cultural context, (2) the protection of children from risk of harm, including understanding the relation between vulnerability and resilience, (3) the balance between risk and opportunities, especially to allow for children’s participation even in risky opportunities and (4) the framing of the research agenda (in terms of concepts, design, measures and priorities) and the evaluation of policies and initiatives in collaboration with researchers and practitioners from the global South.


The invention of a new term—for example, the portmanteau integration of sex and texting into the concept “sexting”—may or may not identify a new phenomenon. Despite the public attention attracted by media announcements, such as those that open this chapter, it is unclear whether sexting is new and problematic or merely the latest moral panic related to youth and technology (Critcher, 2008). Although sexting is not unlike earlier telephonic, written or face-to-face exchanges (Chalfen, 2009), these quick-fire exchanges that occur largely “under the radar” have been greatly enabled, perhaps transformed, by the advent of convenient, aordable, accessible and mobile access to the Internet (boyd, 2008). Also, the privacy and anonymity of much online communication would seem to proliferate the possibilities for youthful sexual communication (Subrahmanyam & Šmahel, 2011).


As Internet use is extending to younger children, there is an increasing need for research focus on the risks young users are experiencing, as well as the opportunities, and how they should cope. With expert contributions from
This report presents initial findings from a UK survey of children and their parents designed to provide a unique insight into the balance of opportunities and risks experienced by UK children on the Internet. A random stratified sample of 1,032 9–16 year olds who use the Internet, and one of their parents/carers, was interviewed during May/June 2010. The UK survey forms part of a larger 25 country survey conducted by EU Kids Online and funded by the EC’s Safer Internet Programme. The questionnaire was designed by the EU Kids Online network, coordinated by the London School of Economics and Political Science. Fieldwork was conducted by Ipsos MORI.


Rapid adoption of the Internet and other online technologies is presenting policy-makers, governments and industry with a significant task of ensuring that online opportunities are maximised and the risks associated with Internet use are minimised and managed. Online opportunities are the focus of considerable public and private sector activity, and diverse ambitious efforts are underway in many countries to promote digital learning technologies in schools, e-governance initiatives, digital participation and digital literacy. The risks associated with the technologies are receiving similar attention through national and international initiatives that address child protection, cybersecurity and privacy, and through discussions explaining the potential for state and/or self-regulation.


Many hopes exist regarding the opportunities that the Internet can offer to young people as well as fears about the risks it may bring. Informed by research on media literacy, this article examines the role of selected measures of Internet literacy in relation to teenagers’ online experiences. Data from a national survey of teenagers in the UK (n = 789) are analysed to examine: first, the demographic factors that influence skills in using the Internet; and, second (the main focus of the study), to ask whether these skills make a difference to online opportunities and online risks. Consistent with research on the digital divide, path analysis showed the direct influence of age and socio-economic status on young people’s access, the direct influence of age and access on their use of online opportunities, and the direct influence of gender on online risks. The importance of online skills was evident insofar as online access, use and skills were found to mediate relations between demographic variables and young people’s experience of online opportunities and risks. Further, an unexpected positive relationship between online opportunities and risks was found, with implications for policy interventions aimed at reducing the risks of Internet use.


In an open-ended survey question to European 9–16 year olds, some 10,000 children reported a range of risks that concern them on the Internet. Pornography (named by 22% of children who mentioned risks), conduct risk such as cyberbullying (19%) and violent content (18%) were at the top of children’s concerns. The priority given to violent content is noteworthy insofar as this receives less attention than sexual content or bullying in awareness-raising initiatives. Many children express shock and disgust on witnessing violent, aggressive or gory online content, especially that which graphically depicts realistic violence against vulnerable victims, including from the news. Video-sharing websites such as YouTube were primary sources of violent and pornographic content. The findings discussed in relation to children’s fear responses to screen media and the implications for the public policy agenda on Internet safety are identified.

There is a widespread concern in Western society about the visibility of pornography in public places and on the Internet. What are the consequences for young men and women, and how do they think about gender, sexuality and pornography? Data was collected, through 22 individual interviews and seven focus groups, from 51 participants (36 women and 37 men aged 14–20 years) in Sweden. The results indicated a process of both normalisation and ambivalence. Pornography was used as a form of social intercourse, a source of information, and a stimulus for sexual arousal. Pornography consumption was more common among the young men than among the women. For both the young men and women, the pornographic script functioned as a frame of reference in relation to bodily ideals and sexual performances. Most of the participants had acquired the necessary skills of how to deal with the exposure to pornography in a sensible and reflective manner.


With the revolution that has taken place in the functionality and uptake of portable networked “smart” technologies, educators are looking to see what potential applications such technologies might have for school education. This article reports on a study on the use of portable personal computing devices in the early years of schooling. Specifically, it focuses on emerging patterns of use of Apple iPads in an Australian Preparatory (first year of compulsory schooling) classroom during the first year of implementation of these devices. We draw on student and teacher interviews and classroom observation data to provide a research meta-narrative of the intentions, practices and reflections of a “first year out” teacher, and to discuss points of tension found in the contested space of early years literacy education, which are highlighted when potentially transformative technologies meet institutionalised literacy education practices. Our findings suggest that the broader policy and curriculum context of early years literacy education, and institutionalised practices found in this space, is potentially at odds with teacher-held intentions to transform learning through technology use, particularly with respect to tensions between print-based traditions and new digital literacies, and those between standards-based classroom curricula and more emancipatory agendas.


Social networking sites have emerged as spaces for both young men and women to portray themselves in sexualised ways, raising questions about how young men construct masculinity while embracing a kind of sexual self-objectification. In this case study analysis, a heterosexually identified male college student guides another male undergraduate on a tour of his MySpace profile in front of a video camera, supplementing the visual data with his own interpretations. The analysis focuses on how the young man takes up, or subverts, hegemonic masculinity in his sexual displays online. Data illustrate how irony is highly adaptive for perpetuating hegemonic masculinity on social networking sites, allowing men to collaborate using digital artefacts to socially construct an intractable kind of masculinity as they explore unconventional forms of sexual expression. The study also suggests that a heightened emphasis on public attention to the self is a critical lens for understanding shifting constructions of gender and sexuality in the millennial generation.


Since the advent of the Internet, the sex industry has profited from an unprecedented proximity to the home environment. Consequently, couples, families, and individuals of all ages are being impacted by pornography in new ways. Examining the systemic impact of Internet pornography, however, is relatively uncharted territory and the body of systematically focused research is limited. A review of the research that does exist was undertaken and many negative trends were revealed. While much remains unknown about the impact of Internet pornography on marriages and families, the available data provide an informed starting point for policy makers, educators, clinicians and researchers.
Martellozzo, E. et al. (2016). “... I wasn’t sure it was normal to watch it...”: A quantitative and qualitative examination of the impact of online pornography on the values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of children and young people. London: Middlesex University.


Social media technologies collapse multiple audiences into single contexts, making it difficult for people to use the same techniques online that they do to handle multiplicity in face-to-face conversation. This article investigates how content producers navigate “imagined audiences” on Twitter. We talked with participants who have different types of followings to understand their techniques, including targeting different audiences, concealing subjects, and maintaining authenticity. Some techniques of audience management resemble the practices of “micro-celebrity” and personal branding, both strategic self-commodification. Our model of the networked audience assumes a many-to-many communication through which individuals conceptualise an imagined audience evoked through their tweets.


Objectives: To describe and get a deeper understanding of how groups of young women and men reflect on and discuss pornography and its spread in the media and society, and its possible influence on sexual behaviour and relationships. Methods: Six focus group interviews were conducted with teenagers, three with women (n = 17) and three with men (n = 18). Open questions about pornography and its spread in the media and society were discussed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed according to Grounded Theory. Results: The core category “A discriminatory sexuality” illustrates how participants felt regarding the messages conveyed by pornography portraying a man’s role as dominant and a woman’s role as subordinate. Pornographic messages were described as “Fiction” depicting a distorted reality. Feelings of ambivalence towards pornography were expressed: anxiety and fear, but also inspiration. Participants said pornography occurred everywhere in the media and society, and felt pressured by messages relating to looks and sexual techniques. Conclusions: Pornography and its spread in the media and society were considered as presenting a discriminatory image of body ideals, sexuality and relationships. Despite this awareness, both men and women considered pornography as sources of knowledge and inspiration: an apparent paradox.


A range of recent academic, policy and practice-focused work in the UK and internationally has identified a need for more focused attention on the role of digital literacies in enabling young people to more effectively navigate their way through an increasingly complex, digitally mediated world. In this article, the authors explore the main debates taking place around the prevalence of digital media in the early twenty-first century, with emphasis on the role of pervasive digital media in educational settings. Focusing on the practice-based project, Digital Commonwealth, a series of critical insights are drawn, highlighting the difficulties facing educational authorities and young people in dealing with the opportunities and threats brought about by digital media. We conclude that a critical digital citizenship agenda needs to be embedded in educational narratives, where young people are, through practice, asked to ponder how digitally mediated publics operate in the school setting and beyond. Integrating “making” and “thinking critically” about the benefits and dangers of pervasive digital media in and outside of school is imperative. This study suggests that there remain significant inequities in terms of provision across schools, access to suitable infrastructure and equipment, and the presence of qualified and confident staff with the requisite digital leadership attributes to enable digital media projects to be integrated into everyday learning practices. Major events, like the Commonwealth Games, can precipitate and accelerate uptake of new approaches and innovative thinking but they do not represent a panacea for the systemic development of critical digital citizenship over time.


Objectives: To obtain national estimates of youth involved in sexting in the past year (the transmission via cell phone, the Internet, and other electronic media of sexual images), as well as provide details of the youth involved and the nature of the sexual images. Methods: The study was based on a cross-sectional national telephone survey of 1,560 youth Internet users, ages 10 through 17. Results: Estimates varied considerably depending on the nature of the images or videos and the role of the youth involved. Two and one-half per cent of youth had appeared in or created nude or nearly nude pictures or videos. However, this percentage is reduced to 1.0% when the definition is restricted to only include images that were sexually explicit (i.e., showed naked breasts, genitals or bottoms). Of the youth who participated in the survey, 7.1% said they had received nude or nearly nude images of others; 5.9% of youth reported receiving sexually explicit images. Few youth distributed these images. Conclusions: Because policy debates on youth sexting behavior focus on concerns about the production and possession of illegal child pornography, it is important to have research that collects details about the nature of the sexual images rather than using ambiguous screening questions without follow-ups. The rate of youth exposure to sexting highlights a need to provide them with information about legal consequences of sexting and advice about what to do if they receive a sexting image. However, the data suggest that appearing in, creating, or receiving sexual images is far from being a normative behaviour for youth.


This article explores changes in the prevalence of youth Internet users reporting unwanted sexual solicitations between 2000 and 2005, as well as the risk factors related to reports of the most serious solicitations, aggressive solicitations, in which solicitors attempted or made offline contact with youth. Data were collected from two cross-sectional random-digit dial telephone surveys of Internet-using youth (aged 10–17) in the United States. Although sexual solicitations declined overall since 2000, in 2005 youth were 1.7 times more likely to report aggressive solicitations, even when adjusting for changes in demographic and Internet-use characteristics. Risk factors for aggressive solicitations included being female, using chat rooms, using the Internet with a cell phone, talking with people met online, sending personal information to people met online, talking about sex online, and experiencing offline physical or sexual abuse. Further research is warranted into the implications of aggressive online sexual solicitation and how to address and prevent such experiences.


This article contributes to the study of children and the Internet by reporting on findings from an ethnographic study of children’s online use, experience and regulation in Melbourne, Australia. As part of a social inclusion study of technology use, we worked with children and their families in the contexts of everyday and home Internet use. This article begins by identifying age-related gaps in the literature on children’s online risks, and then moves on to a discussion of the research findings relating to children’s online mediation, conduct and competence. By developing a concept of digital wellbeing the article argues that rather than focus only on risk protection measures, it is important to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be active, ethical and critical participants online.


Sexting is one of the recurring causes of concern in public discussion of young people and network media. This paper builds on findings from a survey with 1,269 Finnish female respondents aged 11–18 conducted using a popular online community for girls on their experiences of and views on online messages concerning sex and sexuality. Sixty-five per cent of respondents had received messages related to sex from either adults or minors while 20% had also sent such messages themselves. The paper asks how girls experience and make sense of sexual messaging and what motivates them to engage in such interactions. Specific attention is paid to the
distinction between unwanted and wanted messages. While messages from unknown people identified as adult were often discussed as unpleasant or “creepy”, sexual messaging, role play, cybersex experiments and discussions related to sex among peers were defined as fun and pleasurable. Girls display notable resilience and describe coping strategies connected to unwanted messaging but equally frame sexual messaging and role play as issues of choice motivated by curiosity and pleasure. The paper addresses sexual messaging as a form of sexual play and learning, and argues for the importance of contextual analysis in understanding its forms and potentialities.


This small-scale study focuses on young children’s reported information and communication technology (ICT) experiences in the home and the role of parents in providing technological opportunities, recognition and support. The children of the parents involved were all enrolled in nursery and reception classes (4–5 years of age) in two settings (referred to hereafter as Stafford School and Hill School). The term home is used here to denote any context in children’s lives beyond the school/nursery environs while the interpretation of ICT is equally broad and inclusive in nature and encompasses any technology associated with the handling and electronic transmission of information and/or its use in controlling the operations of machines and other devices (HMI, 1989). In this context therefore ICT would include such things as telephones, televisions, video, audio recorders, CD and DVD players, CD-ROMs, programmable toys, games consoles, radios and, of course, computers. The study found that differences in the incidence and availability of ICT in the children’s homes could be subtle on occasion and were the result of a number of factors. Children might have “access” to certain technologies in that they were present in their home environments but this did not necessarily mean that children were always able and/or allowed to “use” those technologies. It supports the arguments made by Marsh and others elsewhere (Marsh, 2004; Marsh et al., 2005) that young children are already in possession of ICT knowledge and competences when they arrive in nursery and reception classes partly as a result of varying levels of parental intervention and modelling as well as being in the process of acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitudes. The study also argues that parents’ involvement with ICT was often characterised by conscious but sometimes uncertain efforts to limit opportunities and access to ICT in the perceived best interests of the children (Clarke, 2006).


Using social media websites is among the most common activity of today’s children and adolescents. Any website that allows social interaction is considered a social media site, including social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; gaming sites and virtual worlds such as Club Penguin, Second Life and the Sims; video sites such as YouTube; and blogs. Such sites offer today’s youth a portal for entertainment and communication and have grown exponentially in recent years. For this reason, it is important that parents become aware of the nature of social media sites, given that not all of them are healthy environments for children and adolescents. Pediatricians are in a unique position to help families understand these sites and to encourage healthy use and urge parents to monitor for potential problems with cyberbullying, “Facebook depression”, sexting, and exposure to inappropriate content.


Digital natives are now of age and comprise the new generation of early career teachers (ECTs). This is an important change in teacher demographics given that new technologies have been introduced into classrooms with expectations that teachers embed them effectively into the teaching of mathematics. This paper draws on the data of three separate studies and reanalyses it to explore how a small group of four early career primary school teachers use information and communication technologies (ICT) in their teaching of mathematics. Two of the ECTs were observed using interactive whiteboards in their mathematics teaching, and two were observed predominantly using tablets. Two important variables developed from the research presented in this paper suggest that ECT’s uses of technology to teach mathematics may not be without complications. First, the
teachers appeared to experience “device conflict”, in that the type of device and its particular affordances and limitations were the primary factors that influenced their mathematics. This was particularly evident in the uses of fixed and mobile devices. The interactive whiteboard (IWB) did not pose pedagogical challenges to the ECTs as their stable location facilitated the opportunity to still use these devices in traditional teaching ways. However, tablets did pose a problem because of their mobility and the need to reconfigure the organisation and to some extent the roles of teacher and student. The second finding was that the teachers’ mathematical knowledge for teaching appeared to be directly related to the ways they used their technology.


The recent proliferation of Internet-enabled technology has significantly changed the way adolescents encounter and consume sexually explicit material. Once confined to a personal computer attached to a telephone line, the Internet is now available on laptops, mobile phones, video game consoles, and other electronic devices. With the growth of the Internet has come easier and more ubiquitous access to pornography. The purpose of this article was to review the recent (i.e., 2005 to present) literature regarding the impact of Internet pornography on adolescents. Specifically, this literature review examined the impact of Internet pornography on sexual attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and sexual aggression. The authors also discuss the literature related to the influence of sexually explicit Internet material on self-concept, body image, social development, as well as the expanding body of research on adolescent brain function and physical development. Finally, recommendations for future research were discussed, based on this literature review.


While there is a popular belief that the digital generation is immersed in and adept at using digital media, recent studies point to a large variation among young people in their appropriation of digital technologies. This study examined the patterns of, and reasons for, infrequent use of digital technology among the younger generation, by conducting semi-structured interviews with 19 school-aged Australian youth. Infrequent users focused narrowly on a small number of applications and did not explore the wide range of available activities. This was mainly due to their lack of confidence and the perceived irrelevance of digital technologies to their lives. Most participants in this study had chosen a vocational path where computers and the Internet were not integral to their everyday learning experience. This deterred them from improving their digital media literacy. Based on observations, I argue that it is not sufficient merely to provide access to digital media; rather, users need motivation, skills and perceived benefits in order to utilise this technology fully. In the case of school-aged youth, schoolwork as well as their peer group culture influences how they situate themselves in the digital environment that surrounds them.


The question of mediation raises many issues since it entails a normative view about children's socialisation. How do media enter children’s lives and who has responsibility for regulating their potential risks or benefits? Parents, teachers, policy makers and the media—all seem to have an opinion. However, the role of parents is prominent since most media use occurs within the home. Structural changes in family life (James et al., 1998; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) may explain certain transformations within family dynamics (from less to more “democratic” styles of parenting) and account for changes in parental styles of mediating online activities (Eastin et al., 2006). Parents’ strategies toward media consumption reflect these dynamics and the family tensions and power relations that underlie the rules set and the way they are negotiated in different situations.


Although research has repeatedly demonstrated a link between adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) and sexual attitudes, the processes underlying this association are not well understood. More specifically, studies have pointed to a mediating role of perceived realism, but internally valid evidence is missing.
To address these problems, the authors used data from a three-wave panel study among 959 Dutch adolescents. They investigated whether two dimensions of the perceived realism of SEIM—social realism and utility—mediated the impact of SEIM on adolescents’ instrumental attitudes toward sex (i.e., the notion of sex as primarily physical and casual rather than affectionate and relational). Structural equation modelling showed that more frequent use of SEIM increased both the perceived social realism and the perceived utility of SEIM. In turn, these two perceptions led to more instrumental attitudes toward sex. No evidence of reverse causality emerged.


The goal of this review was to systematise empirical research that was published in peer-reviewed English-language journals between 1995 and 2015 on the prevalence, predictors and implications of adolescents’ use of pornography. This research showed that adolescents use pornography, but prevalence rates varied greatly. Adolescents who used pornography more frequently were male, at a more advanced pubertal stage, sensation seekers, and had weak or troubled family relations. Pornography use was associated with more permissive sexual attitudes and tended to be linked with stronger gender-stereotypical sexual beliefs. It also seemed to be related to the occurrence of sexual intercourse, greater experience with casual sex behaviour, and more sexual aggression, both in terms of perpetration and victimisation. The findings of this review need to be seen against the background of various methodological and theoretical shortcomings, as well as several biases in the literature, which currently precludes internally valid causal conclusions about effects of pornography on adolescents.


It is amazing how, in all the hoo-ha and debate these days about the decline of education in the USA, we ignore the most fundamental of its causes. Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach. Today’s students have not just changed incrementally from those of the past, nor simply changed their slang, clothes, body adornments, or styles, as has happened between generations previously. A really big discontinuity has taken place. One might even call it a “singularity”—an event that changes things so fundamentally that there is absolutely no going back. This so-called “singularity” is the arrival and rapid dissemination of digital technology in the last decades of the twentieth century. Today’s students—K-12 through college—represent the first generations to grow up with this new technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age. Today’s average college grad has spent fewer than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games (not to mention 20,000 hours watching TV). Computer games, e-mail, the Internet, cell phones and instant messaging are integral parts of their lives.


In Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1, the author discussed how the differences between our Digital Native students and their Digital Immigrant teachers lie at the root of a great many of today’s educational problems. It was suggested that Digital Natives’ brains are likely to be physically different as a result of the digital input they received when growing up. And the author submitted that learning via digital games is one good way to reach Digital Natives in their “native language.” Here the author presents evidence for why they think this is so. It comes from neurobiology, social psychology, and from studies done on children using games for learning.

Priebe, G. et al. (2013). To tell or not to tell? Youth’s responses to unwanted Internet experiences. Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 7(1).

This study is one of the first that investigated youth’s response to unwanted Internet experiences, not only for those youth who were bothered or distressed but for all youth who reported the experience. Three types of response were examined: telling someone about the incident and ending the unwanted situation by active or passive coping. Responses to the following unwanted Internet experiences were analysed: sexual solicitation, online harassment and unwanted exposure to pornography. The study was based on data from the Third Youth Internet Safety Survey (YISS-3), a telephone survey with a nationally representative US sample of 1,560 Internet users, ages 10-17, and their caretakers. Youth’s responses to unwanted Internet experiences differ depending on the type of unwanted experiences, whether they are distressed or have other negative reactions caused by the incident and—to some degree—other youth characteristics and incident characteristics. For example, not all youth who are distressed tell someone and not all youth who tell someone are distressed. Also, the reasons for telling may differ depending on whom they tell, and youth tell somebody less often about their victimisation
if they also are online perpetrators, but of different types of unwanted Internet experiences. Internet safety information for parents and parents’ active mediation of Internet safety does not seem to result in youth telling more often about unwanted Internet experiences.


This chapter describes the process, explains the aspects, analyses the experiences and considers the social policy implications, of cybersex among young people from the sexually conservative Mauritian society. This chapter is based on a study, in which it is found that some of young people from Mauritius are involved in cybersex. The chapter therefore argues that Internet-based technologies are further breaking down “the traditional and moral values”, which some politicians, religious leaders and parents want to preserve through social policy related to sexuality education in Mauritius. A sexual rights-based approach to policy-making and interventions for a formal sex education program in Mauritius is found more appropriate within this particular context, and therefore recommended in this chapter. Finally, this chapter concludes that an appropriate formal sex education for young people should take into account the “Net Culture” context within which contemporary young people are growing sexually in Mauritius.


In debates on young people’s engagements with new media, social networking sites (SNSs) have been explored as potentially democratising spaces allowing a wider spectrum of young users to engage with digital technology than ever before. In relation to gender difference, SNSs are viewed as places that have opened up girls’ and women’s use of new media, building on earlier claims about how online practices like personal websites and blogging have revolutionised girls’ access to and uses of digital technology. On the other hand, there are prominent public debates over children and sexualisation, for example, that position young people and particularly girls as at risk of exposure to online content or SNSs that are not age appropriate, and which may contain adult sexually explicit content or pornography, or even put young people at risk from online paedophiles. In this article we try to think through and beyond SNSs as sites of both gendered risk and opportunity, drawing on qualitative data from a UK study of teens’ uses of the SNS Bebo. We discuss and trouble what gendered and sexualised risk and opportunity might mean in relation to user-generated content and peer-to-peer networks. We situate peer networks as operating within wider postfeminist, pornified media contexts which may intensify dynamics like sexual objectification of girls’ bodies. But we also illustrate how girls navigate such trends in complex ways exploring instances of porno-chic performance and sexualised cyberbullying.


In this paper, we explore a contemporary panic around teen sexting considering why it focuses mostly on girls’ bodies and “breasts”. Drawing on empirical findings from research with 13 and 15 year olds in two London schools, we ask: How are girls’ and boys’ mediated bodies and body parts constructed, negotiated and made sense of in the teen peer group? How are images of girls’ breasts surveilled and owned by others? In what ways can images of girls’ bodies be used to sexually shame them? How do images of “boobs” work differently than those of “six-packs” and “pecs”? When and how is digital proof of sexual activity shamed or rewarded? Our analysis explores the affective dimensions of digital affordances and how relative gendered value is generated through social media images and practices. We demonstrate how our qualitative research approach facilitates exploration of the online and offline relational, material embodied performance of negotiating gender and sexuality in teen’s digitally mediated peer cultures.

This article explores gender inequities and sexual double standards in teens’ digital image exchange, drawing on a UK qualitative research project on youth “sexting”. We develop a critique of “postfeminist” media cultures, suggesting teen “sexting” presents specific age and gender related contradictions: teen girls are called upon to produce particular forms of “sexy” self display, yet face legal repercussions, moral condemnation and “slut shaming” when they do so. We examine the production/circulation of gendered value and sexual morality via teens’ discussions of activities on Facebook and Blackberry. For instance, some boys accumulated “ratings” by possessing and exchanging images of girls’ breasts, which operated as a form of currency and value. Girls, in contrast, largely discussed the taking, sharing or posting of such images as risky, potentially inciting blame and shame around sexual reputation (e.g., being called “slut”, “slag” or “sket”). The daily negotiations of these new digitally mediated, heterosexualised, classed and raced norms of performing teen feminine and masculine desirability are considered.


Since the early 2000s, sociologists of youth have been engaged in a debate concerning the relevance of “subculture” as a theoretical framework in the light of more recent postmodern-influenced interpretations of youth identities as fluid, dynamic and reflexively constructed. Utilising ethnographic data collected on the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia, this article considers such debates in relation to social network sites such as MySpace and Facebook. Although online identity expression has been interpreted as exhibiting subcultural qualities, preliminary empirical research informing this article lends itself to a more neo-tribal reading.


We live in an era of contested conceptualisations of childhood. On the one hand, the commercial imperative of contemporary capitalism has expanded into marketing for and to children. On the other hand, the predominant view of childhood as a natural, universal and biologically inherent period of human development, imagined as an age of innocence where the child is vulnerable to the threat of deviant sexuality, means that we experience a nervous dialectic in which children are held to be “naturally” innocent yet, at the same time, implicated in dangerous sexuality. This means that rather than seeing them as humans going through a complex and contradictory maturation process, we posit children as inherently pure, yet easily corrupted by exposure to explicit image material (Kleinhans, 2004, p. 72).


The authors examined exposure to Internet pornography before the age of 18, as reported by college students (*n* = 563), via an online survey: Ninety-three per cent of boys and 62% of girls were exposed to online pornography during adolescence. Exposure prior to age 13 was relatively uncommon. Boys were more likely to be exposed at an earlier age, to see more images, to see more extreme images (e.g., rape, child pornography), and to view pornography more often, while girls reported more involuntary exposure. If participants in this study are typical of young people, exposure to pornography on the Internet can be described as a normative experience, and more study of its impact is clearly warranted.


In the context of modern Western psychologised, techno-social hybrid realities, where individuals are incited constantly to work on themselves and perform their self-development in public, the use of online social networking sites (SNSs) can be conceptualised as what Foucault has described as a “technique of self”. This article explores examples of status updates on Facebook to reveal that writing on Facebook is a tool for self-formation with historical roots. Exploring examples of self-writing from the past, and considering some of the continuities and discontinuities between these age-old practices and their modern translations, provides
a non-technologically deterministic and historically aware way of thinking about the use of new media technologies in modern societies that understands them to be more than mere tools for communication.


It is now increasingly recognised that youth research needs to pay at least as much attention to the development of competences, resources, skills and assets as to the emergence of disadvantage and risk. This paper summarises recent developments in theory and research on resilience, a construct describing positive adaptation in the face of adversity, and explores possible applications of the theoretical advances and empirical findings to the development of interventions and social policies. A series of guiding principles are discussed along with examples of existing programs aiming to promote the wellbeing of disadvantaged, high-risk young people in our society.


The aim of this study was to investigate age and gender patterns in how adolescents use online pornography and with whom, their reason for using online pornography and how and to whom they communicate their experiences. The sample comprised 2,950 adolescents aged 11–17 (M age 14.08, 53.3% girls). Data were collected in primary and secondary schools in the Czech Republic. For girls, the results showed that the likelihood of using and discussing online pornography in mixed-gender peer settings increased with age. Romantic relationships were an important setting for these activities, especially among older girls. For boys, using online pornography to become sexually aroused was the only reason that increased with age. One-third of the respondents accessed online pornography in order to learn something about sex. The results suggest that adolescents use online pornography in line with their psychosexual development, and this finding needs to be taken into consideration when providing sex education in schools. This suggestion might be challenging, since this study also showed that adolescents were reluctant to talk about online pornography use with adults.


The aim of this study was to examine how young people are intentionally or unintentionally exposed to sexual material on the Internet. A sample from the EU Kids Online II project, including youth (n = 11,712, 11–16 years, 50% girls) from 25 countries, was used to examine predictors of unintentional exposure to online sexual material (EOSM) via pop-up images and intentional EOSM on adult/X-rated websites. Using a multilevel analysis, we considered several individual-level predictors (psychosocial characteristics, patterns of Internet use, and parental mediation), one country-level predictor (mean cultural liberalism of the country), and cross-level interactions. Except for gender, the study did not identify any specific patterns of individual-level predictors for unintentional and intentional EOSM: age, sensation seeking, sexual intercourse, amount of time spent online, level of digital skills, and degree of restrictive mediation predicted both types of EOSM. Intentional EOSM was more often reported by boys, while unintentional EOSM occurred to a similar degree among boys and girls. Finally, living in a country with a stronger culture of liberalism predicted a greater likelihood of intentional but not unintentional EOSM and also was associated with smaller gender differences in intentional EOSM.


There remains a dearth of research on what youth are doing when they are online and what they think about Internet. We contacted 450 adolescents from public high schools and applied a questionnaire to assess their Internet use as well as their opinions about Internet. Results showed that boys are more into Internet use. According to the self-reports, boys feel more addicted to Internet than girls as they feel uncomfortable when they are not online. Similarly, more boys than girls skip their homework due to long log-ins. According to the girls Internet is mostly a waste of time and causes addiction, and therefore not always helpful. The changes in the computer use purposes of children should be taken seriously. Getting more into online chatting and free surfing with increased amounts of daily Internet use might cause social isolation as well as Internet addiction.

New names are continuously being invented for new Internet generations. In 1998, Don Tapscott talked about the “Net Generation”, in 2001 Marc Prensky coined the term “digital natives”, and in 2006 Wim Veen and Ben Vrakking made reference to “homo zappiens”. All these authors are highlighting a discrepancy between older and younger generations, emphasising the seemingly natural capability of the latter to use and cope with an increasingly digitised world. These authors suggest that computers hold no secrets for the children of our era, who seem to master quite naturally the necessary digital skills. Although many parents and teachers share their opinion, they also worry about their children’s lack of the skills that enable these opportunities to be exploited in a way that is not harmful to the child.


The object of this review is to summarise the impact of the Internet on the sexual health of adolescents. This article examines the use of websites, blogs and chat rooms as sources for sexual health information for adolescents. The influence of Internet pornography on sexual behaviours and attitudes is addressed. The use of the Internet as a place to find sexual partners is also assessed. During a time of great physical, emotional and sexual change, the Internet is playing a huge role in the decisions adolescents are making, both positive and negative.


Earlier observations suggested that young children’s engagement with information and communication technologies (ICT) could be unproductive. Interplay: Play, Learning and ICT in Pre-school Settings set out to explore how practitioners can enhance 3 year olds’ to 4 year olds’ encounters with new technologies in the playroom. The study took place in preschool settings where practice was characterised by free play and child-initiated activity. Practitioners and researchers worked together in a process of guided enquiry with staff planning and implementing technology-based interventions in their playrooms. The concept of guided interaction is used to describe the kind of adult support necessary to enhance young children’s learning with a range of ICT. In this paper we present an elaborated understanding of guided interaction (considering both distal and proximal interactions) and our findings about children’s and practitioners’ learning when adults proactively support learning with ICT in the playroom.


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 behaviour become in their world view 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 behaviours with a partner. We conclude that pornography provides a powerful heuristic model which is implicated in men’s expectations and behaviours during sexual encounters.
Telstra, the Swinburne Institute for Social Research and the Centre for Social Impact have joined forces to develop a new national measure of digital inclusion—the Australian Digital Inclusion Index. This discussion sets out our general approach to developing the index, its objectives and key themes and provides examples of indicators that may form the basis of the index. The paper aims to encourage potential users of the index to guide the development of the index to make it as robust and useful as possible.


Previous research has suggested that adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) may result in sexual uncertainty because the content of SEIM may conflict with what adolescents have learned about sex. However, research on which type of adolescent is most susceptible to the relation between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty is lacking. This study therefore investigated whether the relationship between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty depends on within-gender differences in sexual dispositions (i.e., impersonal sex orientation and hyper-gendered orientation). Using data from a representative two-wave panel survey among 1,765 Dutch adolescents (aged 13–17), I found that SEIM use predicted sexual uncertainty only among girls with a low hyper-gendered orientation and girls with a relatively high impersonal sex orientation.


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 socialisation and engagement in sexting behaviour 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 behaviours 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 behaviour and pornography use held true for both boys and girls. Music video consumption was only significantly associated with asking someone for a sexting message and having received a sexting message. Further analyses revealed that these significant relationships only held for boys.


Communication scholars have repeatedly highlighted the importance of studying the type of content that media users are exposed to. However, although adolescents use sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) frequently, we know little about which specific types of SEIM they are exposed to. Moreover, knowledge is lacking about the antecedents of exposure to different types of SEIM and whether these antecedents differ between boys and girls. The present two-wave panel survey among 1,557 Dutch adolescents addressed these lacunae by studying exposure to affection-themed, dominance-themed and violence-themed SEIM. Younger adolescents were more often exposed to affection-themed SEIM, while older adolescents and adolescents with higher levels of academic achievement were more frequently exposed to dominance-themed SEIM. Hyper masculine boys and hyper feminine girls were more frequently exposed to violence-themed SEIM.


A large body of research argues that self-presentation strategies vary based on audience. But what happens when the technical features of websites enable—or even require—users to make personal disclosures to multiple audiences at once, as is often the case on social network sites (SNSs)? Do users apply a lowest common denominator approach, only making disclosures that are appropriate for all audience members? Do they employ
technological tools to disaggregate audiences? When considering the resources that can be harnessed from SNS interactions, researchers suggest users need to engage with their network in order to reap benefits. The present study presents a model including network composition, disclosures, privacy-based strategies, and social capital. Results indicate that (1) audience size and diversity impacts disclosures and use of advanced privacy settings, (2) privacy concerns and privacy settings impact disclosures in varying ways; and (3) audience and disclosure characteristics predict bridging social capital.


On the basis of an online survey of 352 teenagers aged between 16 and 19, the use of pornographic video clips and films was investigated along with the connection between this use and indicators of adolescents’ perceived autonomy, peer group influences, and notions of sexuality. We found that many adolescents regularly use pornographic video clips or films. Respondents who regard themselves as less independent of their environment, especially their parents, use pornography more frequently themselves. For girls, this also applies if they assess the use within their peer group as particularly extensive, and for boys, if they frequently discuss pornography within their peer group. A high level of consumption of sexually explicit media also goes hand in hand with the assumption that people generally have sexual intercourse earlier in life and that people generally favour more varied sexual techniques.


Opponents and proponents of erotic representations (referred to hereafter as “pornography”) have described the effects of pornography from their perspective. Little, however, has been done in the way of research to investigate these claims from the consumer’s point of view. This especially has been so regarding the positive impact of such consumption on a person’s sex life. Using a study group of 245 college students, we examined this question in a framework of scripting theory. We wanted to see whether viewing pornography appeared to expand sexual horizons through normalisation and facilitate a willingness to explore new sexual behaviours and sexual relationships through empowerment. The data supported this viewpoint and further showed the effects to be mediated by gender and sexual preference identity. They suggested, however, that established scripts were extended rather than abandoned. We conclude with connections between our findings and the widespread viewing of pornography in contemporary society.


The importance of socially supportive relationships in assisting people to cope with stress and adverse events is well recognised, but the trajectories whereby individuals develop the capacity to attract those supports have been infrequently studied. Taking advantage of a substantial longitudinal dataset, we aimed to explore the precursors during mid-adolescence, of satisfaction with social supports in young adulthood. Both personality factors (extraversion, neuroticism) and adolescent experiences of high quality interpersonal relationships with parents and peers were hypothesised to predict subsequent satisfactory supports; the authors wished to compare the influence of these factors. Participants in a study of the school to work transition (n = 558) provided psychosocial information at 16-17 years of age and then again six years later at 23, using paper and online questionnaires and standardised measures. Personality and family climate variables both predicted adult social support, with family cohesiveness and neuroticism having the largest roles. The possible implications for mental health promotion are discussed.


The Internet presents a world of opportunities for children and adolescents, but it also threatens communities with inappropriate content, cyberbullying among peers, and online predators—whether that is via connection to the Internet at home, in a cybercafé, or by Smartphone. To date, of those Member States that have some type of government-sponsored initiative on Internet safety (47%), the vast majority also specifically direct efforts at protecting children (93%). However, there is much room for growth as less than a quarter (22%) of responding countries legally require the use of “safety tools” in locations children are known to frequent (e.g., libraries and schools) in more developed countries.

Academics and lay people alike have contended for decades that children view pornography and are affected by this exposure. Pornography studies that actually sample children are a new phenomenon, however. This commentary summarises what we currently know about children’s exposure to pornography and the attitudinal and behavioural correlates of exposure. The author concludes with a call for research on factors that may moderate the effects of exposure and suggests that studies use the sexual script acquisition, activation and application model of media sexual socialisation as a theoretical guide.


Estimates suggest that up to 90% or more youth between 12 and 18 years have access to the Internet. Concern has been raised that this increased accessibility may lead to a rise in pornography seeking among children and adolescents, with potentially serious ramifications for child and adolescent sexual development. Using data from the Youth Internet Safety Survey, a nationally representative, cross-sectional telephone survey of 1,501 children and adolescents (ages 10–17 years), characteristics associated with self-reported pornography seeking behaviour, both on the Internet and using traditional methods (e.g., magazines), are identified. Seekers of pornography, both online and offline, are significantly more likely to be male, with only 5% of self-identified seekers being female. The vast majority (87%) of youth who report looking for sexual images online are 14 years of age or older, when it is developmentally appropriate to be sexually curious. Children under the age of 14 who have intentionally looked at pornography are more likely to report traditional exposures, such as magazines or movies. Concerns about a large group of young children exposing themselves to pornography on the Internet may be overstated. Those who report intentional exposure to pornography, irrespective of source, are significantly more likely to cross-sectionally report delinquent behaviour and substance use in the previous year. Further, online seekers versus offline seekers are more likely to report clinical features associated with depression and lower levels of emotional bonding with their caregiver. Results of the current investigation raise important questions for further inquiry. Findings from these cross-sectional data provide justification for longitudinal studies aimed at parsing out temporal sequencing of psychosocial experiences.


The purpose of this study was to explore the associations between the qualities of different types of relationships in school, social support and loneliness in adolescence. Using a sample \((n = 1,674)\) of adolescent students randomly selected from middle schools, we found boys’ loneliness was influenced by the qualities of opposite-sex, teacher–student and same-sex relationships, whereas girls’ loneliness was only influenced by same-sex relationships. Additionally, social support mediated the association between same-sex relationships and teacher–student relationships, and loneliness. Further, the quality of same-sex relationships showed stronger association with boys’ loneliness than girls’. Finally, the quality of same-sex relationships showed the strongest association with boys’ loneliness comparing with opposite-sex relationships and teacher–student relationships. These findings are discussed to illuminate the possible mechanisms by which interpersonal relationships could influence loneliness. In future research, causal relationships and other influencing factors on loneliness should be examined.

**Online harms**


This study examines the emotional and mental health effects revenge porn has on female survivors. To date, no other academic studies have exclusively focused on mental health effects in revenge porn cases. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted between February 2014 and January 2015 with 18 female revenge porn survivors, and inductive analysis revealed participants’ experiences of trust issues, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and several other mental health effects. These findings reveal the seriousness of revenge porn, the devastating impacts it has on survivors’ mental health, and similarities between revenge porn and sexual assault.


This research study investigates how communication technologies facilitate sexual violence against young people and what challenges this presents for the Victorian criminal justice system. Based on interviews with young people and professionals working with young people, it examines the effects of technology on the lives of young people, the interface between emerging communication technologies and experiences of sexual violence, and the factors that enable or hinder appropriate legal responses. Communication technologies such as online social networking sites and mobile phones are considered, and their use in identifying and grooming potential victims, blackmail and intimidation, sexting, harassment and pornography.


Commission for Children and Young People. (2015). “…as a good parent would…”: Inquiry into the adequacy of the provision of residential care services to Victorian children and young people who have been subject to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation whilst residing in residential care. Melbourne: Commission for Children and Young People.


Considerable scholarly attention has been paid to a range of criminal behaviours that are perpetrated with the aid of digital technologies. Much of this focus, however, has been on high-tech computer crimes, such as hacking, online fraud and identity theft, or child exploitation material and cyberbullying. Less attention has been paid to ‘technology-facilitated sexual violence’, where new technologies are used as tools to perpetrate or extend the harm of a sexual assault, extend control and abuse in a domestic violence situation, or distribute sexual or intimate images of another without their consent. In this article, the authors focus on the scope and limitations of criminal legislation for responding to these varied but interconnected gendered harms. They argue that although there have been some developments in a range of international jurisdictions, particularly relating to the phenomenon of “revenge pornography”, much more needs to be done both within and beyond the law. While they support the intervention of the criminal law, they argue that equal attention must be given to policies and practices of educators, law enforcement agencies, service providers, online communities and social media networks to fulfill the promise of equal and ethical digital citizenship.


The term sexting has come to be associated with media, political and public concern over young people’s involvement in the sending and/or receiving of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos of one another. Public discourses around sexting have framed the practice as problematic, reflecting long-held—and often very real—anxieties over young people and their sexuality. Of particular focus in relation to sexting have been the risks and harms associated with the practice and current or potential legal responses. Missing from much of this public discourse, however, have been the voices of young people themselves. In order to bring young people’s voices into the discourse, this article draws on research conducted with young people, as well as extensive legal and media analysis of sexting by young people. It contrasts these popular and legal discourses around sexting with the discourses of young people themselves, exploring the ways in which they understand and perceive sexting and how these perceptions converge with and diverge from dominant discourses. In this way, the article demonstrates the fundamental discord between such discourses, indicating the need to rethink legal responses to sexting between young people.


Plan International Australia & Our Watch (2016). “Don’t send me that pic”: Australian young women and girls report online abuse and harrassment are endemic. Online. Plan International Australia & Our Watch.


To date, the majority of attention to technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV) in both policy and practice has been on child sexual exploitation and abuse. Far less attention has been paid to digital sexualised violence against adult members of the population. The aim of this paper is to examine police responses to these serious and emerging harms, which we identify as including the following: (1) online sexual harassment; (2) gender and sexuality-based harassment; (3) cyberstalking; (4) image-based sexual exploitation (including “revenge pornography”); and (5) the use of communications technologies to coerce a victim into an unwanted sexual act. While these are variously criminal offences, unlawful civil behaviours or not subject to criminal or civil sanctions or remedies, we claim in this paper that they exist on a continuum of violence and yet the “real” harms of TFSV are frequently minimised in practice. Drawing on 30 stakeholder interviews with police, legal services and domestic and sexual violence service sector providers, we explore the issues, challenges and promises of law enforcement in this area. We argue that greater attention must be paid to recognising the serious harms of digital abuse and harassment; the role of criminal law in responding to these behaviours; and the importance of investing in police resources to adequately tackle these growing behaviours in a constantly shifting and amorphous digital era.


**Exposure to pornography**


To discover adolescent Internet users’ experiences with, exposure to, and perceptions of sexually oriented websites (SOW) and sexually explicit websites (SEW), four web-based focus groups (n = 40) were conducted. Participants (ages 14–17) reported high levels of exposure to SEW and SOW, which was intentional for some and unsolicited for others. Female adolescents found SEW to be socially distasteful; some adolescent males avoided SEW while others were willing consumers. Participants believed exposure to SEW had no influence on them, and reported that their parents were unaware of what they view online. Future research should explore the effects of exposure to SEW and to SOW and mediating factors.


Objective: To determine the prevalence of children and youth exposure to sexual content and inappropriate sexual questions on the Internet; and to identify emotional and behavioural reactions of children after such exposures. Methods: Sample of the study included 2,880 of children and youth aged 10–16 who identified themselves as Internet users. Participants were questioned using Questionnaire on Child Experiences in Internet Use. Results: Results show that 27% of children were exposed to messages of sexual content, mostly containing images of human nudity and sexual activity. Study also shows that children have experienced inappropriate
sexual questions on the Internet. Exposure to questions of intimate nature increased with their age with certain differences in exposure and disturbing emotional reactions related to gender and age. Conclusion: Results obtained by this study show that about a quarter of children are at risk for exposure to sexual content on the Internet. Practical implications: Research results can be used as a starting point for further research in order to throw more light on children and youth exposure to sexual content on the Internet. Furthermore, results can be used in developing prevention strategies for high-risk behaviour of children and youth using the Internet and in working with children, parents and teachers.


A survey was conducted among 692 Australian 13 to 16 year olds to examine aspects of their Internet use and, in particular, their exposure to inappropriate material and behaviours online and their online safety practices. Significant differences were found in the amount of exposure to inappropriate material or behaviours online according to sex and frequency of usage, with males and more frequent Internet users showing greater exposure. No differences were found according to whether blocking or filtering software was installed. Significant differences in online safety practices were also found, with younger participants (13 to 14 year olds) and those participants whose parents had not discussed Internet safety with them being less safety conscious.


Youth in Australia are routinely exposed to sexually explicit images. Among 16 and 17 year olds, three-quarters of boys and one-tenth of girls have ever watched an X-rated movie. Three-quarters of 16 and 17 year-olds have been exposed accidentally to pornographic websites, while 38% of boys and 2% of girls have deliberately accessed them. Internet pornography is a particularly pervasive source of minors’ exposure to pornography, both accidental and deliberate. Two features of children’s exposure to pornography mirror those among adults. First, males are more likely to seek out, and are more frequent consumers of, both X-rated movies and pornographic websites. Second, Internet users of any age find it difficult to avoid unwanted encounters with sexually explicit materials.


Exposure to pornography is routine among children and young people, with a range of notable and often troubling effects. Particularly among younger children, exposure to pornography may be disturbing or upsetting. Exposure to pornography helps to sustain young people’s adherence to sexist and unhealthy notions of sex and relationships. And, especially among boys and young men who are frequent consumers of pornography, including of more violent materials, consumption intensifies attitudes supportive of sexual coercion and increases their likelihood of perpetrating assault. While children and young people are sexual beings and deserve age-appropriate materials on sex and sexuality, pornography is a poor, and indeed dangerous, sex educator.


Purpose: This study was designed to track trends in reports of unwanted sexual solicitations, harassment, and unwanted exposure to pornography via the Internet between 2000 and 2005 across various demographic subgroups of youth. Methods: Cross-sectional data was collected in two equivalent national telephone surveys of 1,500 Internet users, ages 10 through 17 years. Bivariate and multivariate analyses were used to determine whether the percentage of youth reporting specific unwanted Internet experiences had changed in 2005, as compared with 2000. Results: The overall incidence and five-year trends of reporting unwanted sexual solicitations, harassment, and unwanted exposure to pornography varied by age, gender, race, and household income. In particular, the decline in the percentage of youth reporting sexual solicitations was apparent for both boys and girls, all age groups, but not among minority youth and those living in less affluent households. The increase in harassment among particular subgroups of youth was largely explained by increases in amount of Internet use over the past five years. The increase in unwanted exposure to pornography was particularly apparent among 10 to 12 year olds, 16 to 17 year olds, boys, and white, non-Hispanic youth. Conclusions: The decline in the percentage of youth reporting sexual solicitations may be the effect of education and law enforcement activity on this issue in the intervening years. Targeted prevention efforts for minority youth and those living in less affluent households need to be developed. The rise in unwanted pornography exposure may reflect technological changes such as digital photography, faster Internet connections and computer storage capacities, as well as the more aggressive marketing strategies of pornography merchants.

Drawing on a survey of 745 Dutch adolescents ages 13 to 18, the authors investigated (a) the occurrence and frequency of adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit material on the Internet and (b) the correlates of this exposure. Seventy-one per cent of the male adolescents and 40% of the female adolescents had been exposed to some kind of online sexually explicit material in the six months prior to the interview. Adolescents were more likely to be exposed to sexually explicit material online if they were male, were high sensation seekers, were less satisfied with their lives, were more sexually interested, used sexual content in other media more often, had a fast Internet connection, and had friends that were predominantly younger. Among male adolescents, a more advanced pubertal status was also associated with more frequent exposure to online sexually explicit material. Among female adolescents, greater sexual experience decreased exposure to online sexually explicit material.


We examined exposure to Internet pornography before the age of 18, as reported by college students (n = 563), via an online survey. Ninety-three per cent of boys and 62% of girls were exposed to online pornography during adolescence. Exposure prior to age 13 was relatively uncommon. Boys were more likely to be exposed at an earlier age, to see more images, to see more extreme images (e.g., rape, child pornography), and to view pornography more often, while girls reported more involuntary exposure. If participants in this study are typical of young people, exposure to pornography on the Internet can be described as a normative experience, and more study of its impact is clearly warranted.


The study objectives were to evaluate the prevalence, predictors and implications of pornographic Internet site (PIS) use among Greek adolescents. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 529 randomly selected Greek high school students. The prevalence of overall PIS use was 19.47% (n = 96). Among PIS users, 55 (57.29%) reported infrequent and 41 (42.71%) reported frequent PIS use. The predictors of infrequent PIS use included male gender (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] = 8.33; 95% confidence interval [CI] = 3.52–19.61), Internet use for sexual education (AOR = 5.26; 95% CI = 1.78–15.55), chat rooms (AOR = 2.95; 95% CI = 1.48–5.91), and purchases (AOR = 3.06; 95% CI = 1.22–7.67). The predictors of frequent PIS use were male gender (AOR = 19.61; 95% CI = 4.46–83.33), Internet use for sexual education (AOR = 7.39; 95% CI = 2.37–23.00), and less than ten hours per week Internet use (AOR = 1.32; 95% CI = 1.10–1.59). Compared to non-PIS users, infrequent PIS users were twice as likely to have abnormal conduct problems (odds ratio [OR] = 2.74; 95% CI = 1.19–6.28); frequent PIS users were significantly more likely to have abnormal conduct problems (OR = 4.05; 95% CI = 1.57–10.46) and borderline prosocial score (OR = 4.22; 95% CI = 1.64–10.85). Thus, both infrequent and frequent PIS use are prevalent and significantly associated with social maladjustment among Greek adolescents.


Estimates suggest that up to 90% or more youth between 12 and 18 years have access to the Internet. Concern has been raised that this increased accessibility may lead to a rise in pornography seeking among children and adolescents, with potentially serious ramifications for child and adolescent sexual development. Using data from the Youth Internet Safety Survey, a nationally representative, cross-sectional telephone survey of 1,501 children and adolescents (ages 10–17 years), characteristics associated with self-reported pornography seeking behaviour, both on the Internet and using traditional methods (e.g., magazines), are identified. Seekers of pornography, both online and offline, are significantly more likely to be male, with only 5% of self-identified seekers being female. The vast majority (87%) of youth who report looking for sexual images online are 14 years of age or older, when it is developmentally appropriate to be sexually curious. Children under the age of 14 who have intentionally looked at pornography are more likely to report traditional exposures, such as magazines or movies. Concerns about a large group of young children exposing themselves to pornography on the Internet may be overstated. Those who report intentional exposure to pornography, irrespective of source, are significantly more likely to cross-sectionally report delinquent behaviour and substance use in the previous year. Further, online seekers versus offline seekers are more likely to report clinical features associated with depression and lower levels of emotional bonding with their caregiver. Results of the current investigation raise important questions for further inquiry. Findings from these cross-sectional data provide justification for longitudinal studies aimed at parsing out temporal sequencing of psychosocial experiences.
Effects of pornography

Aggression


Sexually reactive children and adolescents (SRCAs), sometimes referred to as juvenile sexual offenders, may be more vulnerable and likely to experience damaging effects from pornography use because they are a high-risk group for a variety of aggressive behaviours. The purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics of those who use pornography and those who do not and to examine the associations between pornography use and aggressive behaviours among SRCAs. This secondary analysis used a descriptive, exploratory design to study 160 SRCAs. Chi-square and individual odds ratio analyses were employed to examine the associations between use of pornography and aggressive behaviours. SRCAs who used pornography were more likely to display aggressive behaviours than their non-using cohort. Recommendations for nurses and mental health professionals encountering these children and adolescents are offered.


There is ample evidence that young people are using social media in grooming and bullying to abuse and exploit others sexually with enough frequency to make those behaviours important concerns for both society and care providers. This article provides a critical overview of the conceptual and theoretical foundations for “grooming” among peers and use of social media within harmful sexual behaviour. It introduces a model for intervention based on the literature on memory bundles, thinking and problem solving and highlights how the suggested model may be applied in practice.


The Confluence Model of sexual aggression (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000) states that pornography use, thought to promote sexual coercion of women through presentation of submissive female imagery, works in conjunction with sexual promiscuity (SP) and hostile masculinity (HM), proposed sexual aggression risk factors, to produce anti-woman sexual aggression. An Internet-based survey (*n* = 183 adult males) replicated results of previous Confluence Model research, such that men who were high in HM and SP were more likely to report sexual coercion when they frequently, rather than infrequently, used pornography. Exploring new ground, this study also found that HM and SP together were strong predictors of consumption of violent sexual media, in comparison to non-violent sexual media, which suggests that men at high risk of sexual aggression consume different types of sexual material than men at low risk. Further, individual differences in sex drive were found to account for the effects previously attributed to pornography use in statistical tests of the Confluence Model. In the light of third variable considerations, these findings warrant a careful reappraisal of the Confluence Model’s assertion that pornography use is a causal determinant of anti-woman sexual aggression.

This cross-sectional study examined 804 adolescents, boys and girls, aged from 14 to 19 years, attending different types of high schools in the northwest of Italy; the questionnaire “Me and My Health” (Bonino, 1996) was used to collect data. The main goals were: (i) to investigate the relationship between active and passive forms of sexual harassment and violence and the relationship between pornography (reading magazines and viewing films or videos) and unwanted sex among adolescents; (ii) to explore the differences in these relationships with respect to gender and age; and (iii) to investigate the factors (pornography, gender and age) that are most likely to promote unwanted sex. The findings showed that active and passive sexual violence and unwanted sex and pornography were correlated. However, reading pornographic material was more strongly linked to active sexual violence, while being a boy was found to be protective against passive sexual violence. Nevertheless, some effects of viewing pornographic films on passive unwanted sex were also found, especially among girls.


College women’s exposure to pornography is growing nationwide. A limited amount of research exists documenting the negative effects of pornography on women’s attitudes and behaviour related to sexual assault. The present study surveyed sorority members at a Midwestern public university on their pornography use, rape myth acceptance, bystander efficacy, and bystander willingness to help in potential sexual assault situations. Results showed that women who view pornography are significantly less likely to intervene as a bystander and are more likely to believe rape myths. Implications for women’s personal safety and for the advisability of consuming pornography are discussed.


Correlates of use and subsequent sexual attitudes and behaviours predicted by exposure to sexually explicit content (i.e., pornography and erotica) in adult magazines, X-rated movies, and the Internet were examined in a prospective survey of a diverse sample of early adolescents (average age at baseline = 13.6 years; n = 967). Two-thirds (66%) of males and more than one-third (39%) of females had seen at least one form of sexually explicit media in the past year. At baseline, being black, being older, and having less-educated parents, lower socio-economic status, and high need for sensation were related to greater exposure for both males and females. Longitudinal analyses showed that early exposure for males predicted less progressive gender role attitudes, more permissive sexual norms, sexual harassment perpetration, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse two years later. Early exposure for females predicted subsequently less progressive gender role attitudes, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse. Implications for healthy sexual socialisation are discussed.


The effects of pornography, whether violent or non-violent, on sexual aggression have been debated for decades. The current review examines evidence about the influence of pornography on sexual aggression in correlational and experimental studies and in real-world violent crime data. Evidence for a causal relationship between exposure to pornography and sexual aggression is slim and may, at certain times, have been exaggerated by politicians, pressure groups and some social scientists. Some of the debate has focused on violent pornography, but evidence of any negative effects is inconsistent, and violent pornography is comparatively rare in the real world. Victimisation rates for rape in the United States demonstrate an inverse relationship between pornography consumption and rape rates. Data from other nations have suggested similar relationships. Although these data cannot be used to determine that pornography has a cathartic effect on rape behaviour, combined with the weak evidence in support of negative causal hypotheses from the scientific literature, it is concluded that it is time to discard the hypothesis that pornography contributes to increased sexual assault behaviour.


Use of pornography is common among adolescents and young adults, with most men and a growing number of women viewing regularly. A vast body of research suggests pornography use is associated with multiple attitudinal and behavioural variables. One of those associations, for both men and women, is higher pornography use is correlated with a lower likelihood of intervening to prevent sexual assault. The present study explored how
motives for viewing pornography related to male \((n = 139)\) and female \((n = 290)\) college students' willingness and efficacy to intervene to help prevent a sexual assault from occurring. We found that several motivations to view pornography were associated with suppression of willingness to intervene as a bystander, even after controlling for frequency of pornography use. This study joins others in suggesting an association between pornography use and callousness toward sexual violence.


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 behaviour 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 behavioural intent to rape, and are more likely to believe rape myths.


A meta-analysis was conducted to determine whether non-experimental studies revealed an association between men's pornography consumption and their attitudes supporting violence against women. The meta-analysis corrected problems with a previously published meta-analysis and added more recent findings. In contrast to the earlier meta-analysis, the current results showed an overall significant positive association between pornography use and attitudes supporting violence against women in non-experimental studies. In addition, such attitudes were found to correlate significantly higher with the use of sexually violent pornography than with the use of non-violent pornography, although the latter relationship was also found to be significant. The study resolves what appeared to be a troubling discordance in the literature on pornography and aggressive attitudes by showing that the conclusions from non-experimental studies in the area are in fact fully consistent with those of their counterpart experimental studies. This finding has important implications for the overall literature on pornography and aggression.


The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief review of the literature concerning the effects of the consumption of pornography on men's attitudes toward women. Several theories, including feminist theories, social learning theory, and aggression models are employed to help explain the effects of pornography among consumers and explore the connection between pornography consumption and gender discrimination. The research cited suggests that a relationship exists between consuming pornography and attitudes that are supportive of violence against women, men's dominance over women, and objectification of women. It also suggests that a relationship exists between consuming pornography and the expectation that, in a sexual setting, most women hold the same desires and behave in the same manner as the women featured in pornography. These findings specifically hold significance for feminist and humanist groups examining gender stereotypes and gender discrimination. They can also be used to support further research on male entitlement, sexual exploitation, the abuse of women, and the role that the media plays in facilitating inequalities.


Path analysis was used to assess the contribution of four exogenous developmental variables (sexual abuse, physical abuse, exposure to violence, exposure to pornography—each occurring prior to age 13) and four personality constructs (“psychopathic and antagonistic attitudes,” “psychosocial deficits,” “pedophilia,” “hostile masculinity”) to the prediction of non-sexual delinquency and number of male child victims in a sample of 256 adolescent males with a history of “hands-on” sexual offending. “Psychosocial deficits” was found to partially mediate the effects of the exogenous variables on both outcomes. Exposure to violence both directly, and indirectly through “psychopathic and antagonistic attitudes,” contributed to the prediction of non-sexual delinquency. Sexual abuse by a male directly, and indirectly through “hostile masculinity” and “pedophilia”, contributed to prediction of number of male child victims. Clinical implications of the findings are discussed.

The influence of pornography on attitudes and behaviours has been a longstanding question that has provoked considerable debate among researchers (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000; Marshall, 2000). Evidence associating pornography consumption with aggression would be important, not only for public policy and legislation, but in the assessment and treatment of special populations, such as sexual offenders. In this commentary, the authors briefly discuss the methodologies in which pornography’s putative effects have been examined, with particular note of the aggregate approach employed by Diamond, Jozifkova, and Weiss (2010). They conclude with a brief review of the literature on pornography’s role in affecting negative attitudes and behaviours among certain individuals.


This article reviews the extant literature regarding pornography’s influence on antisocial attitudes, sexual arousal, and sexually aggressive behaviour in both noncriminal and criminal samples. The article concludes that when examined in the context of multiple, interacting factors, the findings are highly consistent across experimental and non-experimental studies and across differing populations in showing that pornography use can be a risk factor for sexually aggressive outcomes, principally for men who are high on other risk factors and who use pornography frequently. Finally, this article presents theoretical implications based on these findings, as well as some clinical implications relevant to the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders.


Little is known about risk/protective factors for sexually coercive behaviour in general population youth. We used a Swedish school-based population survey of sexual attitudes and experiences (response rate 77%) and investigated literature-based variables across sexually coercive (SEX), non-sexual conduct problem (CP), and normal control (NC) participants to identify general and specific risk/protective factors for sexual coercion. Among 1,933 male youth, 101 (5.2%) reported sexual coercion (ever talked or forced somebody into genital, oral, or anal sex) (SEX), 132 (6.8%) were classified as CP, and the remaining 1,700 (87.9%) as NC. Of 29 tested variables, 25 were more common in both SEX and CP compared to NC youth, including minority ethnicity, separated parents, vocational study program, risk-taking, aggressiveness, depressive symptoms, substance abuse, sexual victimisation, extensive sexual experiences, and sexual preoccupation. When compared to CP youth only, SEX youth more often followed academic study programs, used less drugs and were less risk-taking. Further, SEX more frequently than CP youth reported gender stereotypic and pro-rape attitudes, sexual preoccupation, prostitution, and friends using violent porn. Finally, in a multivariate logistic regression, academic study program, pro-rape attitudes, sexual preoccupation, and less risk-taking independently remained more strongly associated with SEX compared to CP offending. In conclusion, several socio-demographic, family, and individual risk/protective factors were common to non-sexual and sexually coercive antisocial behaviour in late adolescence. However, pro-rape cognitions, and sexual preoccupation, were sexuality-related, specific risk factors. The findings could inform preventive efforts and the assessment and treatment of sexually coercive male youth.


Sexual coercion is recognised as a serious societal problem. Correlates and risk factors of sexually abusive behaviour in females are not well known. Etiological theory and empirical study of female perpetrators of sexual coercion are usually based on small or highly selected samples. Specifically, population-based data are needed to elucidate risk/protective factors. Main outcome measures include a self-report questionnaire containing 65 items tapping socio-demographic and health conditions, social relations, sexual victimisation, conduct problems and a set of normative and deviant sexual cognitions, attitudes, and behaviours. The authors used a 2003–2004 survey of sexual attitudes and experiences among high school students in Norway and Sweden to identify risk factors and correlates to sexually coercive behaviour (response rate 80%); 4,363 females participated (Mean = 18.1 years). Results: Thirty-seven women (0.8%) reported sexual coercion (ever talked someone into, used pressure, or forced somebody to have sex). Sexually coercive compared with non-coercive women were similar on socio-demographic variables, but reported less parental care and more parental overprotection, aggression, depressive symptoms, and substance misuse. Also, sexually coercive females reported more sexual
lust, sex partners, penetrative sexual victimisation, rape myths, use of violent porn, and friends more likely to use porn. When using the Swedish subsample to differentiate risk factors specific for sexual coercion from those for antisocial behaviour in general, we found less cannabis use, but more sexual preoccupation, pro-rape attitudes, and friends using violent porn in sexually coercive compared with non-sex conduct problem females. Conclusions: Sexually coercive behaviour in high school women was associated with general risk/needs factors for antisocial behaviour, but also with specific sexuality-related risk factors. This differential effect has previously been overlooked, agrees with similar findings in men, and should have substantial etiological importance.


According to radical feminist theory, pornography serves to further the subordination of women by training its users, males and females alike, to view women as little more than sex objects over whom men should have complete control. Composite variables from the General Social Survey were used to test the hypothesis that pornography users would hold attitudes that were more supportive of gender non-egalitarianism than non-users of pornography. Results did not support hypotheses derived from radical feminist theory. Pornography users held more egalitarian attitudes toward women in positions of power, toward women working outside the home, and toward abortion than non-users of pornography. Further, pornography users and pornography non-users did not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the traditional family and in their self-identification as feminist. The results of this study suggest that pornography use may not be associated with gender non-egalitarian attitudes in a manner that is consistent with radical feminist theory.


This article focuses on the effects of exposure to pornography on teenagers, particularly males, and concentrates on sexually aggressive outcomes and on the characteristics of the individual as crucial in determining whether pornography consumption may or may not lead to sexually aggressive outcomes. In future work, it is important not to use an overly simplistic lens of focus in which pornography exposure is seen as generally harmful or not. Depending on particular constellations of personality characteristics, the effects of pornography may differ considerably among different teenagers as well as within different cultures. The research suggests that particular concerns may be needed for those who are highly frequent consumers of pornography, those who seek out sexually violent content, and those who also have other risk factors.


Based on the Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression, the authors hypothesised that individual differences in risk for sexual aggression moderate the association between pornography use and attitudes supporting violence against women. This hypothesis was in keeping with the findings of a recent meta-analysis that indicated such a positive association between porn use and attitudes. However, in this meta-analysis there was also a high degree of heterogeneity among studies, suggesting the existence of crucial moderating variables. Unfortunately, the available literature included in this meta-analysis did not enable identifying the basis for such moderation. To fully test our hypothesis of individual differences moderation and related hypotheses requires a representative sample. Fortunately, a unique nationally representative sample of US men in any form of post-high school education that we obtained in 1984-85 enabled testing our predictions. Participants had anonymously completed questionnaires that included items pertaining to pornography use, attitudes about violence against women, and other measures assessing risk factors highlighted by the Confluence Model. As predicted, while we found an overall positive association between pornography consumption and attitudes, further examination showed that it was moderated by individual differences. More specifically, as predicted this association was found to be largely due to men at relatively high risk for sexually aggression who were relatively frequent pornography consumers. The findings help resolve inconsistencies in the literature and are in line not only with experimental research on attitudes but also with both experimental and non-experimental studies assessing the relationship between pornography consumption and sexually aggressive behaviour.
Effects of pornography


Purpose: Extant scholarship has examined pornography’s putative link to the commission of sex crime. Yet, virtually no research speaks to whether an offender’s exposure to pornography during many different stages of life elevates the violence of a sex offense. The current study addresses this gap. Methods: Using retrospective longitudinal data, we systematically investigate the effect of offender pornography exposure during adolescence, adulthood, and immediately prior to the offense on the level of physical injury as well as the extent of humiliation experienced by sex crime victims. Results: Findings indicate that adolescent exposure was a significant predictor of the elevation of violence—it increased the extent of victim humiliation. Results also suggest a tempering, or cathartic effect of pornography—using pornography just prior to the offense was correlated with reduced victim physical injury. No effects, however, were observed for adult pornography exposure. Conclusion: Pornography use may differentially influence offenders’ propensity to harm or degrade victims over the life course.


The recent proliferation of Internet-enabled technology has significantly changed the way adolescents encounter and consume sexually explicit material. Once confined to a personal computer attached to a telephone line, the Internet is now available on laptops, mobile phones, video game consoles, and other electronic devices. With the growth of the Internet has come easier and more ubiquitous access to pornography. The purpose of this article was to review the recent (i.e., 2005 to present) literature regarding the impact of Internet pornography on adolescents. Specifically, this literature review examined the impact of Internet pornography on sexual attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and sexual aggression. The authors also discuss the literature related to the influence of sexually explicit Internet material on self-concept, body image, social development, as well as the expanding body of research on adolescent brain function and physical development. Finally, recommendations for future research were discussed, based on this literature review.


The goal of this review was to systematise empirical research that was published in peer-reviewed English-language journals between 1995 and 2015 on the prevalence, predictors and implications of adolescents’ use of pornography. This research showed that adolescents use pornography, but prevalence rates varied greatly. Adolescents who used pornography more frequently were male, at a more advanced pubertal stage, sensation seekers, and had weak or troubled family relations. Pornography use was associated with more permissive sexual attitudes and tended to be linked with stronger gender-stereotypical sexual beliefs. It also seemed to be related to the occurrence of sexual intercourse, greater experience with casual sex behaviour, and more sexual aggression, both in terms of perpetration and victimisation. The findings of this review need to be seen against the background of various methodological and theoretical shortcomings, as well as several biases in the literature, which currently precludes internally valid causal conclusions about effects of pornography on adolescents.


Over the past three decades, an accepted “given” of adolescent sexually abusive behaviour assessment and treatment has been that the more serious the sexual acts committed, the more entrenched that adolescent’s behaviours are likely to be, with a likely progression from minor assaults through to more serious, intrusive acts. We assume youth engaging in the sexually abusive behaviour may have become both desensitised to the harm they are causing, while needing to engage in more severe offences to gain the level of arousal originally achieved through lesser acts. This conceptualisation suggests a somewhat causal relationship between the duration of the sexually abusive behaviour; the severity of the behaviour and the length of treatment required to manage and treat the issue. Has pornography consumption potentially impacted the assessment and treatment of youth who sexually harm? Does a relationship exist between the severity and the entrenchedness of the sexually assaultive acts committed, or has viewing pornography and re-enacting what has been viewed altered this relationship? This article explores a number of these themes and questions.

The aims of this article are to analyse exposure to pornography, its content, and the associations between victimisation and pornography in a sample of 303 students (49.2% female). The questionnaire included questions on pornography exposure, psychological and physical family violence, and sexual violence. Almost all male students and 67% of female students had ever watched pornography; 42% and 32%, respectively, had watched violence against women. Female students exposed to family psychological violence and to sexual violence were significantly more likely to watch pornography, especially violent pornography than those who had not been exposed. No such association was found among male students.


Information about the pornography-viewing habits of urban, low-income youth of colour in the United States is lacking. This study was designed to answer the following using a sample of 16 to 18 year old urban-residing, low-income Black or Hispanic youth: (1) What types of pornography do youth report watching; where and for what purpose? (2) Do youth feel that pornography exposure has an impact on their own sexual behaviours? and (3) How do parents react to their pornography use? The following themes emerged from interviews with 23 youth: (1) Youth primarily reported watching pornography that featured one-on-one sexual intercourse but also reported having seen extreme pornography (e.g., public humiliation, incest); (2) youth reported watching pornography on home computers or smartphones, and that pornography was frequently watched in school; (3) youth reported watching for entertainment, for sexual stimulation, instructional purposes, and to alleviate boredom; many copied what they saw in pornography during their own sexual encounters; (4) pressure to make or to imitate pornography was an element of some unhealthy dating relationships; and (5) parents were generally described as unsupportive of youth’s use of pornography but underequipped to discuss it. Approximately one-fifth expressed a preference for pornography featuring actors of their same race/ethnicity.


Sexual violence against women is a major concern to researchers and policy makers, as well as to the general public. This study uses a sample of more than 2,000 college students to investigate the extent to which exposure to harsh parenting practices and sexually explicit materials contributes to perpetration and victimisation. Findings indicate that frequent corporal punishment in the family of origin combined with consumption of pornographic materials increased the probability that males reported engaging in coercive sexual practices. For females, both frequent corporal punishment and exposure to paternal hostility combined with consumption of pornographic materials were associated with higher levels of reported sexual victimisation. These results provide increased understanding of the impact of pornography use among a nonclinical sample, as well as the consequences of experiencing harsh corporal punishment in one’s family of origin, on the sexual victimisation of females.


New technology has made pornography increasingly accessible to young people, and a growing evidence base has identified a relationship between viewing pornography and violent or abusive behaviour in young men. This article reports findings from a large survey of 4,564 young people aged 14 to 17 in five European countries which illuminate the relationship between regular viewing of online pornography, sexual coercion and abuse and the sending and receiving of sexual images and messages, known as “sexting.” In addition to the survey, which was completed in schools, 91 interviews were undertaken with young people who had direct experience of interpersonal violence and abuse in their own relationships. Rates for regularly viewing online pornography were very much higher among boys and most had chosen to watch pornography. Boys’ perpetration of sexual coercion and abuse was significantly associated with regular viewing of online pornography. Viewing online pornography was also associated with a significantly increased probability of having sent sexual images/messages for boys in nearly all countries. In addition, boys who regularly watched online pornography were significantly more likely to hold negative gender attitudes. The qualitative interviews illustrated that, although sexting is normalised and perceived positively by most young people, it has the potential to reproduce sexist features of pornography such as control and humiliation. Sex and relationships education should aim to promote a critical understanding of pornography among young people that recognizes its abusive and gendered values.

The main focus of the present study was to examine the unique contribution (if any) of pornography consumption to men's sexually aggressive behaviour. Even after controlling for the contributions of risk factors associated with general antisocial behaviour and those used in Confluence Model research as specific predictors of sexual aggression, we found that high pornography consumption added significantly to the prediction of sexual aggression. Further analyses revealed that the predictive utility of pornography was due to its discriminative ability only among men classified (based on their other risk characteristics) at relatively high risk for sexual aggression. Other analyses indicated that the specific risk factors accounted for more variance in sexual aggression than the general risk factors and mediated the association between the general risk factors and sexual aggression. We illustrate the potential application of the findings for risk assessment using a classification tree.


Whether pornography consumption is a reliable correlate of sexually aggressive behaviour continues to be debated. Meta-analyses of experimental studies have found effects on aggressive behaviour and attitudes. That pornography consumption correlates with aggressive attitudes in naturalistic studies has also been found. Yet, no meta-analysis has addressed the question motivating this body of work: Is pornography consumption correlated with committing actual acts of sexual aggression? Twenty-two studies from seven different countries were analysed. Consumption was associated with sexual aggression in the United States and internationally, among males and females, and in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. Associations were stronger for verbal than physical sexual aggression, although both were significant. The general pattern of results suggested that violent content may be an exacerbating factor.


Longitudinal linkages between intentional exposure to X-rated material and sexually aggressive behaviour 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 generalised estimating equations was used to represent the population-average odds of sexually aggressive behaviour 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 behaviour 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 six-fold increase in the odds of self-reported sexually aggressive behavior (aOR: 5.8, 95% CI: 3.2, 10.5), whereas exposure to nonviolent X-rated material was not statistically significantly related (aOR: 1.7, 95% CI: 0.94, 2.9). Associations were similar for boys and girls (boys nonviolent X-rated material aOR = 2.0, 95% CI: 0.8, 4.7; violent X-rated material aOR = 6.5, 95% CI: 2.7, 15.3; girls nonviolent X-rated material aOR = 1.2, 95% CI: 0.5, 3.2; violent X-rated material (aOR = 6.1, 95% CI: 2.5, 14.8).

**Attitudes and gender stereotypes**


Guided by a feminist perspective, the authors examined young men’s recollection of their reactions to and the familial and social contexts in which they realised that they were seeing an explicit sexual image for the first time. The sample consisted of 199 young men enrolled in a human sexuality class who responded to questions regarding the what, when, where, with whom, and how they felt about and reacted to seeing a sexualised image. On average, participants were in elementary school and without adult supervision when they found their first image in a form of media that was readily available in the home. Implications for family life education for both parents and children include direct and knowledgeable communication about sexuality to counter the often sensationalising, objectifying, and entitled culture in which boys are informally initiated into adult sexuality.

It is generally accepted that pornography is widely consumed by young men and that mainstream heterosexual pornography is characterised by a dynamic of male sexual dominance and female submission. What is less agreed upon is whether such pornography is a source of “sexist education” (Flood, 2010) for men or whether men engage with it in an empathic and ethical manner. In this study, we discuss findings from interviews with 21 young men about pornography and its consumption. They described it as normative for men to watch pornography and they described “extreme” content as “normal.” It was clear that they were unused to having to account for the appeal of pornography. Men’s discussion of male sexual dominance and female submission, and violence against women, within pornography was characterised by detachment. Most of the men did not take up the challenge to notice and critically respond to the sexism within the material they described. There were some exceptions, with a minority of the participants reflecting on the ethical dilemmas posed by their consumption of such pornography.


This article reviews qualitative research into the consumption of pornography and other sexually explicit media emerging from a range of subject areas. Taking a critique of quantitative methods and a focus on measuring sexual effects and attitudes as a starting point, it considers the proposition that qualitative work is more suited to an examination of the complex social, cultural, and political constructions of sexuality. Examining studies into the way men, women, and young people see, experience, and use explicit media texts, the article identifies the key findings that have emerged. Qualitative work shows that sexually explicit media texts are experienced and understood in a variety of ways and evoke strong and often contradictory reactions, not all of which are represented in public debates about pornography. These texts function in a range of different ways, depending on context as a source of knowledge, a resource for intimate practices, a site for identity construction, and an occasion for performing gender and sexuality. The article reviews these studies and their findings, identifying what they suggest about directions for future research, both in terms of developing methodology and refining approaches to sexuality and media consumption.


The Internet has made sexually explicit media more accessible to young people. Online pornography is diverse, can be very graphic, and a large amount is available free of charge with restrictions varying by country. Many young people are accessing online pornography, intentionally or unintentionally, and there are fears that this could impact on their sexual development and future relationships. Current research into the effects of viewing pornography on attitudes and behaviours of young people is patchy and often contradictory. Via an anonymous survey of 218 young people and focus group discussions with 23 teaching professionals in outer London schools, this study examines whether young people and teaching professionals consider pornography use to have harmful effects, and if they feel schools should be incorporating teaching about online pornography in their educational programs. Findings reveal that young people and teachers perceive there to be many negative effects of viewing pornography, particularly at a young age. Young people and teachers agree that schools should teach about the risks associated with online pornography viewing. Recommendations for schools about how to facilitate discussion of issues surrounding pornography use as part of the wider sex education programme are made, including the involvement of parents.


Purpose: Mass media play an important role in the socialisation of youth. Given its expanding nature and accessibility, the Internet may be at the forefront of this education. However, the extent of the Internet’s impact on adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviours is not yet known. Methods: A total of 433 adolescents completed an anonymous survey at a health centre in New York City. The cross-sectional survey assessed Internet accessibility, exposure to sexually explicit websites (SEWs), sexual behaviours, and sexually permissive attitudes. Results: Of the participants, 96% had Internet access, and 55.4% reported ever visiting a SEW. Logistic regression analyses revealed that adolescents exposed to SEWs were more likely to have multiple lifetime sexual partners (OR = 1.8, CI = 1.2, 2.9), to have had more than one sexual partner in the last three months (OR = 1.8, CI = 1.1, 3.1), to have used alcohol or other substances at last sexual encounter (OR = 2.8, CI = 1.5, 5.2), and to have engaged
Effects of pornography in anal sex (OR = 2.0, CI = 1.2, 3.4). Adolescents who visit SEWs display higher sexual permissiveness scores compared with those who have never been exposed (2.3 vs 1.9, p < or = .001), indicating a more permissive attitude. Conclusions: Exposure to Internet pornography has potential implications for adolescent sexual relationships, such as number of partners and substance use. SEWs can serve an educational purpose and create an opportunity for adults to engage adolescents in discussions about sexual health and consumption of Internet material. Longitudinal research is needed to evaluate how exposure to SEWs influences youth attitudes and sexual behaviours.


College women's exposure to pornography is growing nationwide. A limited amount of research exists documenting the negative effects of pornography on women’s attitudes and behaviour related to sexual assault. The present study surveyed sorority members at a Midwestern public university on their pornography use, rape myth acceptance, bystander efficacy, and bystander willingness to help in potential sexual assault situations. Results showed that women who view pornography are significantly less likely to intervene as a bystander and are more likely to believe rape myths. Implications for women’s personal safety and for the advisability of consuming pornography are discussed.


Correlates of use and subsequent sexual attitudes and behaviours predicted by exposure to sexually explicit content (i.e., pornography and erotica) in adult magazines, X-rated movies, and the Internet were examined in a prospective survey of a diverse sample of early adolescents (average age at baseline = 13.6 years; n = 967). Two-thirds (66%) of males and more than one-third (39%) of females had seen at least one form of sexually explicit media in the past year. At baseline, being black, being older, and having less-educated parents, lower socio-economic status, and high need for sensation were related to greater exposure for both males and females. Longitudinal analyses showed that early exposure for males predicted less progressive gender role attitudes, more permissive sexual norms, sexual harassment perpetration, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse two years later. Early exposure for females predicted subsequently less progressive gender role attitudes, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse. Implications for healthy sexual socialisation are discussed.


This study examined correlates of pornography acceptance and use within a normative (nonclinical) population of emerging adults (individuals aged 18–26). Participants included 813 university students (500 women; M age = 20 years) recruited from six college sites across the United States. Participants completed online questionnaires regarding their acceptance and use of pornography, as well as their sexual values and activity, substance use, and family formation values. Results revealed that roughly two thirds (67%) of young men and one half (49%) of young women agree that viewing pornography is acceptable, whereas nearly nine out of ten (87%) young men and nearly one third (31%) of young women reported using pornography. Results also revealed associations between pornography acceptance and use and emerging adults’ risky sexual attitudes and behaviours, substance use patterns, and non-marital cohabitation values. The discussion considers the implications of pornography use during the transition to adulthood.


Although research has repeatedly demonstrated that adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is related to their endorsement of permissive sexual attitudes and their experience with sexual behaviour, it is not clear how linkages between these constructs unfold over time. This study combined two types of longitudinal modeling, mean-level development and cross-lagged panel modelling, to examine (a) developmental patterns in adolescents’ SEIM use, permissive sexual attitudes, and experience with sexual behaviour, as well as whether these developments are related; and (b) longitudinal directionality of associations between SEIM use on the one hand and permissive sexual attitudes and sexual behaviour on the other hand. We used four-wave longitudinal data from 1,132 7th through 10th grade Dutch adolescents (M (age) T1 = 13.95; 52.7% boys) and estimated multigroup models to test for moderation by gender. Mean-level developmental trajectories showed that boys occasionally and increasingly used SEIM over the 18-month study period, which co-occurred with increases in their permissive attitudes and their experience with sexual behaviour. Cross-lagged panel models revealed
unidirectional effects from boys’ SEIM use on their subsequent endorsement of permissive attitudes, but no consistent directional effects between their SEIM use and sexual behaviour. Girls showed a similar pattern of increases in experience with sexual behaviour, but their SEIM use was consistently low and their endorsement of permissive sexual attitudes decreased over the 18-month study period. In contrast to boys, girls’ SEIM use was not longitudinally related to their sexual attitudes and behaviour. Theoretical and practical implications of these gender-specific findings are discussed.


This study used a person-centred approach to examine whether different developmental trajectories of boys’ and girls’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) exist, which factors predict these trajectories, and whether sexual behaviour develops differently for adolescents in these trajectories. A combination of latent class growth analysis on SEIM use and latent growth curve analysis on sexual behaviour was used on four-wave longitudinal data of 787 eighth through tenth grade Dutch adolescents. Among boys, four SEIM use trajectories were identified, which were labelled Non-use/Infrequent Use, Strongly Increasing Use, Occasional Use, and Decreasing Use. Among girls, a large Stable Non-use/Infrequent Use and smaller Strongly Increasing Use and Stable Occasional Use trajectories were distinguished. Higher initial levels and/or stronger increases in SEIM use were predicted by demographic, social contextual, personal, and media use characteristics, including a stronger sexual interest, a higher degree of perceived realism regarding sexualised Internet content, and more permissive sexual attitudes. Moreover, initial levels of and, to some extent, developmental changes in sexual behaviour varied for boys and girls in the different SEIM use trajectories. Whereas some adolescents showed concurrent low levels, or parallel strong increases in SEIM use and sexual behaviour, a subgroup of boys decreased their SEIM use while increasing their sexual behavior.


Exposure to pornography is routine among children and young people, with a range of notable and often troubling effects. Particularly among younger children, exposure to pornography may be disturbing or upsetting. Exposure to pornography helps to sustain young people’s adherence to sexist and unhealthy notions of sex and relationships. And, especially among boys and young men who are frequent consumers of pornography, including of more violent materials, consumption intensifies attitudes supportive of sexual coercion and increases their likelihood of perpetrating assault. While children and young people are sexual beings and deserve age-appropriate materials on sex and sexuality, pornography is a poor, and indeed dangerous, sex educator.


Use of pornography is common among adolescents and young adults, with most men and a growing number of women viewing regularly. A vast body of research suggests pornography use is associated with multiple attitudinal and behavioural variables. One of those associations, for both men and women, is higher pornography use is correlated with a lower likelihood of intervening to prevent sexual assault. The present study explored how motives for viewing pornography related to male (n = 139) and female (n = 290) college students’ willingness and efficacy to intervene to help prevent a sexual assault from occurring. We found that several motivations to view pornography were associated with suppression of willingness to intervene as a bystander, even after controlling for frequency of pornography use. This study joins others in suggesting an association between pornography use and callousness toward sexual violence.


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 behaviour 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 behavioural intent to rape, and are more likely to believe rape myths.

Literature indicates that 72% of adolescent girls are exposed to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) before the age of 18, and between 2% and 30% of girls report intentionally seeking SEIM. Despite the recognition that adolescent girls are consuming SEIM, and that their use impacts behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes, there has been limited attention paid to their experience of SEIM use. Findings have suggested that adolescent girls often use SEIM as a tool for sex education, posing high risks in the development of ideas about sex, sexuality, intimacy, and relationships based on unrealistic depictions of sex in SEIM. This dissertation examined the psychosexual impacts on adolescent girls viewing SEIM and factors, such as caregiver–teen communication, that protect adolescent girls from the negative impacts of their SEIM use. The dissertation explored how exposure and use of SEIM affects adolescent girls’ ideas of sex, perceptions of self, beliefs, attitudes, sexual relationships, sexual behaviours, and health. Grounded in an extensive review of the literature within the topic area, the dissertation addressed protective factors against the negative impacts of SEIM exposure and discussed the development of a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls. Open and honest communication between the primary caregiver and adolescent about sex and sexuality has been found to reduce adolescents’ risky sexual behaviours and contribute their development of a healthy sexual self. As a means to disseminate the literature findings, a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls was developed within the framework of Protection Motivation Theory.


Pornography is one of the most sought-after topics on the Internet, and is easily available for anyone, including children and adolescents. At youth centres, nurse-midwives have noticed that young people have different kinds of questions about sexual practices compared with a few years ago. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of thoughts and reflections about pornography consumption, and its possible influence on sexual practices, among young women and men. The staff at a youth centre in a city in central Sweden asked the visitors if they had seen pornography and if they wanted to be interviewed about their experiences. Ten young women and eight men, aged 16–23 years, participated. In-depth interviews were performed and open-ended questions about pornography and sexuality were posed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed according to grounded theory. The core category “Living with the current sexual norm” depicted how pornography created sexual expectations and demands, for instance, to perform certain sexual acts. The informants expressed contradictory feelings towards pornography and felt that sexuality was separated from intimacy. A moral attitude was described and examples of stereotypic gender roles were given. To deal with the current sexual norm, informants had different individual handling strategies and attitudes to pornography, namely liberal, normalisation, distance, feminist or conservative. Limitations of this study were the small sample size and that results from a qualitative research study cannot be generalized. The results contribute to an understanding of how pornographic material can influence young peoples’ thoughts, reflections and sexual behaviour. This indicates the importance, for personnel at youth centres and schools, to discuss sexual behaviour and how sexuality is portrayed in pornographic material with young people.


Objectives: To investigate consumption of and attitudes toward pornography in relation to demographic factors and relationships to parents among third-year high school students. Methods: A random sample of 718 students with a mean age 18 years (range 17–21) completed a classroom questionnaire consisting of 89 questions. Results: More students in practical than in theoretical study programs had parents with a practical profession ($p < 0.001$). More parents to students attending theoretical programs owned their housing ($p < 0.001$). More men than women had ever consumed pornography (38% vs 72%; $p < 0.001$). More practical than theoretical students were influenced by watching pornographic films, fantasising about ($p < 0.05$) or having performed acts inspired by pornography ($p < 0.05$). Both theoretical and practical male students had more favourable attitudes toward pornography than either group of female students ($p < 0.001$, $p = 0.037$). More female, than male students, were of the opinion that pornography could create uncertainty and demands. Conclusion: Students’ high school program choices partly reflect their social background. Pornography was consumed mainly by male students, who also had the most favourable attitudes, while females mainly had negative attitudes. To promote sexual health these differences between genders and study programmes should be taken into consideration in counselling, and in sex- and relationships education.

Using a probability-based sample of young Danish adults and a randomised experimental design, this study investigated effects of past pornography consumption, experimental exposure to nonviolent pornography, perceived realism of pornography, and personality (i.e., agreeableness) on sexist attitudes (i.e., attitudes toward women, hostile and benevolent sexism). Further, sexual arousal mediation was assessed. Results showed that, among men, an increased past pornography consumption was significantly associated with less egalitarian attitudes toward women and more hostile sexism. Further, lower agreeableness was found to significantly predict higher sexist attitudes. Significant effects of experimental exposure to pornography were found for hostile sexism among low in agreeableness participants and for benevolent sexism among women. These experimental exposure effects were found to be mediated by sexual arousal.


Despite the vast number of Canadian young adults who consume sexually explicit Internet movies (SEIM), the potential influences SEIM consumption has on overall sexual health remains understudied. This study aimed to develop insight into what Canadian young adults perceive to be the influences of consuming SEIM on six components of sexual health: sexual knowledge, sexual self-perception, sexual activity, sexual partner relations, perceptions of sexuality, and overall wellbeing. Employing an exploratory qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 urban, heterosexual young adults (ages 19–29), who self-identified as having consumed SEIM for a period of at least one year. All interviews were audiotaped with permission, transcribed verbatim and analysed using principles of constructivist grounded theory. Young adults described a wide range of influences that encompassed topics beyond physical reactions, to include experiences with overall sexuality and sexual self. These influences were perceived to result in both health benefits and health challenges. The disparities between this study’s findings and other empirical SEIM studies suggest that conceptualizing SEIM consumption using person-centred, holistic perspectives may help researchers more effectively capture the multitude of diverse ways SEIM can influence Canadians’ sexual health.


The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief review of the literature concerning the effects of the consumption of pornography on men's attitudes toward women. Several theories, including feminist theories, social learning theory, and aggression models are employed to help explain the effects of pornography among consumers and explore the connection between pornography consumption and gender discrimination. The research cited suggests that a relationship exists between consuming pornography and attitudes that are supportive of violence against women, men's dominance over women, and objectification of women. It also suggests that a relationship exists between consuming pornography and the expectation that, in a sexual setting, most women hold the same desires and behave in the same manner as the women featured in pornography. These findings specifically hold significance for feminist and humanist groups examining gender stereotypes and gender discrimination. They can also be used to support further research on male entitlement, sexual exploitation, the abuse of women, and the role that the media plays in facilitating inequalities.


This article reviews the extant literature regarding pornography’s influence on antisocial attitudes, sexual arousal, and sexually aggressive behaviour in both noncriminal and criminal samples. The article concludes that when examined in the context of multiple, interacting factors, the findings are highly consistent across experimental and non-experimental studies and across differing populations in showing that pornography use can be a risk factor for sexually aggressive outcomes, principally for men who are high on other risk factors and who use pornography frequently. Finally, this article presents theoretical implications based on these findings, as well as some clinical implications relevant to the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders.

According to radical feminist theory, pornography serves to further the subordination of women by training its users, males and females alike, to view women as little more than sex objects over whom men should have complete control. Composite variables from the General Social Survey were used to test the hypothesis that pornography users would hold attitudes that were more supportive of gender non-egalitarianism than non-users of pornography. Results did not support hypotheses derived from radical feminist theory. Pornography users held more egalitarian attitudes toward women in positions of power, toward women working outside the home, and toward abortion than nonusers of pornography. Further, pornography users and pornography nonusers did not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the traditional family and in their self-identification as feminist. The results of this study suggest that pornography use may not be associated with gender non-egalitarian attitudes in a manner that is consistent with radical feminist theory.


Aims and scope: The usage of mobile phones and the Internet by young people has increased rapidly in the past decade, approaching saturation by middle childhood in developed countries. Besides many benefits, online content, contact or conduct can be associated with risk of harm; most research has examined whether aggressive or sexual harms result from this. The authors examine the nature and prevalence of such risks, and evaluate the evidence regarding the factors that increase or protect against harm resulting from such risks, so as to inform the academic and practitioner knowledge base. They also identify the conceptual and methodological challenges encountered in this relatively new body of research, and highlight the pressing research gaps.

Methods: Given the pace of change in the market for communication technologies, we review research published since 2008. Following a thorough bibliographic search of literature from the key disciplines (psychology, sociology, education, media studies and computing sciences), the review concentrates on recent, high quality empirical studies, contextualising these within an overview of the field. Findings: Risks of cyberbullying, contact with strangers, sexual messaging (“sexting”) and pornography generally affect fewer than one in five adolescents. Prevalence estimates vary according to definition and measurement, but do not appear to be rising substantially with increasing access to mobile and online technologies, possibly because these technologies pose no additional risk to offline behaviour, or because any risks are offset by a commensurate growth in safety awareness and initiatives. While not all online risks result in self-reported harm, a range of adverse emotional and psychosocial consequences is revealed by longitudinal studies. Useful for identifying which children are more vulnerable than others, evidence reveals several risk factors: personality factors (sensation-seeking, low self-esteem, psychological difficulties), social factors (lack of parental support, peer norms) and digital factors (online practices, digital skills, specific online sites). Conclusions: Mobile and online risks are increasingly intertwined with pre-existing (offline) risks in children’s lives. Research gaps, as well as implications for practitioners, are identified. The challenge is now to examine the relations among different risks, and to build on the risk and protective factors identified to design effective interventions.


Since the advent of the Internet, the sex industry has profited from an unprecedented proximity to the home environment. Consequently, couples, families, and individuals of all ages are being impacted by pornography in new ways. Examining the systemic impact of Internet pornography, however, is relatively uncharted territory and the body of systemically focused research is limited. A review of the research that does exist was undertaken and many negative trends were revealed. While much remains unknown about the impact of Internet pornography on marriages and families, the available data provide an informed starting point for policy-makers, educators, clinicians and researchers.


Objective: The aims were to gain a deeper understanding of how personnel, who work with adolescents, reason about the effect of pornography and its spread in the media, and to explore how well prepared they consider themselves to be in addressing sexual health and gender equality. Design and sample: An inductive, exploratory, qualitative study with focus group discussions was selected. Seventeen participants with different professions were invited into five heterogeneous groups. Measures: Data were analysed according to grounded theory.
Results: Conflicting messages about sexuality became the core category. Participants were of the opinion that pornography conveyed a contradictory message compared with national public health goals, societal laws, and regulations. They believed that young people use pornography as a source of information and stimulation. Furthermore, they thought that pornography contributed to norm-creating ideals and a demanding sexuality, thus, confirming the traditional gender order. The participants opined that a professional approach was required when addressing sexuality and gender equality issues and requested better training tools and more cultural competence. Conclusions: Professionals working with adolescents perceived that pornography conveys a conflicting message about sexuality. They expressed a need for adequate tools for improving education on health and sexuality, including gender equality aspects and critical media analysis.


Objectives: To describe and get a deeper understanding of how groups of young women and men reflect on and discuss pornography and its spread in the media and society, and its possible influence on sexual behaviour and relationships. Methods: Six focus group interviews were conducted with teenagers, three with women (n = 17) and three with men (n = 18). Open questions about pornography and its spread in the media and society were discussed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed according to Grounded Theory. Results: The core category “A discriminatory sexuality” illustrates how participants felt regarding the messages conveyed by pornography portraying a man’s role as dominant and a woman’s role as subordinate. Pornographic messages were described as “fiction” depicting a distorted reality. Feelings of ambivalence towards pornography were expressed: anxiety and fear, but also inspiration. Participants said pornography occurred everywhere in the media and society, and felt pressured by messages relating to looks and sexual techniques. Conclusions: Pornography and its spread in the media and society were considered as presenting a discriminatory image of body ideals, sexuality and relationships. Despite this awareness, both men and women considered pornography as sources of knowledge and inspiration: an apparent paradox.


Objectives: The study investigated the differences between high school boys and girls in: (1) the use of pornography, (2) sexual experiences, (3) experience of sexual abuse, and (4) perceptions of sexuality and pornography. It also examined the possible predictors of experiencing sexual activities, such as sex, socio-demographic factors (high school program, household and ethnic background), pornography consumption, experience of sexual abuse, perception of sexuality, and perception of pornography. Method: A population-based classroom survey of 16-year-old boys (n = 477) and girls (n = 400) from 53 randomly selected high school classes in two towns in mid-Sweden. Results: Almost all boys (96%, n = 453) and 54% of the girls (n = 213) had watched pornography. Regardless of sex, pornography consumers had a positive perception of pornography. There were no differences between pornography-consuming boys and girls regarding fantasies, and they had attempted sexual acts inspired by pornography. A higher proportion of girls (15%) than boys (6%) had experienced sexual abuse. Predictors for being sexually experienced (oral sex, intercourse and anal sex) included: being a girl, attending a vocational high school program, living with separated parents, having experience of sexual abuse, stating that boys and girls are equally interested in sex, and having a positive perception of pornography (Adj. R2 = 0.166). Conclusion: Boys had more experience of and a more positive perception of pornography but there were only a few differences between boys and girls in the pornography-consumer group. Girls were more sexually experienced than boys. A positive perception of pornography predicted being sexually experienced.


Objective: To describe patterns of pornography use among high school boys and to investigate differences between frequent, average, and non-frequent users of pornography with respect to sexual experiences, lifestyles and self-rated health. Methods: A population-based classroom survey among 16-year-old boys (n = 477), from 53 randomly selected high school classes in two towns in mid-Sweden. Results: Almost all boys, 96% (n = 453), had watched pornography. Frequent users of pornography (everyday) (10%, n = 47) differed from average users (63%, n = 292) and non-frequent users (27%, n = 126). Frequent users versus average users and non-frequent users had more sexual experiences, such as one-night stands (45%, 32%, 25%, respectively) and sex with friends more than 10 times (13, 10, 2%). A higher proportion of frequent users spent more than 10 straight hours at the computer several times a week (32, 5, 8%) and reported more relationship problems with peers (38, 22, 21%), truancy at least once a week (11, 6, 5%), obesity (13, 3, 3%), use of oral tobacco (36, 29, 20%), and use of alcohol (77, 70, 52%) versus...
average and non-frequent users. One third of frequent users watched more pornography than they actually wanted. There were no differences between the groups regarding physical and psychological self-rated health. Conclusions: The boys defined as frequent users of pornography were more sexually experienced, spent more time at the computer, and reported an unhealthier lifestyle compared with average and non-frequent users. No differences regarding self-rated health were detected even though obesity was twice as common among frequent users.


Objective: This survey provides data about the attitudes towards women of 1,023 pornography consumers in Australia, and the relationships between these attitudes, their level of pornography consumption, and several other demographic variables. Method: A survey of 1,023 consumers of pornography in Australia recruited through mailing lists of pornography consumers, and via the Internet. Results: There was no relationship demonstrated between consumers’ attitudes towards women and the amount of pornography consumed; but there was a relationship between greater negative attitudes towards women and being older; voting for a right-wing political party, living in a rural area; having a lower level of formal education; and being a man. Conclusions: The paper suggests that consuming pornography is not a significant factor in the generation of negative attitudes towards women.

Implications: The survey suggests that in seeking to understand how negative attitudes towards women are generated in society we should start by asking what issues might be most important, rather than beginning with the assumption that pornography is the major cause of such attitudes.


In recent debates about the regulation of technologies that deliver pornographic content, the greatest concerns have been about the increasing ease with which young people can access such material. Because of the ethical difficulties in researching this topic, little data has been available on the potential harms done to young people by exposure to pornography. This paper gathers a number of sources of data that address this issue indirectly—including the results of our own survey of over 1,000 consumers of pornography—to explore this issue. Research shows that healthy sexual development includes natural curiosity about sexuality. Retrospective studies show that accidental exposure to real-life scenes of sexuality does not harm children. Our survey shows that age of first exposure to pornography does not correlate with negative attitudes towards women. Studies with non-explicit representations of sexuality show that young people who seek out sexualised representations tend to be those with a pre-existing interest in sexuality. These studies also suggest that current generations of children are no more sexualised than previous generations; that they are not innocent about sexuality; and that a key negative effect of this knowledge is the requirement for them to pretend to be ignorant in order to satisfy adults’ expectations of them. Research also suggests important differences between pre- and post-pubescent attitudes towards pornography; and that pornography is not addictive.


Porno? Chic! examines the relationship between the proliferation of pornography and sexualised culture in the West and social and cultural trends which have advanced the rights of women and homosexuals. Contents including Introduction; Pornosphere; Porno? Chic!: Porno fear; What’s pornography ever done for us? The argument from evidence; Gaga-ing for it: the feminisation of pornography and sexual culture; Pornography and the politics of sexual inclusion; The aesthetics of sexual transgression; Drop porn not bombs; Conclusion.


It has been an assumption of most anti-pornography discourse that porn damages women (and children) in a variety of ways. In Porno? Chic! the author interrogated this assumption by examining the correlation between the incidence of sexual violence and other indicators of misogyny, and the availability and accessibility of pornography within a number of societies. This article develops that work with a specific focus on the regulatory environment as it relates to pornography and sexual representation. Does a liberal regulatory regime in sexual culture correlate with a relatively advanced state of sexual politics in a given country? Conversely, does an illiberal regime, where pornography and other forms of sexual culture are banned or severely restricted, correlate with relatively strong patriarchal structures? A comparative cross-country analysis seeks to explain the correlations identified, and to assess the extent to which the availability of porn can be viewed as a causal or a consequential characteristic of those societies where feminism has achieved significant advances.

This study examined how levels of sexually explicit material (SEM) use during adolescence and young adulthood were associated with sexual preferences, sexual behaviours, and sexual and relationship satisfaction. Participants included 782 heterosexual college students (326 men and 456 women; M(age) = 19.9) who completed a questionnaire online. Results revealed high frequencies and multiple types and contexts of SEM use, with men’s usage rates systematically higher than women’s. Regression analyses revealed that both the frequency of SEM use and number of SEM types viewed were uniquely associated with more sexual experience (a higher number of overall and casual sexual intercourse partners, as well as a lower age at first intercourse). Higher frequencies of SEM use were associated with less sexual and relationship satisfaction. The frequency of SEM use and number of SEM types viewed were both associated with higher sexual preferences for the types of sexual practices typically presented in SEM. These findings suggest that SEM use can play a significant role in a variety of aspects of young adults’ sexual development processes.


Pornography use is often associated with less-progressive sex-role attitudes, such as endorsement of a sexual double standard between heterosexual partners, but the process by which this relationship occurs is still largely unexamined. The present study was conducted to examine how perceptions about pornography may play a role in the relationship between pornography use and sex-role attitudes. Perceived general acceptance and perceived influence of pornography on most people partially mediated the relationship between pornography use and sex-role attitudes. The more participants reported using pornography, the more they believed pornography was generally accepted and had a positive influence; however, conversely to what was hypothesised, the more positive they perceived pornography’s influence, the less likely they were to report sex-role attitudes that endorse a sexual double standard.


The recent proliferation of Internet-enabled technology has significantly changed the way adolescents encounter and consume sexually explicit material. Once confined to a personal computer attached to a telephone line, the Internet is now available on laptops, mobile phones, video game consoles, and other electronic devices. With the growth of the Internet has come easier and more ubiquitous access to pornography. The purpose of this article was to review the recent (i.e., 2005 to present) literature regarding the impact of Internet pornography on adolescents. Specifically, this literature review examined the impact of Internet pornography on sexual attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and sexual aggression. The authors also discuss the literature related to the influence of sexually explicit Internet material on self-concept, body image, social development, as well as the expanding body of research on adolescent brain function and physical development. Finally, recommendations for future research were discussed, based on this literature review.


Previous research has largely ignored the implications of adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit online material for their sexual attitude formation. To study whether adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit material on the Internet is related to recreational attitudes toward sex, we conducted an online survey among 471 Dutch adolescents aged 13–18. In line with an orientation 1—stimulus—orientation 2—response (O1–S–O2–R) model, we found a pattern of multiple mediated relationships. Male adolescents (O1) used sexually explicit online material (S) more than female adolescents, which led to a greater perceived realism of such material (O2). Perceived realism (O2), in turn, mediated the relationship between exposure to sexually explicit online material (S) and recreational attitudes toward sex (R). Exposure to sexually explicit online material, then, is related to more recreational attitudes toward sex, but this relationship is influenced by adolescents’ gender and mediated by the extent to which they perceive online sexual material as realistic.

This study was designed to investigate whether adolescents’ exposure to a sexualized media environment is associated with stronger beliefs that women are sex objects. More specifically, the authors studied whether the association between notions of women as sex objects and exposure to sexual content of varied explicitness (i.e., sexually non-explicit, semi-explicit, or explicit) and in different formats (i.e., visual and audiovisual) can be better described as cumulative or as hierarchical. Further, they investigated whether this association was contingent on gender. Based on data from an online survey of 745 Dutch adolescents aged 13-18, the authors found that the relationship between exposure to a sexualised media environment and notions of women as sex objects followed a hierarchical pattern: Starting with adolescents’ exposure to sexually semi-explicit content, the statistical significance of the relationship with notions of women as sex objects moved from semi-explicit to explicit sexual content and from visual to audiovisual formats. Exposure to sexually explicit material in online movies was the only exposure measure significantly related to beliefs that women are sex objects in the final regression model, in which exposure to other forms of sexual content was controlled. The relationship between exposure to a sexualised media environment and notions of women as sex objects did not differ for girls and boys.


The link between adolescents’ exposure to sexual media content and their sexual socialisation has hardly been approached from an identity development framework. Moreover, existing research has largely ignored the role of adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material in that association. This study introduces two characteristics of adolescents’ sexual self—sexual uncertainty and attitudes toward sexual exploration—and investigates these characteristics as potential correlates of adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material. Drawing from a sample of 2,343 Dutch adolescents aged 13 to 20, the authors find that more frequent exposure to sexually explicit Internet material is associated with greater sexual uncertainty and more positive attitudes toward uncommitted sexual exploration (i.e., sexual relations with casual partners/friends or with sexual partners in one-night stands). The findings call for more attention to adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit material on the Internet and identity-related issues.


The main aim of this study was to investigate whether adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) increased their sexual preoccupancy (i.e., a strong cognitive engagement in sexual issues). Further, the authors wanted to know (a) whether subjective sexual arousal mediated a potential influence of exposure to SEIM on sexual preoccupancy and (b) whether this process differed between male and female adolescents. Over the course of one year, they surveyed 962 Dutch adolescents aged 13–20 years three times. Structural equation modelling showed that exposure to SEIM stimulated sexual preoccupancy. This influence was fully mediated by subjective sexual arousal from SEIM. The effect of exposure to SEIM on subjective sexual arousal did not differ between male and female adolescents. The findings suggest that a sexualised media environment may affect adolescents’ sexual development beyond traditionally studied variables, such as sexual attitudes and sexual behaviour.


The aim of this study was to clarify causality in the previously established link between adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) and notions of women as sex objects. Furthermore, the study investigated which psychological processes underlie this link and whether the various influences varied by gender. On the basis of data from a three-wave panel survey among 962 Dutch adolescents, structural equation modelling initially showed that exposure to SEIM and notions of women as sex objects had a reciprocal direct influence on each other. The direct impact of SEIM on notions of women as sex objects did not vary by gender. However, the direct influence of notions of women as sex objects on exposure to SEIM was only significant for male adolescents. Further analyses showed that, regardless of adolescents’ gender, liking of SEIM mediated the influence of exposure to SEIM on their beliefs that women are sex objects, as well as the impact of these beliefs on exposure to SEIM.

Although research has repeatedly demonstrated a link between adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) and sexual attitudes, the processes underlying this association are not well understood. More specifically, studies have pointed to a mediating role of perceived realism, but internally valid evidence is missing. To address these problems, the authors used data from a three-wave panel study among 959 Dutch adolescents. They investigated whether two dimensions of the perceived realism of SEIM—social realism and utility—mediated the impact of SEIM on adolescents’ instrumental attitudes toward sex (i.e., the notion of sex as primarily physical and casual rather than affectionate and relational). Structural equation modelling showed that more frequent use of SEIM increased both the perceived social realism and the perceived utility of SEIM. In turn, these two perceptions led to more instrumental attitudes toward sex. No evidence of reverse causality emerged.


Research has shown that adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is positively associated with an important characteristic of the developing sexual self, sexual uncertainty. However, the causal relation between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty is unclear. Moreover, we do not know which processes underlie this relation and whether gender moderates these processes. Based on a three-wave panel survey among 956 Dutch adolescents, structural equation modelling revealed that more frequent SEIM use increased adolescents’ sexual uncertainty. This influence was mediated by adolescents’ involvement in SEIM. The impact of SEIM use on involvement was stronger for females than for male adolescents. Future research on the effects of SEIM may benefit from greater attention to experiential states during SEIM use.


Previous research on the influence of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) on adolescents’ stereotypical beliefs about women’s sexual roles has three shortcomings. First, the role of peers has been neglected; second, stereotypical beliefs have rarely been studied as causing the use of SEIM and the selection of specific peers; and third, it is unclear whether adolescents are more vulnerable to the effects of SEIM than adults. We used data from two nationally representative two-wave panel surveys among 1,445 Dutch adolescents and 833 Dutch adults, focusing on the stereotypical belief that women engage in token resistance to sex (i.e., the notion that women say “no” when they actually intend to have sex). Structural equation modelling showed that peers who supported traditional gender roles elicited, both among adolescents and adults, stronger beliefs that women use token resistance to sex. Further, the belief that women engage in token resistance predicted adolescents’ and adults’ selection of gender-role traditional peers, but it did not predict adolescents’ and adults’ use of SEIM. Finally, adults, but not adolescents, were susceptible to the impact of SEIM on beliefs that women engage in token resistance to sex.


An implicit assumption in research on adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is that they may feel more attracted to such material than adults, given the “forbidden” character of SEIM for minors. However, systematic comparisons between adolescents’ and adults’ SEIM use and of its antecedents are missing. We conducted a two-wave panel survey among a nationally representative sample of 1,445 Dutch adolescents and a nationally representative sample of 833 Dutch adults. Adolescents’ and adults’ SEIM use was similar. When significant differences in the SEIM use occurred, they indicated that adults used SEIM more often than adolescents. Male adults were the most frequent users of SEIM. No difference in the antecedent structure of SEIM use emerged between adolescents and adults. In both groups, males, sensation seekers, as well as people with a not exclusively heterosexual orientation used SEIM more often. Among adolescents and adults, lower life satisfaction increased SEIM use. Our findings suggest that the frequency of SEIM use and its antecedents are largely the same among adolescents and adults.
The goal of this review was to systematise empirical research that was published in peer-reviewed English-language journals between 1995 and 2015 on the prevalence, predictors and implications of adolescents’ use of pornography. This research showed that adolescents use pornography, but prevalence rates varied greatly. Adolescents who used pornography more frequently were male, at a more advanced pubertal stage, sensation seekers and had weak or troubled family relations. Pornography use was associated with more permissive sexual attitudes and tended to be linked with stronger gender-stereotypical sexual beliefs. It also seemed to be related to the occurrence of sexual intercourse, greater experience with casual sex behaviour, and more sexual aggression, both in terms of perpetration and victimisation. The findings of this review need to be seen against the background of various methodological and theoretical shortcomings, as well as several biases in the literature, which currently precludes internally valid causal conclusions about effects of pornography on adolescents.


Background: Pornography can affect the lifestyles of adolescents, especially in terms of their sexual habits and porn consumption, and may have a significant influence on their sexual attitudes and behaviours. Objective: The aim of this study was to understand and analyse the frequency, duration, and perception of web porn utilisation by young Italians attending high school. Materials and methods: A total of 1,565 students attending the final year of high school were involved in the study, and 1,492 have agreed to fill out an anonymous survey. The questions representing the content of this study were: 1) How often do you access the web? 2) How much time do you remain connected? 3) Do you connect to pornographic sites? 4) How often do you access pornographic sites? 5) How much time you spend on them? 6) How often do you masturbate? and 7) How do you rate the attendance of these sites? Statistical analysis was performed by Fischer’s test. Results: All young people, on an almost daily basis, have access to Internet. Among those surveyed, 1,163 (77.9%) of Internet users admit to the consumption of pornographic material, and of these, 93 (8%) access pornographic websites daily, 686 (59%) boys accessing these sites perceive the consumption of pornography as always stimulating, 255 (21.9%) define it as habitual, 116 (10%) report that it reduces sexual interest towards potential real-life partners, and the remaining 106 (9.1%) report a kind of addiction. In addition, 19% of overall pornography consumers report an abnormal sexual response, while the percentage rose to 25% among regular consumers. Conclusion: It is necessary to educate web users, especially young users, to a safe and responsible use of the Internet and of its contents. Moreover, public education campaigns should be increased in number and frequency to help improve knowledge of Internet-related sexual issues both by adolescents and by parents.


Concern about the influence of pornography on adolescents and emerging adults is growing due to widespread access to pornography. Past research shows that parent–child conversations about media content can alter the extent and effects of exposure to media content. This study, therefore, explored the predictors of negative active mediation of pornography—parent–child conversations that are critical of pornography—as well as the relationship between negative active mediation delivered during adolescence and emerging adults’ pornography use, attitudes about pornography, and self-esteem of those whose sexual partner regularly views pornography. Results revealed that the inverse relationship between negative active mediation and emerging adults’ pornography use was mediated by attitudes about pornography and that active mediation protected the self-esteem of those whose sexual partner regularly views pornography. These findings suggest that active mediation of pornography may be one way to reduce negative indirect effects of pornography exposure and prevent future pornography use.


Widespread access to and use of pornography has led to concern about the potentially negative effects of exposure to pornography on emerging adults—its largest user group. Past research shows that salient social norms can influence subsequent behaviour. This study, therefore, explored the relationship between salient pornography-related norms and pornography use among emerging adults, as well as the relationship between parental mediation of pornography during adolescence and emerging adults’ salient pornography-related norms. Results revealed that emerging adults are more likely to view pornography when they hold a salient belief (norm) that their peers both approve of viewing and regularly view pornography. The study also found that parents’
provision of rules about viewing pornography during adolescence may reduce future pornography use by instilling the salient belief that the parent disapproves of viewing pornography. These findings suggest that the effect of rules in the home about adolescents’ use of pornography may persist into emerging adulthood.


Psychologists have long recognised the role pornography has played in the sexualisation of women and girls and its potential harmful effects on children and young people. However with the proliferation of the Internet, and the increasingly violent nature of much pornographic content, serious concerns are now emerging within and beyond psychology about the impact on young people’s expectations of sex and sexuality, the role pornography plays in facilitating and normalising violence against women, and how it contributes more broadly to representations and normative understandings about sex, sexuality and gender in society. Pornography has thus been implicated in a number of social issues that have been the subject of recent government inquiries. Through its advocacy, the APS has provided psychological knowledge to inform government policy and public debate in these areas, as outlined below.


Digital media are an important part of the lives of young people, who use these resources to access sexual materials such as pornography. This kind of consumption can reveal important aspects of their social lives. Starting from the viewpoint of consumers, this paper is a reflection on girls’ consumption of pornography and on the meanings they give to their practices and choices in the continuum between online and offline experiences. The research involved boys and girls from the ages of 16 to 18 using different techniques: six “co-construction groups”, 48 face-to-face interviews, and two online focus groups. The article describes girls’ experiences with Internet pornography, underlining the symbolic use of pornographic material as exploration and definition of gender performance. According to girls, using Internet pornography means to “play” with gender borders: defining and redefining them, experiencing them, passing through them. These borders are connecting to the meaning of being a girl or a boy, but also to the common idea of “normality” within the peer group.


The object of this review is to summarise the impact of the Internet on the sexual health of adolescents. This article examines the use of websites, blogs and chat rooms as sources for sexual health information for adolescents. The influence of Internet pornography on sexual behaviours and attitudes is addressed. The use of the Internet as a place to find sexual partners is also assessed. During a time of great physical, emotional and sexual change, the Internet is playing a huge role in the decisions adolescents are making, both positive and negative.


New technology has made pornography increasingly accessible to young people, and a growing evidence base has identified a relationship between viewing pornography and violent or abusive behaviour in young men. This article reports findings from a large survey of 4,564 young people aged 14 to 17 in five European countries which illuminate the relationship between regular viewing of online pornography, sexual coercion and abuse and the sending and receiving of sexual images and messages, known as “sexting.” In addition to the survey, which was completed in schools, 91 interviews were undertaken with young people who had direct experience of interpersonal violence and abuse in their own relationships. Rates for regularly viewing online pornography were very much higher among boys and most had chosen to watch pornography. Boys’ perpetration of sexual coercion and abuse was significantly associated with regular viewing of online pornography. Viewing online pornography was also associated with a significantly increased probability of having sent sexual images/messages for boys in nearly all countries. In addition, boys who regularly watched online pornography were significantly more likely to hold negative gender attitudes. The qualitative interviews illustrated that, although sexting is normalised and perceived positively by most young people, it has the potential to reproduce sexist features of pornography such as control and humiliation. Sex and relationships education should aim to promote a critical understanding of pornography among young people that recognizes its abusive and gendered values.

In spite of a growing presence of pornography in contemporary life, little is known about its potential effects on young people’s sexual socialisation and sexual satisfaction. In this article, the authors present a theoretical model of the effects of sexually explicit materials (SEM) mediated by sexual scripting and moderated by the type of SEM used. An online survey dataset that included 650 young Croatian men aged 18–25 years was used to explore empirically the model. Descriptive findings pointed to significant differences between mainstream and paraphilic SEM users in frequency of SEM use at the age of 14, current SEM use, frequency of masturbation, sexual boredom, acceptance of sex myths, and sexual compulsiveness. In testing the model, a novel instrument was used, the Sexual Scripts Overlap Scale, designed to measure the influence of SEM on sexual socialisation. Structural equation analyses suggested that negative effects of early exposure to SEM on young men’s sexual satisfaction, albeit small, could be stronger than positive effects. Both positive and negative effects—the latter being expressed through suppression of intimacy—were observed only among users of paraphilic SEM. No effect of early exposure to SEM was found among the mainstream SEM users. To counterbalance moral panic but also the glamorisation of pornography, sex education programs should incorporate contents that would increase media literacy and assist young people in critical interpretation of pornographic imagery.


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 behaviour become in their world view and the more likely they are to use those scripts to act upon real-life experiences. The authors argue pornography creates a sexual script that then guides sexual experiences. To test this, they 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 behaviours with a partner. They conclude that pornography provides a powerful heuristic model that is implicated in men’s expectations and behaviours during sexual encounters.


Pornography is both prevalent and normative in United States’ culture; however, little is known about the psychological and relational affects that it can have on men in romantic relationships. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine theorized antecedents (i.e., gender-role conflict and attachment styles) and consequences (i.e., poorer relationship quality and sexual satisfaction) of men’s pornography use among 373 young adult heterosexual men. Findings revealed that both frequency of pornography use and problematic pornography use were related to greater gender role conflict, more avoidant and anxious attachment styles, poorer relationship quality and less sexual satisfaction. In addition, the findings provided support for a theorised mediated model in which gender-role conflict was linked to relational outcomes both directly and indirectly via attachment styles and pornography use. Finally, psychometric support for the Pornography Use Scale developed for this study is provided.


In this study exposure to and preferences for three important youth media (TV, music styles/music TV, Internet) were examined in relation to adolescents’ permissive sexual attitudes and gender stereotypes (i.e., views of men as sex-driven and tough, and of women as sex objects). Multivariate structural analysis of data from a school-based sample of 480 13 to 16 year-old Dutch students revealed that preferences, rather than exposure were associated with attitudes and stereotypes. For both girls and boys, preferences for hip-hop and hard-house music were associated positively with gender stereotypes and preference for classical music was negatively associated with gender stereotypes. Particularly for boys, using Internet to find explicit sexual content emerged as a powerful indicator of all attitudes and stereotypes.
Within objectification theory research, sexual objectification is typically operationalised as interpersonal sexual objectification—being targets of body evaluation and unwanted sexual advances. We argue that women’s male partners’ pornography use could be integrated within objectification theory as another form of sexual objectification and negatively linked to women’s wellbeing. College women \((n = 171)\) rated how often their current and previous male partners viewed pornography and whether pornography use bothered them. They also completed measures of objectification theory constructs, internalisation of cultural beauty standards, relationship attachment, self-esteem, body appreciation, and negative affect. The extent to which women were bothered by partner pornography use was controlled in all analyses. Path analysis revealed that previous partners’ pornography use (a) directly predicted interpersonal sexual objectification, internalisation and eating disorder symptomatology and (b) indirectly predicted body surveillance and body shame through internalisation. In hierarchical regressions, previous partners’ pornography use inversely predicted self-esteem and body appreciation and positively predicted relationship anxiety and negative affect. Current partners’ pornography use was not linked to any criterion. Researchers should more comprehensively examine partners’ pornography use in relation to women’s distress. Practitioners may consider exploring male partners’ pornography use in female clients’ relationship histories and its potential associations with their well-being when relevant to them.


Previous research has suggested that adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) may result in sexual uncertainty because the content of SEIM may conflict with what adolescents have learned about sex. However, research on which type of adolescent is most susceptible to the relation between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty is lacking. This study therefore investigated whether the relationship between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty depends on within-gender differences in sexual dispositions (i.e., impersonal sex orientation and hypergendered orientation). Using data from a representative two-wave panel survey among 1,765 Dutch adolescents (aged 13-17), I found that SEIM use predicted sexual uncertainty only among girls with a low hypergendered orientation and girls with a relatively high impersonal sex orientation.


The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of and attitudes among young people toward pornography and their sources of information about sexuality. Eight hundred and seventy-six young people ages 15-25 years (555 females and 321 males) who visited a youth centre in Sweden for a period of one year answered a questionnaire about their use of pornography, their attitudes toward pornography, and sources of information about sexuality. Although most had seen pornographic movies, the youngest boys reported viewing the most pornography. The male participants reported that the most common reason they viewed pornography was to get aroused and to masturbate, whereas the female participants stated that they viewed pornography out of curiosity. The most frequent source of information about sexuality was peers. These results illustrate the importance of sex education to give factual information about sexuality and to counteract the messages about sexuality presented in pornography.


On the basis of an online survey of 352 teenagers aged between 16 and 19, the use of pornographic video clips and films was investigated along with the connection between this use and indicators of adolescents’ perceived autonomy, peer group influences, and notions of sexuality. We found that many adolescents regularly use pornographic video clips or films. Respondents who regard themselves as less independent of their environment, especially their parents, use pornography more frequently themselves. For girls, this also applies if they assess the use within their peer group as particularly extensive, and for boys, if they frequently discuss pornography within their peer group. A high level of consumption of sexually explicit media also goes hand in hand with the assumption that people generally have sexual intercourse earlier in life and that people generally favour more varied sexual techniques.

Academics and lay people alike have contended for decades that children view pornography and are affected by this exposure. Pornography studies that actually sample children are a new phenomenon, however. This commentary summarises what we currently know about children’s exposure to pornography and the attitudinal and behavioural correlates of exposure. The author concludes with a call for research on factors that may moderate the effects of exposure and suggests that studies use the sexual script acquisition, activation, and application model of media sexual socialisation as a theoretical guide.


Despite the persistence of wage gaps and other indicators of discrimination, many Americans oppose affirmative action for women. Our study investigated a potential source of social influence that has often been hypothesised to reduce compassion and sympathy for women: pornography. National panel data were employed. Data were gathered in 2006, 2008 and 2010 from 190 adults ranging in age from 19 to 88 at baseline. Pornography viewing was indexed via reported consumption of pornographic movies. Attitudes toward affirmative action were indexed via opposition to hiring and promotion practices that favour women. Contrary to a selective-exposure perspective on media use, prior opposition to affirmative action did not predict subsequent pornography viewing. Consistent with a social learning perspective on media effects, prior pornography viewing predicted subsequent opposition to affirmative action even after controlling for prior affirmative action attitudes and a number of other potential confounds. Gender did not moderate this association. Practically, these results suggest that pornography may be a social influence that undermines support for affirmative action programs for women. Theoretically, these results align with the perspective that sexual media activate abstract scripts for social behavior that may be applied to judgements that extend beyond the specific interaction patterns depicted.


Many consider same-sex marriage the civil rights issue of our time. Although support is on the rise, there are some Americans who oppose same-sex marriage. Heterosexual males are a demographic group particularly likely to oppose same-sex marriage. Mass media and education are often thought of as important agents of socialisation in American culture. Pornography in particular is a platform often discussed in terms of its impact on males’ sexual attitudes. This study used nationally representative three-wave longitudinal data gathered from adult U.S. males to examine the over-time interplay between pornography consumption, education, and support for same-sex marriage. Support for same-sex marriage did not prospectively predict pornography consumption, but pornography consumption did prospectively predict support for same-sex marriage. Education was also positively associated with support for same-sex marriage. Scientific and social implications of these findings are discussed.

Behaviours, knowledge, practices


This article reviews qualitative research into the consumption of pornography and other sexually explicit media emerging from a range of subject areas. Taking a critique of quantitative methods and a focus on measuring sexual effects and attitudes as a starting point, it considers the proposition that qualitative work is more suited to an examination of the complex social, cultural and political constructions of sexuality. Examining studies into the way men, women and young people see, experience and use explicit media texts, the article identifies the key findings that have emerged. Qualitative work shows that sexually explicit media texts are experienced and understood in a variety of ways and evoke strong and often contradictory reactions, not all of which are represented in public debates about pornography. These texts function in a range of different ways, depending on context as a source of knowledge, a resource for intimate practices, a site for identity construction, and an occasion for performing gender and sexuality. The article reviews these studies and their findings, identifying what they suggest about directions for future research, both in terms of developing methodology and refining approaches to sexuality and media consumption.
The Internet offers several opportunities to explore sexuality among adolescents. However, some studies have reported that the Internet has made sexually explicit media more accessible to young people. Online pornography is diverse, can be very graphic, and a large amount is available free of charge with restrictions varying by country. Many young people are accessing online pornography, intentionally or unintentionally, and there are fears that this could impact on their sexual development and future relationships. Current research into the effects of viewing pornography on attitudes and behaviours of young people is patchy and often contradictory. Via an anonymous survey of 218 young people and focus group discussions with 23 teaching professionals in outer London schools, this study examines whether young people and teaching professionals consider pornography use to have harmful effects, and if they feel schools should be incorporating teaching about online pornography in their educational programs. Findings reveal that young people and teachers perceive there to be many negative effects of viewing pornography, particularly at a young age. Young people and teachers agree that schools should teach about the risks associated with online pornography viewing. Recommendations for schools about how to facilitate discussion of issues surrounding pornography use as part of the wider sex education program are made, including the involvement of parents.


The Internet offers several opportunities to explore sexuality among adolescents. However, some studies have also revealed problematic effects of cybersex in earlier stages. Despite this, few studies analyse the online sexual behaviour among adolescents, even less in Spain where there is very little data. For this reason, our aim is to examine the use of Internet for sexual purposes among Spanish adolescents, including gender differences. Three hundred and twenty-two adolescents completed an ad-hoc questionnaire and the Spanish version of the Internet Sex Screening Test. In general, boys report more cybersex than girls do, for example, in masturbating while the Internet (60.6% of boys and 7.3% of girls). In addition, Internet sex interferes with lifestyles more frequently in boys (12.7% of them) than in girls (4.7% of them). Moreover, according to linear regression, variables such as general pornography use or oral sex seem to be connected to cybersex for both groups, while same-sex behaviours are more associated with cybersex for boys and masturbation for girls. Therefore, these findings support the existence of cybersex among Spanish adolescents (ranging from 3.1%–60.6% in boys and 0%–11.5% in girls for some online sexual activities), including certain problematic behaviours (8.6% of boys show a risk profile), and the relevance of gender in its analysis. These results should be considered in prevention and support strategies.


Research has demonstrated that adolescents regularly use Internet pornography. This two-wave panel study aimed to test an integrative model in early adolescent boys (Mage = 14.10; n = 325) that (a) explains their exposure to Internet pornography by looking at relationships with pubertal timing and sensation seeking, and (b) explores the potential consequence of their exposure to Internet pornography for their academic performance. An integrative path model indicated that pubertal timing and sensation seeking predicted the use of Internet pornography. Boys with an advanced pubertal stage and boys high in sensation seeking more frequently used Internet pornography. Moreover, an increased use of Internet pornography decreased boys’ academic performance 6 months later. The discussion focuses on the consequences of this integrative model for future research on Internet pornography.


In order to examine whether pornography consumption is associated with risky sexual behaviour among emerging adults, we examined two large samples of those who reported hooking up in the past 12 months (combined n = 1,216). Pornography use was associated with a higher likelihood of having a penetrative hookup; a higher incidence of intoxication during hook ups for men (but a lower incidence of intoxication during hook ups for women); increasing levels of intoxication during hook ups for men but decreasing levels of intoxication for women; and a higher likelihood of being in the riskiest category of having a penetrative hook up, without a condom, while intoxicated. For each of these outcomes, our point estimates for Study 2 fell within the 95% confidence intervals from Study 1. Controlling for trait self-control, binge drinking frequency, broader problematic patterns of alcohol use, openness to experience, and attitudes toward casual sex did not change the pattern of results. Implications for interventions to reduce sexual risk are discussed.
This study examined correlates of pornography acceptance and use within a normative (nonclinical) population. The present study surveyed sorority members at a Midwestern public university on their pornography use, rape myth acceptance, bystander efficacy, and bystander willingness to help in potential sexual assault situations. Results showed that women who view pornography are significantly less likely to intervene as a bystander and are more likely to believe rape myths. Implications for women’s personal safety and for the advisability of consuming pornography are discussed.

College women’s exposure to pornography is growing nationwide. A limited amount of research exists documenting the negative effects of pornography on women’s attitudes and behavior related to sexual assault. The present study surveyed sorority members at a Midwestern public university on their pornography use, rape myth acceptance, bystander efficacy, and bystander willingness to help in potential sexual assault situations. Results showed that women who view pornography are significantly less likely to intervene as a bystander and are more likely to believe rape myths. Implications for women’s personal safety and for the advisability of consuming pornography are discussed.

This study examined correlates of pornography acceptance and use within a normative (nonclinical) population of emerging adults (individuals aged 18–26). Participants included 813 university students (500 women; M age = 20 years) recruited from six college sites across the United States. Participants completed online questionnaires regarding their acceptance and use of pornography, as well as their sexual values and activity, substance use, and family formation values. Results revealed that roughly two thirds (67%) of young men and one half (49%) of young women agree that viewing pornography is acceptable, whereas nearly nine out of ten (87%) young men and nearly one third (31%) of young women reported using pornography. Results also revealed associations between pornography acceptance and use and emerging adults’ risky sexual attitudes and behaviours, substance use patterns, and non-marital cohabitation values. The discussion considers the implications of pornography use during the transition to adulthood.

Although research has repeatedly demonstrated that adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is related to their endorsement of permissive sexual attitudes and their experience with sexual behaviour, it is not clear how linkages between these constructs unfold over time. This study combined two types of longitudinal modelling, mean-level development and cross-lagged panel modelling, to examine (a) developmental patterns in adolescents’ SEIM use, permissive sexual attitudes, and experience with sexual behaviour, as well as whether these developments are related, and (b) longitudinal directionality of associations between SEIM use on the one hand and permissive sexual attitudes and sexual behaviour on the other hand. We used four-wave longitudinal data from 1,132 7th through 10th grade Dutch adolescents (M(age) T1 = 13.95; 52.7% boys) and estimated multigroup models to test for moderation by gender. Mean-level developmental trajectories showed that boys occasionally and increasingly used SEIM over the 18-month study period, which co-occurred with increases in their permissive attitudes and their experience with sexual behaviour. Cross-lagged panel models revealed unidirectional effects from boys’ SEIM use on their subsequent endorsement of permissive attitudes, but no consistent directional effects between their SEIM use and sexual behaviour. Girls showed a similar pattern of increases in experience with sexual behaviour, but their SEIM use was consistently low and their endorsement of permissive sexual attitudes decreased over the 18-month
study period. In contrast to boys, girls’ SEIM use was not longitudinally related to their sexual attitudes and behaviour. Theoretical and practical implications of these gender-specific findings are discussed.


This study used a person-centered approach to examine whether different developmental trajectories of boys’ and girls’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) exist, which factors predict these trajectories, and whether sexual behaviour develops differently for adolescents in these trajectories. A combination of latent class growth analysis on SEIM use and latent growth curve analysis on sexual behaviour was used on four-wave longitudinal data of 787 eighth through tenth grade Dutch adolescents. Among boys, four SEIM use trajectories were identified, which were labelled Nonuse/Infrequent Use, Strongly Increasing Use, Occasional Use, and Decreasing Use. Among girls, a large Stable Nonuse/Infrequent Use and smaller Strongly Increasing Use and Stable Occasional Use trajectories were distinguished. Higher initial levels and/or stronger increases in SEIM use were predicted by demographic, social contextual, personal, and media use characteristics, including a stronger sexual interest, a higher degree of perceived realism regarding sexualized Internet content, and more permissive sexual attitudes. Moreover, initial levels of and, to some extent, developmental changes in sexual behaviour varied for boys and girls in the different SEIM use trajectories. Whereas some adolescents showed concurrent low levels, or parallel strong increases in SEIM use and sexual behaviour, a subgroup of boys decreased their SEIM use while increasing their sexual behaviour.


Use of pornography is common among adolescents and young adults, with most men and a growing number of women viewing regularly. A vast body of research suggests pornography use is associated with multiple attitudinal and behavioural variables. One of those associations, for both men and women, is higher pornography use is correlated with a lower likelihood of intervening to prevent sexual assault. The present study explored how motives for viewing pornography related to male (n = 139) and female (n = 290) college students’ willingness and efficacy to intervene to help prevent a sexual assault from occurring. We found that several motivations to view pornography were associated with suppression of willingness to intervene as a bystander, even after controlling for frequency of pornography use. This study joins others in suggesting an association between pornography use and callousness toward sexual violence.


Literature indicates that 72% of adolescent girls are exposed to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) before the age of 18, and between 2% and 30% of girls report intentionally seeking SEIM. Despite the recognition that adolescent girls are consuming SEIM, and that their use impacts behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes, there has been limited attention paid to their experience of SEIM use. Findings have suggested that adolescent girls often use SEIM as a tool for sex education, posing high risks in the development of ideas about sex, sexuality, intimacy and relationships based on unrealistic depictions of sex in SEIM. This dissertation examined the psychosexual impacts on adolescent girls viewing SEIM and factors, such as caregiver-teen communication, that protect adolescent girls from the negative impacts of their SEIM use. The dissertation explored how exposure and use of SEIM affects adolescent girls’ ideas of sex, perceptions of self, beliefs, attitudes, sexual relationships, sexual behaviours and health. Grounded in an extensive review of the literature within the topic area, the dissertation addressed protective factors against the negative impacts of SEIM exposure and discussed the development of a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls. Open and honest communication between the primary caregiver and adolescent about sex and sexuality has been found to reduce adolescents’ risky sexual behaviours and contribute their development of a healthy sexual self. As a means to disseminate the literature findings, a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls was developed within the framework of Protection Motivation Theory.


Pornography consumption and sexual behaviour were studied, with an aim to investigate any associations. Participants were 718 students from 47 high school classes, mean age 18 years, in a medium-sized Swedish city. More men (98%) than women (72%) had ever consumed pornography. More male high consumers than low consumers or women got sexually aroused by, fantasised about, or tried to perform acts seen in a pornographic film (p < 0.001). Three-quarters of the sample had had sexual intercourse, of which 71% reported contraceptive use at first intercourse. Anal intercourse was reported by 16%, with infrequent condom use (39%). Intercourse
with a friend (adjusted odds ratio (adj. OR) 2.29; 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.27–4.12) was significantly associated with high consumption of pornography among men, while anal intercourse (adj. OR 1.99; 95% CI 0.95–4.16) and group sex (adj. OR 1.9; 95% CI 0.70–5.47) tended to be associated. A significant confounder was early age of sexual debut (adj. OR 1.49; 95% CI 1.18–1.88).


Pornography is one of the most sought-after topics on the Internet, and is easily available for anyone, including children and adolescents. At youth centres, nurse-midwives have noticed that young people have different kinds of questions about sexual practices compared with a few years ago. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of thoughts and reflections about pornography consumption, and its possible influence on sexual practices, among young women and men. The staff at a youth centre in a city in central Sweden asked the visitors if they had seen pornography and if they wanted to be interviewed about their experiences. Ten young women and eight men, aged 16-23 years, participated. In-depth interviews were performed and open-ended questions about pornography and sexuality were posed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed according to grounded theory. The core category “Living with the current sexual norm” depicted how pornography created sexual expectations and demands, for instance, to perform certain sexual acts. The informants expressed contradictory feelings towards pornography and felt that sexuality was separated from intimacy. A moral attitude was described and examples of stereotypic gender roles were given. To deal with the current sexual norm, informants had different individual handling strategies and attitudes to pornography, namely liberal, normalisation, distance, feminist or conservative. Limitations of this study were the small sample size and that results from a qualitative research study cannot be generalised. The results contribute to an understanding of how pornographic material can influence young peoples’ thoughts, reflections and sexual behaviour. This indicates the importance, for personnel at youth centres and schools, to discuss sexual behaviour and how sexuality is portrayed in pornographic material with young people.


Objectives: To investigate consumption of and attitudes toward pornography in relation to demographic factors and relationships to parents among third-year high school students. Methods: A random sample of 718 students with a mean age 18 years (range 17-21) completed a classroom questionnaire consisting of 89 questions. Results: More students in practical than in theoretical study programs had parents with a practical profession (p < 0.001). More parents to students attending theoretical programs owned their housing (p < 0.001). More men than women had ever consumed pornography (98% vs 72%; p < 0.001). More practical than theoretical students were influenced by watching pornographic films, fantasizing about (p < 0.05) or having performed acts inspired by pornography (p < 0.05). Both theoretical and practical male students had more favourable attitudes toward pornography than either group of female students (p < 0.001; p = 0.037). More female, than male students, were of the opinion that pornography could create uncertainty and demands. Conclusion: Students’ high school program choices partly reflect their social background. Pornography was consumed mainly by male students, who also had the most favourable attitudes, while females mainly had negative attitudes. To promote sexual health these differences between genders and study programmes should be taken into consideration in counselling, and in sex- and relationships education.


Introduction: Concerns have been voiced that the use of sexually explicit materials (SEMs) may adversely affect sexual behaviours, particularly in young people. Previous studies have generally found significant associations between SEM consumption and the sexual behaviours investigated. However, most of these studies have focused on sexual behaviours related to sexually transmitted infections or sexual aggression and/or failed to adequately control for relevant covariates. Thus, research more thoroughly investigating the association between SEM consumption and a broader range of sexual behaviours is needed. Aims: The study aims to investigate SEM consumption patterns of young people, and to assess the strength of the association between SEM consumption and a range of sexual behaviours, controlling for a comprehensive array of variables previously shown to affect these relationships. Methods: Online cross-sectional survey study of 4,600 young people, 15–25 years of age, in The Netherlands was performed. Main Outcomes Measures: The main outcome measures were self-reported SEM consumption and sexual practices. Results: The study found that 88% of men and 45% of women had consumed SEM in the past 12 months. Using hierarchical multiple regression analyses to control for
other factors, the association between SEM consumption and a variety of sexual behaviours was found to be significant, accounting for between 0.3% and 4% of the total explained variance in investigated sexual behaviours. Conclusions: This study suggests that, when controlling for important other factors, SEM consumption influences sexual behaviours. The small to moderate associations that emerged between SEM consumption and sexual behaviour after controlling for other variables suggest that SEM is just one factor among many that may influence youth sexual behaviours. These findings contribute novel information to the ongoing debates on the role of SEM consumption in sexual behaviours and risk, and provide appropriate guidance to policy makers and program developers concerned with sexual education and sexual health promotion for young people.


Despite the vast number of Canadian young adults who consume sexually explicit Internet movies (SEIM), the potential influences SEIM consumption has on overall sexual health remains understudied. This study aimed to develop insight into what Canadian young adults perceive to be the influences of consuming SEIM on six components of sexual health: Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Self-Perception, Sexual Activity, Sexual Partner Relations, Perceptions of Sexuality, and Overall Wellbeing. Employing an exploratory qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 urban, heterosexual young adults (ages 19–29), who self-identified as having consumed SEIM for a period of at least one year. All interviews were audiorecorded and transcribed verbatim and analysed using principles of constructivist grounded theory. Young adults described a wide range of influences that encompassed topics beyond physical reactions, to include experiences with overall sexuality and sexual self. These influences were perceived to result in both health benefits and health challenges. The disparities between this study’s findings and other empirical SEIM studies suggest that conceptualizing SEIM consumption using person-centred, holistic perspectives may help researchers more effectively capture the multitude of diverse ways SEIM can influence Canadians’ sexual health.


The purpose of this study is to estimate the association between adolescent sexual behaviour and exposure to sexual media content. A three-wave, longitudinal survey sample (n = 506) of 14 to 16 year olds at baseline is analysed using growth curves. Growth trajectories are linear for sexual behaviour but not for exposure to sexual media content. The signs of the exposure slopes are not uniformly positive: Hispanic and African-American respondents show declines of exposure to sexual media content over the age range investigated here. Although changes in exposure to sex content are highly associated with changes in sexual behaviour among whites, there is little or no association between changes in these variables among blacks.


The current study investigated whether viewing X-rated movies, Internet access in the home, and gender of the participant would differ between age of first initiation for oral sex, age of first initiation for sexual intercourse, and number of sexual partners. An online sample of 437 participants with an average age of 29.46 participated in the study. Each participant completed a survey that assessed early sexual behaviours and Internet and X-rated material exposure. Results discovered males with Internet access during the ages of 12 to 17 reported significantly younger ages for first oral sex compared to males without Internet access. In addition, male and female participants with Internet access, between the ages 12 to 17, reported younger ages for first sexual intercourse compared to participants without Internet access. Study limitations and implications are discussed.


There is a widespread concern in Western society about the visibility of pornography in public places and on the Internet. What are the consequences for young men and women, and how do they think about gender, sexuality, and pornography? Data was collected, through 22 individual interviews and seven focus groups, from 51 participants (36 women and 37 men aged 14–20 years) in Sweden. The results indicated a process of both normalisation and ambivalence. Pornography was used as a form of social intercourse, a source of information, and a stimulus for sexual arousal. Pornography consumption was more common among the young men than among the women. For both the young men and women, the pornographic script functioned as a frame...
and reference in relation to bodily ideals and sexual performances. Most of the participants had acquired the necessary skills of how to deal with the exposure to pornography in a sensible and reflective manner.


This study aimed to compare the sexual behaviour of adolescents who were or were not exposed to online pornography, to assess to what extent the willingness of exposure changed these possible associations, and to determine the profiles of youths who were exposed to online pornography. Data were drawn from the 2002 Swiss Multicenter Adolescent Survey on Health, a self-administered cross-sectional, paper and pencil questionnaire. From the 7,529 adolescents aged 16-20 years, 6,054 (3,283 males) used the Internet during the previous month and were eligible for our study. Males were divided into three groups (wanted exposure, 29.2%; unwanted exposure, 46.7%; no exposure, 24.1%) whereas females were divided into two groups (exposure, 35.9%; no exposure, 64.1%). The principal outcome measures were demographic characteristics, Internet use parameters and risky sexual behaviours. Risky sexual behaviours were not associated with online pornography exposure in any of the groups, except that males who were exposed (deliberately or not) had higher odds of not having used a condom at last intercourse. Bi/homosexual orientation and Internet use parameters were not associated either. Additionally, males in the wanted exposure group were more likely to be sensation-seekers. On the other hand, exposed girls were more likely to be students, higher sensation-seekers, early maturers, and to have a highly educated father. We conclude that pornography exposure is not associated with risky sexual behaviours and that the willingness of exposure does not seem to have an impact on risky sexual behaviours among adolescents.


Objectives: To describe and get a deeper understanding of how groups of young women and men reflect on and discuss pornography and its spread in the media and society, and its possible influence on sexual behaviour and relationships. Methods: Six focus group interviews were conducted with teenagers, three with women (n = 17) and three with men (n = 18). Open questions about pornography and its spread in the media and society were discussed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed according to Grounded Theory. Results: The core category “A discriminatory sexuality” illustrates how participants felt regarding the messages conveyed by pornography portraying a man’s role as dominant and a woman’s role as subordinate. Pornographic messages were described as “fiction” depicting a distorted reality. Feelings of ambivalence towards pornography were expressed: anxiety and fear, but also inspiration. Participants said pornography occurred everywhere in the media and society, and felt pressured by messages relating to looks and sexual techniques. Conclusions: Pornography and its spread in the media and society were considered as presenting a discriminatory image of body ideals, sexuality and relationships. Despite this awareness, both men and women considered pornography as sources of knowledge and inspiration: an apparent paradox.


Objectives: The study investigated the differences between high school boys and girls in: (1) the use of pornography, (2) sexual experiences, (3) experience of sexual abuse, and (4) perceptions of sexuality and pornography. It also examined the possible predictors of experiencing sexual activities, such as sex, socio-demographic factors (high school program, household, and ethnic background), pornography consumption, experience of sexual abuse, perception of sexuality, and perception of pornography. Method: A population-based classroom survey of 16-year-old boys (n = 477) and girls (n = 400) from 53 randomly selected high school classes in two towns in mid-Sweden. Results: Almost all boys (96%, n = 453) and 54% of the girls (n = 213) had watched pornography. Regardless of sex, pornography consumers had a positive perception of pornography. There were no differences between pornography-consuming boys and girls regarding fantasies, and they had attempted sexual acts inspired by pornography. A higher proportion of girls (15%) than boys (6%) had experienced sexual abuse. Predictors for being sexually experienced (oral sex, intercourse and anal sex) included: being a girl, attending a vocational high school program, living with separated parents, having experience of sexual abuse, stating that boys and girls are equally interested in sex, and having a positive perception of pornography (Adj. R2 = 0.166). Conclusion: Boys had more experience of and a more positive perception of pornography, but there were only a few differences between boys and girls in the pornography-consumer group. Girls were more sexually experienced than boys. A positive perception of pornography predicted being sexually experienced.
This study examined how levels of sexually explicit material (SEM) use during adolescence and young adulthood influenced the development of young men with non-exclusive sexual orientations. The objective was to describe patterns of pornography use among high school boys and to investigate differences between frequent, average, and non-frequent users of pornography with respect to sexual experiences, lifestyles, and self-rated health.

**Methods:** A population-based classroom survey among 16-year-old boys ($n = 477$), from 53 randomly selected high school classes in 2 towns in mid-Sweden. RESULTS: Almost all boys, 96% ($n = 453$), had watched pornography. Frequent users of pornography (everyday) (10%, $n = 47$) differed from average users (63%, $n = 292$) and non-frequent users (27%, $n = 126$). Frequent users versus average users and non-frequent users had more sexual experiences, such as one-night stands (45, 32, 25%, respectively) and sex with friends more than 10 times (13, 10, 2%). A higher proportion of frequent users spent more than 10 straight hours at the computer several times a week (32, 5, 8%) and reported more relationship problems with peers (38, 22, 21%), truancy at least once a week (11, 6, 5%), obesity (13, 3, 3%), use of oral tobacco (36, 29, 20%), and use of alcohol (77, 70, 52%) versus average and non-frequent users. One third of frequent users watched more pornography than they actually wanted. There were no differences between the groups regarding physical and psychological self-rated health.

Conclusions: The boys, defined as frequent users of pornography, were more sexually experienced, spent more time at the computer, and reported an unhealthier lifestyle compared with average and non-frequent users. No differences regarding self-rated health were detected even though obesity was twice as common among frequent users.


This qualitative research examines the influence of pornography consumption on young men with non-exclusive sexual orientations. Drawing on 35 in-depth interviews with young men from an elite university in the north-eastern United States, we examine how pornography was experienced as a leisure activity to be consumed in free time. Rather than focusing on the potential harms of pornography, we use an inductive analytic approach to explore the broader range of experiences that participants had, since the time they first consumed pornography. We demonstrate that pornography had educational benefits for these young men, related to their sexual desires, emerging sexual identities and for developing new sexual techniques. This study is part of a growing body of research that seeks to develop a holistic understanding of pornography in society, addressing the absence of the lived experience of the consumer in most pornography research.


This study examined how levels of sexually explicit material (SEM) use during adolescence and young adulthood were associated with sexual preferences, sexual behaviours, and sexual and relationship satisfaction. Participants included 782 heterosexual college students (326 men and 456 women; M(age) = 19.9) who completed a questionnaire online. Results revealed high frequencies and multiple types and contexts of SEM use, with men’s usage rates systematically higher than women’s. Regression analyses revealed that both the frequency of SEM use and number of SEM types viewed were uniquely associated with more sexual experience (a higher number of overall and casual sexual intercourse partners, as well as a lower age at first intercourse). Higher frequencies of SEM use were associated with less sexual and relationship satisfaction. The frequency of SEM use and number of SEM types viewed were both associated with higher sexual preferences for the types of sexual practices typically presented in SEM. These findings suggest that SEM use can play a significant role in a variety of aspects of young adults’ sexual development processes.


New digital technologies are highly responsive to many of the developmental needs of adolescents, including their need for intimate connection and social identity. This chapter explores adolescents’ use of web-based sexual information, texting and “sexting,” online dating sites, role-playing games, and sexually explicit media, and presents new data comparing the interpersonal and intrapersonal health outcomes among youth who engage in online sexual activities to those who do not. Despite the media-stoked concerns surrounding adolescents’ participation in online sexual activities, the ubiquity of online activities and close overlap between online and offline activities indicate that this type of behavior should not be pathologised or used as a metric of problem behaviour. The chapter concludes with implications for parents, educators, researchers, counsellors, and health care providers, a call to challenge our deep discomfort around adolescent sexuality and to harness these technologies in ways that help promote growth and positive development.

The recent proliferation of Internet-enabled technology has significantly changed the way adolescents encounter and consume sexually explicit material. Once confined to a personal computer attached to a telephone line, the Internet is now available on laptops, mobile phones, video game consoles, and other electronic devices. With the growth of the Internet has come easier and more ubiquitous access to pornography. The purpose of this article was to review the recent (i.e., 2005 to present) literature regarding the impact of Internet pornography on adolescents. Specifically, this literature review examined the impact of Internet pornography on sexual attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and sexual aggression. The authors also discuss the literature related to the influence of sexually explicit Internet material on self-concept, body image, social development, as well as the expanding body of research on adolescent brain function and physical development. Finally, recommendations for future research were discussed, based on this literature review.


This study had three goals: first, to investigate whether sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) affects sexual risk behaviour; second, to study whether these effects differ between adolescents and adults; and third, to analyse, separately for adolescents and adults, whether gender and age moderate an influence of SEIM on sexual risk behaviour. The authors conducted a two-wave panel survey among nationally representative random samples of 1,445 Dutch adolescents and 833 Dutch adults. SEIM use increased sexual risk behaviour among adults, but not among adolescents. More specifically, moderator analyses showed that SEIM use increased sexual risk behaviour only among male adults, but not among female adults. In the adolescent sample, no moderating gender effect occurred. Neither among adolescents nor among adults did age moderate the effects. Our study shows that SEIM may influence outcomes related to people’s sexual health. It also suggests that male adults may present a potential risk group for adverse effects of SEIM.


An implicit assumption in research on adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is that they may feel more attracted to such material than adults, given the “forbidden” character of SEIM for minors. However, systematic comparisons between adolescents’ and adults’ SEIM use and of its antecedents are missing. We conducted a two-wave panel survey among a nationally representative sample of 1,445 Dutch adolescents and a nationally representative sample of 833 Dutch adults. Adolescents’ and adults’ SEIM use was similar. When significant differences in the SEIM use occurred, they indicated that adults used SEIM more often than adolescents. Male adults were the most frequent users of SEIM. No difference in the antecedent structure of SEIM use emerged between adolescents and adults. In both groups, males, sensation seekers, as well as people with a not exclusively heterosexual orientation used SEIM more often. Among adolescents and adults, lower life satisfaction increased SEIM use. Our findings suggest that the frequency of SEIM use and its antecedents are largely the same among adolescents and adults.


The goal of this review was to systematise empirical research that was published in peer-reviewed English-language journals between 1995 and 2015 on the prevalence, predictors and implications of adolescents’ use of pornography. This research showed that adolescents use pornography, but prevalence rates varied greatly. Adolescents who used pornography more frequently were male, at a more advanced pubertal stage, sensation seekers, and had weak or troubled family relations. Pornography use was associated with more permissive sexual attitudes and tended to be linked with stronger gender-stereotypical sexual beliefs. It also seemed to be related to the occurrence of sexual intercourse, greater experience with casual sex behaviour, and more sexual aggression, both in terms of perpetration and victimisation. The findings of this review need to be seen against the background of various methodological and theoretical shortcomings, as well as several biases in the literature, which currently precludes internally valid causal conclusions about effects of pornography on adolescents.

Background: Pornography can affect the lifestyles of adolescents, especially in terms of their sexual habits and porn consumption, and may have a significant influence on their sexual attitudes and behaviours. Objective: The aim of this study was to understand and analyse the frequency, duration and perception of web porn utilisation by young Italians attending high school. Materials and methods: A total of 1,565 students attending the final year of high school were involved in the study, and 1,492 have agreed to fill out an anonymous survey. The questions representing the content of this study were: 1) How often do you access the web? 2) How much time do you remain connected? 3) Do you connect to pornographic sites? 4) How often do you access pornographic sites? 5) How much time you spend on them? 6) How often do you masturbate? and 7) How do you rate the attendance of these sites? Statistical analysis was performed by Fischer’s test. Results: All young people, on an almost daily basis, have access to Internet. Among those surveyed, 1,163 (77.9%) of Internet users admit to the consumption of pornographic material, and of these, 93 (8%) access pornographic websites daily, 686 (59%) boys accessing these sites perceive the consumption of pornography as always stimulating, 255 (21.9%) define it as habitual, 116 (10%) report that it reduces sexual interest towards potential real-life partners, and the remaining 106 (9.1%) report a kind of addiction. In addition, 19% of overall pornography consumers report an abnormal sexual response, while the percentage rose to 25.1% among regular consumers. Conclusion: It is necessary to educate web users, especially young users, to a safe and responsible use of the Internet and of its contents. Moreover, public education campaigns should be increased in number and frequency to help improve knowledge of Internet-related sexual issues both by adolescents and by parents.


Information about the pornography-viewing habits of urban, low-income youth of colour in the United States is lacking. This study was designed to answer the following using a sample of 16- to 18-year-old urban-residing, low-income Black or Hispanic youth: (1) What types of pornography do youth report watching; where and for what purpose? (2) Do youth feel that pornography exposure has an impact on their own sexual behaviours? and (3) How do parents react to their pornography use? The following themes emerged from interviews with 23 youth: (1) Youth primarily reported watching pornography that featured one-on-one sexual intercourse but also reported having seen extreme pornography (e.g., public humiliation, incest); (2) youth reported watching pornography on home computers or smartphones, and that pornography was frequently watched in school; (3) youth reported watching for entertainment, for sexual stimulation, instructional purposes, and to alleviate boredom; many copied what they saw in pornography during their own sexual encounters; (4) pressure to make or to imitate pornography was an element of some unhealthy dating relationships; and (5) parents were generally described as unsupportive of youth’s use of pornography but underequipped to discuss it. Approximately one-fifth expressed a preference for pornography featuring actors of their same race/ethnicity.


The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the context of heterosexual anal intercourse (HAI) among adolescents. Black and Latino youth were recruited at an urban college and an inner-city adolescent clinic. Participants completed a sexual behavioural questionnaire and the Sexual Relationship Power Scale (SRPS). A total of 61 young people, all of whom were sexually experienced, completed the survey (53 females; 8 males). Of these respondents, 20% reported engaging in HAI (n = 12), and 50% reported HAI refusal. The Relationship Control subscale scores of the SRPS were significantly inversely correlated with a history of HAI. Those who reported HAI or HAI refusal were invited to participate in an interview; 15 participants were interviewed. Most women found HAI distasteful, though some enjoyed it and instigated it. Most participants did not associate HAI with HIV-infection risk, and few used condoms. Some reported no longer using condoms for vaginal or oral intercourse after not using condoms for HAI and vice versa. The data suggest that there is no sexual script for HAI. HAI appears to be a complex behaviour. Conventional views about it, as a way to preserve virginity or prevent pregnancy, may not be adequate. More research is needed to understand this behaviour.

Digital media are an important part of the lives of young people, who use these resources to access sexual materials such as pornography. This kind of consumption can reveal important aspects of their social lives.

Starting from the viewpoint of consumers, this paper is a reflection on girls’ consumption of pornography and on the meanings they give to their practices and choices in the continuum between online and offline experiences. The research involved boys and girls from the ages of 16 to 18 using different techniques: six “co-construction groups”, 48 face-to-face interviews, and two online focus groups. The article describes girls’ experiences with Internet pornography, underlining the symbolic use of pornographic material as exploration and definition of gender performance. According to girls, using Internet pornography means to “play” with gender borders: defining and redefining them, experiencing them, passing through them. These borders are connecting to the meaning of being a girl or a boy, but also to the common idea of “normality” within the peer group.


Among the suggested problems and harms associated with widespread pornography use among young people, risky sexual behaviours have been frequently mentioned. To further explore this public health concern, this article analysed sexual sensation seeking (SSS) as a potential confounder of the association between pornography use and sexual risks using data collected in 2010 from a population-based sample of young Croatian adults aged 18 to 25 (n = 1,005). Significant, but small, correlations were found between the indicators of pornography use (age at first exposure, frequency of use in the past 12 months, and personal importance of pornography) and sexual risk-taking. However, in a multivariate analysis, only age at first exposure to pornography remained a significant, albeit weak, predictor of sexual risk taking among both women and men. SSS, defined as the dispositional tendency toward the impulsive pursuit of sexual arousal and stimulation, neither confounded nor moderated this association. Overall, the findings do not support the notion that pornography use is substantially associated with sexual risk taking among young adults, but suggest that early exposure to sexually explicit material and high SSS are additive risk factors for sexual risk-taking.


The aim of this study was to investigate associations between pubertal timing and boys’ Internet use, particularly their viewing of pornography. We used a sample comprising of 97 boys in grade 8 (M age, 14.22 years) from two schools in a medium-sized Swedish town. This age should be optimal for differentiating early, on-time, and later-maturing boys. Boys responded to self-report questionnaires on their Internet use and pubertal timing. Early, on-time, and late-maturing boys did not differ in terms of most Internet activities. However, early maturers reported downloading and viewing pornography more often than the other boys did (p < .001). The findings build on previous research on the link between pubertal timing and sexual behaviour in adolescence. Moreover, they help further understanding of the behavioural implications of boys’ pubertal timing.


The aims of this study were to determine links between adolescents’ well-being and their sexual and romantic activities off- and online. The study includes 245 mid-adolescents (15 years of age; 55% girls) and 251 late-adolescents (18 years of age; 49% girls). Of the 496 teenagers, 54% had experiences of both online and offline sexual and romantic activities, while the remaining (46%) had only offline experiences. Teenagers’ experiences with online sexual/romantic activities were associated with experiences of offline sexual/romantic activities. Multiple regressions showed that age (older) and risk behaviour contributed to higher engagement in offline sexual/romantic activities. In contrast, only higher risk behaviour contributed to higher engagement in online sexual/romantic activities for boys, but for girl several factors, such as age (younger), lower body esteem, higher risk- and problem behaviour contributed to higher engagement in online sexual/romantic activities. The authors discuss this result from a gender perspective.

The object of this review is to summarize the impact of the Internet on the sexual health of adolescents. This article examines the use of websites, blogs and chatrooms as sources for sexual health information for adolescents. The influence of Internet pornography on sexual behaviours and attitudes is addressed. The use of the Internet as a place to find sexual partners is also assessed. During a time of great physical, emotional and sexual change, the Internet is playing a huge role in the decisions adolescents are making, both positive and negative.


In spite of a growing presence of pornography in contemporary life, little is known about its potential effects on young people’s sexual socialisation and sexual satisfaction. In this article, we present a theoretical model of the effects of sexually explicit materials (SEM) mediated by sexual scripting and moderated by the type of SEM used. An online survey dataset that included 650 young Croatian men aged 18–25 years was used to explore empirically the model. Descriptive findings pointed to significant differences between mainstream and paraphilic SEM users in frequency of SEM use at the age of 14, current SEM use, frequency of masturbation, sexual boredom, acceptance of sex myths, and sexual compulsiveness. In testing the model, a novel instrument was used, the Sexual Scripts Overlap Scale, designed to measure the influence of SEM on sexual socialisation. Structural equation analyses suggested that negative effects of early exposure to SEM on young men’s sexual satisfaction, albeit small, could be stronger than positive effects. Both positive and negative effects—the latter being expressed through suppression of intimacy—were observed only among users of paraphilic SEM. No effect of early exposure to SEM was found among the mainstream SEM users. To counterbalance moral panic but also the glamorisation of pornography, sex education programs should incorporate contents that would increase media literacy and assist young people in critical interpretation of pornographic imagery.


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 behaviour become in their world view 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 behaviours with a partner. We conclude that pornography provides a powerful heuristic model that is implicated in men’s expectations and behaviours during sexual encounters.


Frequent use of pornography has not been sufficiently studied before. In a Swedish survey 2015 male students aged 18 years participated. A group of frequent users of pornography \(n=200, 10.5\%\) were studied with respect to background and psychosocial correlates. The frequent users had a more positive attitude to pornography, were more often “turned on” viewing pornography and viewed more often advanced forms of pornography. Frequent use was also associated with many problem behaviours. A multiple logistic regression analysis showed that frequent users of pornography were more likely to be living in a large city, consuming alcohol more often, having greater sexual desire and had more often sold sex than other boys of the same age. High frequent viewing of pornography may be seen as a problematic behaviour that needs more attention from both parents and teachers and also to be addressed in clinical interviews.

A two-wave panel study was conducted among adolescents (Mean age = 14.78; \( n = 639 \)) to examine the relationship between using sexually explicit websites and sexual initiation with particular attention to adolescents' pubertal status. Structural equation modelling and logistic regression analysis indicated that frequent users of sexually explicit websites were five times more likely to initiate sexual intercourse than nonusers. Pubertal status moderated this relationship: an increased likelihood to initiate sex was found among adolescents in an early pubertal stage who frequently viewed sexually explicit websites. However, a lower likelihood to initiate sex was found among adolescents in an advanced pubertal stage. The possibility of a reciprocal relationship was also examined but was not supported.


On the basis of an online survey of 352 teenagers aged between 16 and 19, the use of pornographic video clips and films was investigated along with the connection between this use and indicators of adolescents' perceived autonomy, peer group influences, and notions of sexuality. The authors found that many adolescents regularly use pornographic video clips or films. Respondents who regard themselves as less independent of their environment, especially their parents, use pornography more frequently themselves. For girls, this also applies if they assess the use within their peer group as particularly extensive, and for boys, if they frequently discuss pornography within their peer group. A high level of consumption of sexually explicit media also goes hand in hand with the assumption that people generally have sexual intercourse earlier in life and that people generally favour more varied sexual techniques.


Opponents and proponents of erotic representations (referred to hereafter as “pornography”) have described the effects of pornography from their perspective. Little, however, has been done in the way of research to investigate these claims from the consumer’s point of view. This especially has been so regarding the positive impact of such consumption on a person’s sex life. Using a study group of 245 college students, the authors examined this question in a framework of scripting theory. They wanted to see whether viewing pornography appeared to expand sexual horizons through normalisation and facilitate a willingness to explore new sexual behaviours and sexual relationships through empowerment. The data supported this viewpoint and further showed the effects to be mediated by gender and sexual preference identity. They suggested, however, that established scripts were extended rather than abandoned. We conclude with connections between our findings and the widespread viewing of pornography in contemporary society.


Academics and lay people alike have contended for decades that children view pornography and are affected by this exposure. Pornography studies that actually sample children are a new phenomenon, however. This commentary summarises what we currently know about children's exposure to pornography and the attitudinal and behavioural correlates of exposure. The author concludes with a call for research on factors that may moderate the effects of exposure and suggests that studies use the sexual script acquisition, activation, and application model of media sexual socialisation as a theoretical guide.


Sexual scripts in pornography rarely include condoms. Many US college students consume pornography and have unprotected sex. Yet no study appears to have investigated whether pornography consumption is correlated with having unprotected sex among US college students. This article reports results from two studies of pornography consumption and condomless sex among US college students. Pornography consumption was directly associated with a higher likelihood of condomless sex in study 1. This finding was replicated in study 2. Study 2 also explored whether perceptions of peers’ use of condoms partially mediates the association between pornography consumption and condomless sex. Pornography consumption was associated with lower estimations of peers’ condom use, and lower estimations of peers’ condom use were associated with personally engaging in condomless sex.
As sex education


Both popular and academic discussions of pornography have explored the question of sexually explicit texts as pedagogy. While many commentators and scholars have acknowledged the educational qualities of pornography, there is no universal consensus as to what porn teaches its consumers and how it works as an educator. Pornography is increasingly itself the subject of educational texts, with “porn literacy” being debated as a potential addition to the secondary state school curriculum in the United Kingdom and Australia. This article presents an overview of the field of “porn as pedagogy” and pedagogy about porn. It is modest in scope, relying primarily on recent research and media reportage from Australasia, North America and the United Kingdom. These Anglophone countries have significant similarities in respect to the ways pornography is framed as a moral and/or political issue within public debate (although there are also notable differences). For this reason, the overview that follows does not seek to be globally representative, but represents a preliminary foray into a complex and diverse field.


This article examines the sexually explicit comments and references to pornography in young men’s answers to a survey about sexuality education. Instead of viewing these remarks as simply impertinent and therefore discountable, I argue that they offer insights into the constitution of masculine identity and an erotic deficit in sexuality education. Many of these comments make requests for the inclusion of enfleshed (female) bodies in sexuality programs and the use of pornographic materials (i.e., videos, magazines). These responses can be seen to represent a challenge to school authority in the way they are laden with “shock” value and push at the discursive limits of “sexual respectability”. In a school environment that seeks to deny the sexual and contain student sexuality, these statements symbolise an assertion of young men’s sexual agency. Young men’s remarks also offer a critique of sexuality education that is de-eroticised and which denies them as positive and legitimate sexual subjects. The implications of these comments for how sexuality education might be conceptualised are considered.


Sexually explicit material (SEM) (including Internet, video and print) may play a key role in the lives of Black same-sex sexually active youth by providing the only information to learn about sexual development. There is limited school- and/or family-based sex education to serve as models for sexual behaviours for Black youth. We describe the role SEM plays in the sexual development of a sample of Black same-sex attracted (SSA) young adolescent males ages 15–19. Adolescents recruited from clinics, social networking sites, and through snowball sampling were invited to participate in a 90-minute, semi-structured qualitative interview. Most participants described using SEM prior to their first same-sex sexual experience. Participants described using SEM primarily for sexual development, including learning about sexual organs and function, the mechanics of same-gender sex, and to negotiate one’s sexual identity. Secondary functions were to determine readiness for sex; to learn about sexual performance, including understanding sexual roles and responsibilities (e.g., “top” or “bottom”); to introduce sexual performance scripts; and to develop models for how sex should feel (e.g., pleasure and pain). Youth also described engaging in sexual behaviours (including condom non-use and/or swallowing ejaculate) that were modelled on SEM. Comprehensive sexuality education programs should be designed to address the unmet needs of young, Black SSA men, with explicit focus on sexual roles and behaviours that may be inaccurately portrayed and/or involve sexual risk-taking (such as unprotected anal intercourse and swallowing ejaculate) in SEM. This work also calls for development of Internet-based HIV/STI prevention strategies targeting young Black SSA men who may be accessing SEM.


The relationship between children, sex and the media is, in some respects, an old issue. The presence of “sexually explicit” material in the media has routinely generated concern on the part of many commentators, even if what counts as “explicit” has changed markedly over time. In recent years, however, this debate seems to have taken on a new urgency. The advent of new technologies—video, cable, satellite and the Internet—has made it increasingly difficult to prevent young people from gaining access to such material; and it is of course a premise of this book that Western culture has in general become more “sexualised”.


Literature indicates that 72% of adolescent girls are exposed to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) before the age of 18, and between 2%-30% of girls report intentionally seeking SEIM. Despite the recognition that adolescent girls are consuming SEIM, and that their use impacts behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes, there has been limited attention paid to their experience of SEIM use. Findings have suggested that adolescent girls often use SEIM as a tool for sex education, posing high risks in the development of ideas about sex, sexuality, intimacy and relationships based on unrealistic depictions of sex in SEIM. This dissertation examined the psychosexual impacts on adolescent girls viewing SEIM and factors, such as caregiver-teen communication, that protect adolescent girls from the negative impacts of their SEIM use. The dissertation explored how exposure and use of SEIM affects adolescent girls’ ideas of sex, perceptions of self, beliefs, attitudes, sexual relationships, sexual behaviors and health. Grounded in an extensive review of the literature within the topic area, the dissertation addressed protective factors against the negative impacts of SEIM exposure and discussed the development of a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls. Open and honest communication between the primary caregiver and adolescent about sex and sexuality has been found to reduce adolescents’ risky sexual behaviors and contribute their development of a healthy sexual self. As a means to disseminate the literature findings, a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls was developed within the framework of Protection Motivation Theory.


Despite the vast number of Canadian young adults who consume sexually explicit Internet movies (SEIM), the potential influences SEIM consumption has on overall sexual health remains understudied. This study aimed to develop insight into what Canadian young adults perceive to be the influences of consuming SEIM on six components of sexual health: Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Self-Perception, Sexual Activity, Sexual Partner Relations, Perceptions of Sexuality, and Overall Wellbeing. Employing an exploratory qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 urban, heterosexual young adults (ages 19–29), who self-identified as having consumed SEIM for a period of at least one year. All interviews were audi-taped with permission, transcribed verbatim and analysed using principles of constructivist grounded theory. Young adults described a wide range of influences that encompassed topics beyond physical reactions, to include experiences with overall sexuality and sexual self. These influences were perceived to result in both health benefits and health challenges. The disparities between this study’s findings and other empirical SEIM studies suggest that conceptualising SEIM consumption using person-centred, holistic perspectives may help researchers more effectively capture the multitude of diverse ways SEIM can influence Canadians’ sexual health.


One emerging avenue for the exploration of adolescents’ sexual orientation identity development is the Internet, since it allows for varying degrees of anonymity and exploration. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the role of the Internet in facilitating the sexual orientation identity development process of gay and bisexual male adolescents. Qualitative interviews were conducted with an ethnically diverse sample of 63 gay/bisexual male adolescents (ages 15–23). Participants reported using a range of Internet applications as they explored and came to accept their sexual orientation identity, with the intended purpose and degree of anonymity desired determining which applications were used. Youth reported that the Internet provided a range of functions with regard to the exploration and acceptance of their sexual orientation identity, including (1) increasing self-awareness of sexual orientation identity, (2) learning about gay/bisexual community life, (3) communicating with other gay/bisexual people, (4) meeting other gay/bisexual people, (5) finding comfort and acceptance with sexual orientation, and (6) facilitating the coming out process. Future research and practice may explore the Internet as a platform for promoting the healthy development of gay and bisexual male adolescents by providing a developmentally and culturally appropriate venue for the exploration and subsequent commitment to an integrated sexual orientation identity.


A growing body of research has investigated the effectiveness of abstinence-only sexual education. There remains a dearth of research on the relevant sexual health information available to young men who have sex with men (YMSM). Drawing on a mixed-methods study with 526 YMSM, this study explores how and where YMSM
receive relevant information on sexual health/behaviour. Findings indicate that information related to gay men’s sexuality is not readily available from family, friends or schools. At initiation of anal intercourse, respondents generally had limited information about HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In some cases, this resulted in the perception that activities such as unprotected sex were “low risk.” Many mentioned they first learned about anal sex during their sexual debut, describing painful and/or unpleasant experiences. Some relied on older/more experienced partners, the Internet, and pornography for information. Findings are discussed in relation to how providers can help YMSM build solid foundations of sexual education to protect them from STI and HIV infection.


There is a widespread concern in Western society about the visibility of pornography in public places and on the Internet. What are the consequences for young men and women, and how do they think about gender, sexuality and pornography? Data was collected, through 22 individual interviews and seven focus groups, from 51 participants (36 women and 37 men aged 14–20 years) in Sweden. The results indicated a process of both normalisation and ambivalence. Pornography was used as a form of social intercourse, a source of information, and a stimulus for sexual arousal. Pornography consumption was more common among the young men than among the women. For both the young men and women, the pornographic script functioned as a frame of reference in relation to bodily ideals and sexual performances. Most of the participants had acquired the necessary skills of how to deal with the exposure to pornography in a sensible and reflective manner.


Objective: The aims were to gain a deeper understanding of how personnel, who work with adolescents, reason about the effect of pornography and its spread in the media, and to explore how well prepared they consider themselves to be in addressing sexual health and gender equality. Design and sample: An inductive, exploratory, qualitative study with focus group discussions was selected. Seventeen participants with different professions were invited into five heterogeneous groups. Measures: Data were analysed according to grounded theory. Results: Conflicting messages about sexuality became the core category. Participants were of the opinion that pornography conveyed a contradictory message compared with national public health goals, societal laws and regulations. They believed that young people use pornography as a source of information and stimulation. Furthermore, they thought that pornography contributed to norm-creating ideals and a demanding sexuality, thus, confirming the traditional gender order. The participants opined that a professional approach was required when addressing sexuality and gender equality issues and requested better training tools and more cultural competence. Conclusions: Professionals working with adolescents perceived that pornography conveys a conflicting message about sexuality. They expressed a need for adequate tools for improving education on health and sexuality, including gender equality aspects and critical media analysis.


This qualitative research examines the influence of pornography consumption on young men with non-exclusive sexual orientations. Drawing on 35 in-depth interviews with young men from an elite university in the north-eastern United States, we examine how pornography was experienced as a leisure activity to be consumed in free time. Rather than focusing on the potential harms of pornography, we use an inductive analytic approach to explore the broader range of experiences that participants had, since the time they first consumed pornography. We demonstrate that pornography had educational benefits for these young men, related to their sexual desires, emerging sexual identities and for developing new sexual techniques. This study is part of a growing body of research that seeks to develop a holistic understanding of pornography in society, addressing the absence of the lived experience of the consumer in most pornography research.


Although research has repeatedly demonstrated a link between adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) and sexual attitudes, the processes underlying this association are not well understood. More specifically, studies have pointed to a mediating role of perceived realism, but internally valid evidence is missing. To address these problems, the authors used data from a three-wave panel study among 959 Dutch adolescents. They investigated whether two dimensions of the perceived realism of SEIM—social realism and utility—mediated
The object of this review is to summarise the impact of the Internet on the sexual health of adolescents. This includes viewing sexually explicit material as adolescents included that some content portrayed a more realistic range of people and bodies than sexual content in mainstream media and that it was a safe means of exploring and learning about sexuality. Participants’ negative assessments of viewing sexually explicit material as adolescents included encountering upsetting content and feeling that it portrayed unrealistic sexual behaviours and interactions. Many participants described incorporating ideas gleaned from sexually explicit material into their sexual experiences. Participants with skills and resources to critically view sexually explicit material were most likely to assess it positively. Based on these findings, initial suggestions could be derived for how online sexual information as well as sexually explicit material might be responsibly addressed in formal sexual education settings.


The object of this review is to summarise the impact of the Internet on the sexual health of adolescents. This article examines the use of Web sites, blogs and chat rooms as sources for sexual health information for adolescents. The influence of Internet pornography on sexual behaviours and attitudes is addressed. The use of the Internet as a place to find sexual partners is also assessed. During a time of great physical, emotional and sexual change, the Internet is playing a huge role in the decisions adolescents are making, both positive and negative.


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 behaviour become in their world view 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 behaviours with a partner. We conclude that pornography provides a powerful heuristic model which is implicated in men’s expectations and behaviours during sexual encounters.


The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of and attitudes among young people toward pornography and their sources of information about sexuality. Eight hundred and seventy-six young people ages 15–25 years (555 females and 321 males) who visited a youth centre in Sweden for a period of one year answered a questionnaire about their use of pornography, their attitudes toward pornography, and sources of information about sexuality. Although most had seen pornographic movies, the youngest boys reported viewing the most pornography. The male participants reported that the most common reason they viewed pornography was to get aroused and to masturbate, whereas the female participants stated that they viewed pornography out of curiosity. The most frequent source of information about sexuality was peers. These results illustrate the importance of sex education to give factual information about sexuality and to counteract the messages about sexuality presented in pornography.

**Cognitive, neurological**


Short definition of addiction: Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviours. Addiction is characterised by inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioural control, craving, diminished recognition of significant problems with one’s behaviours and interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response. Like other chronic diseases, addiction often involves cycles of relapse and remission. Without treatment or engagement in recovery activities, addiction is progressive and can result in disability or premature death.


Research has demonstrated that adolescents regularly use Internet pornography. This two-wave panel study aimed to test an integrative model in early adolescent boys (Mage = 14.10; n = 325) that (a) explains their exposure to Internet pornography by looking at relationships with pubertal timing and sensation seeking, and (b) explores the potential consequence of their exposure to Internet pornography for their academic performance. An integrative path model indicated that pubertal timing and sensation seeking predicted the use of Internet pornography. Boys with an advanced pubertal stage and boys high in sensation seeking more frequently used Internet pornography. Moreover, an increased use of Internet pornography decreased boys’ academic performance six months later. The discussion focuses on the consequences of this integrative model for future research on Internet pornography.


Although a growing body of literature addresses the effects of young people’s use of sexually explicit Internet material, research on the compulsive use of this type of online content among adolescents and its associated factors is largely lacking. This study investigated whether factors from three distinct psychosocial domains (i.e., psychological well-being, sexual interests/behaviours, and impulsive-psychopathic personality)
predicted symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material among adolescent boys. Links between psychosocial factors and boys’ compulsive use symptoms were analysed both cross-sectionally and longitudinally with compulsive use symptoms measured six months later (T2). Data were used from 331 Dutch boys (M age = 15.16 years, range 11–17) who indicated that they used sexually explicit Internet material. The results from negative binomial regression analyses indicated that lower levels of global self-esteem and higher levels of excessive sexual interest concurrently predicted boys’ symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material. Longitudinally, higher levels of depressive feelings and, again, excessive sexual interest predicted relative increases in compulsive use symptoms six months later. Impulsive and psychopathic personality traits were not uniquely related to boys’ symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material. Our findings, while preliminary, suggest that both psychological wellbeing factors and sexual interests/behaviours are involved in the development of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material among adolescent boys. Such knowledge is important for prevention and intervention efforts that target the needs of specific problematic users of sexually explicit Internet material.


Objective: To describe patterns of pornography use among high school boys and to investigate differences between frequent, average and non-frequent users of pornography with respect to sexual experiences, lifestyles, and self-rated health. Methods: A population-based classroom survey among 16-year-old boys (n = 477), from 53 randomly selected high school classes in two towns in mid-Sweden. Results: Almost all boys, 96% (n = 453), had watched pornography. Frequent users of pornography (everyday) (10%, n = 47) differed from average users (63%, n = 292) and non-frequent users (27%, n = 126). Frequent users versus average users and non-frequent users had more sexual experiences, such as one-night stands (45, 32, 25%, respectively) and sex with friends more than ten times (13, 10, 2%). A higher proportion of frequent users spent more than ten straight hours at the computer several times a week (32, 5, 8%) and reported more relationship problems with peers (38, 22, 21%), truancy at least once a week (11, 6, 5%), obesity (13, 3, 3%), use of oral tobacco (36, 29, 20%), and use of alcohol (77, 70, 52%) versus average and nonfrequent users. One third of frequent users watched more pornography than they actually wanted. There were no differences between the groups regarding physical and psychological self-rated health. Conclusions: The boys, defined as frequent users of pornography, were more sexually experienced, spent more time at the computer, and reported an unhealthier lifestyle compared with average and non-frequent users. No differences regarding self-rated health were detected even though obesity was twice as common among frequent users.


The recent proliferation of Internet-enabled technology has significantly changed the way adolescents encounter and consume sexually explicit material. Once confined to a personal computer attached to a telephone line, the Internet is now available on lap-tops, mobile phones, video game consoles, and other electronic devices. With the growth of the Internet has come easier and more ubiquitous access to pornography. The purpose of this article was to review the recent (i.e., 2005 to present) literature regarding the impact of Internet pornography on adolescents. Specifically, this literature review examined the impact of Internet pornography on sexual attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and sexual aggression. The authors also discuss the literature related to the influence of sexually explicit Internet material on self-concept, body image, social development, as well as the expanding body of research on adolescent brain function and physical development. Finally, recommendations for future research were discussed, based on this literature review.


When high speed Internet became widely available a few years ago, growing numbers of people began to worry that their porn use was running out of control. Far from preparing them for fulfilling relationships, viewing an endless stream of porn videos led to unexpected symptoms. Perhaps most surprisingly, for the first time in history erectile dysfunction was becoming a significant problem for young men. This led to one of the largest informal experiments in the history of science. Tens of thousands of people have tried abstaining from sexually stimulating material in a process they call “rebooting”. Many of them reported startling changes, from improved concentration and elevated mood to a greater capacity for real-life intimacy. Gary Wilson has listened to the stories of those who have tried giving up Internet porn and related them to an account of how the reward system of the brain interacts with its environment. And now a growing body of research in neuroscience is confirming...
what these pioneers have discovered for themselves—Internet pornography can be seriously addictive and damaging. In Your Brain on Porn Wilson provides a concise introduction to the phenomenon of Internet porn addiction that draws on both first-person accounts and the findings of cognitive neuroscience. In a voice that is generous and humane, he also offers advice for those who want to stop using Internet pornography. The publication of Your Brain on Porn is a landmark in our attempts to understand, and remain balanced in, a world where addiction is big business.

Effects and mediating factors


Sexually reactive children and adolescents (SRCAs), sometimes referred to as juvenile sexual offenders, may be more vulnerable and likely to experience damaging effects from pornography use because they are a high-risk group for a variety of aggressive behaviours. The purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics of those who use pornography and those who do not and to examine the associations between pornography use and aggressive behaviours among SRCAs. This secondary analysis used a descriptive, exploratory design to study 160 SRCAs. Chi-square and individual odds ratio analyses were employed to examine the associations between use of pornography and aggressive behaviours among SRCAs. SRCAs who used pornography were more likely to display aggressive behaviours than their non-using cohort. Recommendations for nurses and mental health professionals encountering these children and adolescents are offered.


This article reviews qualitative research into the consumption of pornography and other sexually explicit media emerging from a range of subject areas. Taking a critique of quantitative methods and a focus on measuring sexual effects and attitudes as a starting point, it considers the proposition that qualitative work is more suited to an examination of the complex social, cultural, and political constructions of sexuality. Examining studies into the way men, women, and young people see, experience, and use explicit media texts, the article identifies the key findings that have emerged. Qualitative work shows that sexually explicit media texts are experienced and understood in a variety of ways and evoke strong and often contradictory reactions, not all of which are represented in public debates about pornography. These texts function in a range of different ways, depending on context as a source of knowledge, a resource for intimate practices, a site for identity construction, and an occasion for performing gender and sexuality. The article reviews these studies and their findings, identifying what they suggest about directions for future research, both in terms of developing methodology and refining approaches to sexuality and media consumption.


The Confluence Model of sexual aggression (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000) states that pornography use, thought to promote sexual coercion of women through presentation of submissive female imagery, works in conjunction with sexual promiscuity (SP) and hostile masculinity (HM), proposed sexual aggression risk factors, to produce anti-woman sexual aggression. An Internet-based survey (n = 183 adult males) replicated results of previous Confluence Model research, such that men who were high in HM and SP were more likely to report sexual coercion when they frequently, rather than infrequently, used pornography. Exploring new ground, this study also found that HM and SP together were strong predictors of consumption of violent sexual media, in comparison to non-violent sexual media, which suggests that men at high risk of sexual aggression consume different types of sexual material than men at low risk. Further, individual differences in sex drive were found to account for the effects previously attributed to pornography use in statistical tests of the Confluence Model. In the light of third variable considerations, these findings warrant a careful reappraisal of the Confluence Model's assertion that pornography use is a causal determinant of anti-woman sexual aggression.


The Internet has made sexually explicit media more accessible to young people. Online pornography is diverse, can be very graphic, and a large amount is available free of charge with restrictions varying by country. Many
young people are accessing online pornography, intentionally or unintentionally, and there are fears that this could impact on their sexual development and future relationships. Current research into the effects of viewing pornography on attitudes and behaviours of young people is patchy and often contradictory. Via an anonymous survey of 218 young people and focus group discussions with 23 teaching professionals in outer London schools, this study examines whether young people and teaching professionals consider pornography use to have harmful effects, and if they feel schools should be incorporating teaching about online pornography in their educational programs. Findings reveal that young people and teachers perceive there to be many negative effects of viewing pornography, particularly at a young age. Young people and teachers agree that schools should teach about the risks associated with online pornography viewing. Recommendations for schools about how to facilitate discussion of issues surrounding pornography use as part of the wider sex education program are made, including the involvement of parents.


The increase in exposure to sexually explicit material has been cited as a significant factor influencing adolescent sexuality and health. Concern about the negative impact of this material is increasingly prominent within policy, professional groups, and the media. Little research, however, has been conducted within this area. This article presents findings from the author’s research, which is located at the intersection of public health, sociology, media and cultural studies. It explores young people’s perspectives of sexuality, sexual identity and health within the context of sexualised culture and examines how young people discuss these issues, providing a critical account of young people’s engagement with, and experiences of, sexualised culture as “agents” in their own right. My findings are set against historical debates about the nature and impact of sexualised culture and the development of sexual health policy in the United Kingdom.


Research has demonstrated that adolescents regularly use Internet pornography. This two-wave panel study aimed to test an integrative model in early adolescent boys (Mage = 14.10; n = 325) that (a) explains their exposure to Internet pornography by looking at relationships with pubertal timing and sensation seeking, and (b) explores the potential consequence of their exposure to Internet pornography for their academic performance. An integrative path model indicated that pubertal timing and sensation seeking predicted the use of Internet pornography. Boys with an advanced pubertal stage and boys high in sensation seeking more frequently used Internet pornography. Moreover, an increased use of Internet pornography decreased boys’ academic performance six months later. The discussion focuses on the consequences of this integrative model for future research on Internet pornography.


Correlates of use and subsequent sexual attitudes and behaviours predicted by exposure to sexually explicit content (i.e., pornography and erotica) in adult magazines, X-rated movies, and the Internet were examined in a prospective survey of a diverse sample of early adolescents (average age at baseline = 13.6 years; n = 967). Two-thirds (66%) of males and more than one-third (39%) of females had seen at least one form of sexually explicit media in the past year. At baseline, being black, being older, and having less-educated parents, lower socio-economic status, and high need for sensation were related to greater exposure for both males and females. Longitudinal analyses showed that early exposure for males predicted less progressive gender role attitudes, more permissive sexual norms, sexual harassment perpetration, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse two years later. Early exposure for females predicted subsequently less progressive gender role attitudes, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse. Implications for healthy sexual socialisation are discussed.


This paper examines the many factors that underpin pornography exposure, and stresses how the risk factors for exposure and problematic sexual behaviours intersect to contribute to harm. An understanding of the complex interplay of factors such as gender, age, attitude, personal characteristics and social context of use is important in the development of strategies that will assist young people to avoid any potential adverse outcomes. The available evidence remains highly incomplete, and its interpretation is highly contested, so the paper highlights the need for longitudinal studies of use and of actual behaviour, and for studies that focus on cultural contexts and emerging media.

This article revisits young people’s experiences with sexual content in the light of dominant arguments in the public debate concerning the potential effects, or risk and harm for young people. Drawing upon a research project the author conducted in 2011, they argue in this article that there might be an alternative approach to young people’s experiences with sexual content, one deriving from the Foucauldian perspective on sexuality as a self-governing discourse. Set in a social constructionist framework my discussion prioritises young people’s accounts as reflections on a constructed notion of sexuality.


Although research has repeatedly demonstrated that adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is related to their endorsement of permissive sexual attitudes and their experience with sexual behaviour, it is not clear how linkages between these constructs unfold over time. This study combined two types of longitudinal modelling, mean-level development and cross-lagged panel modelling, to examine (a) developmental patterns in adolescents’ SEIM use, permissive sexual attitudes, and experience with sexual behavior, as well as whether these developments are related; and (b) longitudinal directionality of associations between SEIM use on the one hand and permissive sexual attitudes and sexual behaviour on the other hand. We used four-wave longitudinal data from 1,352 7th through 10th grade Dutch adolescents (M(age) T1 = 13.95; 52.7% boys) and estimated multigroup models to test for moderation by gender. Mean-level developmental trajectories showed that boys occasionally and increasingly used SEIM over the 18-month study period, which co-occurred with increases in their permissive attitudes and their experience with sexual behaviour. Cross-lagged panel models revealed unidirectional effects from boys’ SEIM use on their subsequent endorsement of permissive attitudes, but no consistent directional effects between their SEIM use and sexual behaviour. Girls showed a similar pattern of increases in experience with sexual behaviour, but their SEIM use was consistently low and their endorsement of permissive sexual attitudes decreased over the 18-month study period. In contrast to boys, girls’ SEIM use was not longitudinally related to their sexual attitudes and behaviour. Theoretical and practical implications of these gender-specific findings are discussed.


This study used a person-centred approach to examine whether different developmental trajectories of boys’ and girls’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) exist, which factors predict these trajectories, and whether sexual behaviour develops differently for adolescents in these trajectories. A combination of latent class growth analysis on SEIM use and latent growth curve analysis on sexual behaviour was used on four-wave longitudinal data of 787 eighth through tenth grade Dutch adolescents. Among boys, four SEIM use trajectories were identified, which were labelled Nonuse/Infrequent Use, Strongly Increasing Use, Occasional Use, and Decreasing Use. Among girls, a large Stable Nonuse/Infrequent Use and smaller Strongly Increasing Use and Stable Occasional Use trajectories were distinguished. Higher initial levels and/or stronger increases in SEIM use were predicted by demographic, social contextual, personal, and media use characteristics, including a stronger sexual interest, a higher degree of perceived realism regarding sexualized Internet content, and more permissive sexual attitudes. Moreover, initial levels of and, to some extent, developmental changes in sexual behaviour varied for boys and girls in the different SEIM use trajectories. Whereas some adolescents showed concurrent low levels, or parallel strong increases in SEIM use and sexual behaviour, a subgroup of boys decreased their SEIM use while increasing their sexual behaviour.


A survey was conducted among 692 Australian 13 to 16 year olds to examine aspects of their Internet use and, in particular, their exposure to inappropriate material and behaviours online and their online safety practices. Significant differences were found in the amount of exposure to inappropriate material or behaviours online according to sex and frequency of usage, with males and more frequent Internet users showing greater exposure. No differences were found according to whether blocking or filtering software was installed. Significant differences in online safety practices were also found, with younger participants (13 to 14 year olds) and those participants whose parents had not discussed Internet safety with them being less safety conscious.

Youth in Australia are routinely exposed to sexually explicit images. Among 16 and 17-year-olds, three-quarters of boys and one-tenth of girls have ever watched an X-rated movie. Three-quarters of 16 and 17 year olds have been exposed accidentally to pornographic websites, while 38% of boys and 2% of girls have deliberately accessed them. Internet pornography is a particularly pervasive source of minors’ exposure to pornography, both accidental and deliberate. Two features of children’s exposure to pornography mirror those among adults. First, males are more likely to seek out, and are more frequent consumers of, both X-rated movies and pornographic websites. Second, Internet users of any age find it difficult to avoid unwanted encounters with sexually explicit materials.


Literature indicates that 72% of adolescent girls are exposed to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) before the age of 18, and between 2% and 30% of girls report intentionally seeking SEIM. Despite the recognition that adolescent girls are consuming SEIM, and that their use impacts behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes, there has been limited attention paid to their experience of SEIM use. Findings have suggested that adolescent girls often use SEIM as a tool for sex education, posing high risks in the development of ideas about sex, sexuality, intimacy, and relationships based on unrealistic depictions of sex in SEIM. This dissertation examined the psychosexual impacts on adolescent girls viewing SEIM and factors, such as caregiver-teen communication, that protect adolescent girls from the negative impacts of their SEIM use. The dissertation explored how exposure and use of SEIM affects adolescent girls’ ideas of sex, perceptions of self, beliefs, attitudes, sexual relationships, sexual behaviours, and health. Grounded in an extensive review of the literature within the topic area, the dissertation addressed protective factors against the negative impacts of SEIM exposure and discussed the development of a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls. Open and honest communication between the primary caregiver and adolescent about sex and sexuality has been found to reduce adolescents’ risky sexual behaviours and contribute their development of a healthy sexual self. As a means to disseminate the literature findings, a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls was developed within the framework of Protection Motivation Theory.


Pornography is one of the most sought-after topics on the Internet, and is easily available for anyone, including children and adolescents. At youth centres, nurse-midwives have noticed that young people have different kinds of questions about sexual practices compared with a few years ago. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of thoughts and reflections about pornography consumption, and its possible influence on sexual practices, among young women and men. The staff at a youth centre in a city in central Sweden asked the visitors if they had seen pornography and if they wanted to be interviewed about their experiences. Ten young women and eight men, aged 16–23 years, participated. In-depth interviews were performed and open-ended questions about pornography and sexuality were posed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed according to grounded theory. The core category “Living with the current sexual norm” depicted how pornography created sexual expectations and demands, for instance, to perform certain sexual acts. The informants expressed contradictory feelings towards pornography and felt that sexuality was separated from intimacy. A moral attitude was described and examples of stereotypic gender roles were given. To deal with the current sexual norm, informants had different individual handling strategies and attitudes to pornography, namely liberal, normalisation, distance, feminist or conservative. Limitations of this study were the small sample size and that results from a qualitative research study cannot be generalized. The results contribute to an understanding of how pornographic material can influence young peoples’ thoughts, reflections and sexual behaviour. This indicates the importance, for personnel at youth centres and schools, to discuss sexual behaviour and how sexuality is portrayed in pornographic material with young people.


Objectives: To investigate consumption of and attitudes toward pornography in relation to demographic factors and relationships to parents among third-year high school students. Methods: A random sample of 718 students with a mean age 18 years (range 17–21) completed a classroom questionnaire consisting of 89 questions. Results: More students in practical than in theoretical study programs had parents with a practical profession (p < 0.001). More parents to students attending theoretical programs owned their housing (p < 0.001). More men than women had ever consumed pornography (98% vs 72%; p < 0.001). More practical than theoretical students were
influenced by watching pornographic films, fantasizing about ($p < 0.05$) or having performed acts inspired by pornography ($p < 0.05$). Both theoretical and practical male students had more favourable attitudes toward pornography than either group of female students ($p < 0.001; p = 0.037$). More female, than male students, were of the opinion that pornography could create uncertainty and demands. Conclusion: Students’ high school programme choices partly reflect their social background. Pornography was consumed mainly by male students, who also had the most favourable attitudes, while females mainly had negative attitudes. To promote sexual health these differences between genders and study programmes should be taken into consideration in counselling, and in sex- and relationships education.


Gottfredson and Hirschi’s (1990) general theory of crime and Akers’ (1998) social learning theory have received strong empirical support for explaining crime in both the physical and cyberworlds. Most of the studies examining cybercrime, however, have only used college samples. In addition, the evidence on the interaction between low self-control and deviant peer associations is mixed. Therefore, this study examined whether low self-control and deviant peer associations explained various forms of cyberdeviance in a youth sample. We also tested whether associating with deviant peers mediated the effect of low self-control on cyberdeviance as well as whether it conditioned the effect. Low self-control and deviant peer associations were found to be related to cyberdeviance in general, as well as piracy, harassment, online pornography and hacking specifically. Deviant peer associations both mediated and exacerbated the effect of low self-control on general cyberdeviance, though these interactions were not found for the five cyberdeviant types examined.


The influence of pornography on attitudes and behaviours has been a longstanding question that has provoked considerable debate among researchers (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000; Marshall, 2000). Evidence associating pornography consumption with aggression would be important, not only for public policy and legislation, but in the assessment and treatment of special populations, such as sexual offenders. In this commentary, the authors briefly discuss the methodologies in which pornography’s putative effects have been examined, with particular note of the aggregate approach employed by Diamond, Jozifkova, and Weiss (2010). They conclude with a brief review of the literature on pornography’s role in affecting negative attitudes and behaviours among certain individuals.


This article reviews the extant literature regarding pornography’s influence on antisocial attitudes, sexual arousal, and sexually aggressive behaviour in both noncriminal and criminal samples. The article concludes that when examined in the context of multiple, interacting factors, the findings are highly consistent across experimental and non-experimental studies and across differing populations in showing that pornography use can be a risk factor for sexually aggressive outcomes, principally for men who are high on other risk factors and who use pornography frequently. Finally, this article presents theoretical implications based on these findings, as well as some clinical implications relevant to the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders.


This study aimed to compare the sexual behaviour of adolescents who were or were not exposed to online pornography, to assess to what extent the willingness of exposure changed these possible associations, and to determine the profiles of youths who were exposed to online pornography. Data were drawn from the 2002 Swiss Multicenter Adolescent Survey on Health, a self-administered cross-sectional, paper and pencil questionnaire. From the 7,529 adolescents aged 16–20 years, 6,054 (3,283 males) used the Internet during the previous month and were eligible for our study. Males were divided into three groups (wanted exposure, 29.2%; unwanted exposure, 46.7%; no exposure, 24.1%) whereas females were divided into two groups (exposure, 35.9%; no exposure, 64.1%). The principal outcome measures were demographic characteristics, Internet use parameters and risky sexual behaviours. Risky sexual behaviours were not associated with online pornography exposure in any of the groups, except that males who were exposed (deliberately or not) had higher odds of not having used a condom at last intercourse. Bi/homosexual orientation and Internet use parameters were not associated either.
Additionally, males in the wanted exposure group were more likely to be sensation seekers. On the other hand, exposed girls were more likely to be students, higher sensation seekers, early maturers, and to have a highly educated father. We conclude that pornography exposure is not associated with risky sexual behaviours and that the willingness of exposure does not seem to have an impact on risky sexual behaviours among adolescents.


This article focuses on the effects of exposure to pornography on teenagers, particularly males, and concentrates on sexually aggressive outcomes and on the characteristics of the individual as crucial in determining whether pornography consumption may or may not lead to sexually aggressive outcomes. In future work, it is important not to use an overly simplistic lens of focus in which pornography exposure is seen as generally harmful or not. Depending on particular constellations of personality characteristics, the effects of pornography may differ considerably among different teenagers as well as within different cultures. The research suggests that particular concerns may be needed for those who are highly frequent consumers of pornography, those who seek out sexually violent content, and those who also have other risk factors.


Based on the Confluence Model of Sexual Aggression, we hypothesised that individual differences in risk for sexual aggression moderate the association between pornography use and attitudes supporting violence against women. This hypothesis was in keeping with the findings of a recent meta-analysis that indicated such a positive association between porn use and attitudes. However, in this meta-analysis there was also a high degree of heterogeneity among studies, suggesting the existence of crucial moderating variables. Unfortunately, the available literature included in this meta-analysis did not enable identifying the basis for such moderation. To fully test our hypothesis of individual differences moderation and related hypotheses requires a representative sample. Fortunately, a unique nationally representative sample of US men in any form of post-high school education that we obtained in 1984–85 enabled testing our predictions. Participants had anonymously completed questionnaires that included items pertaining to pornography use, attitudes about violence against women, and other measures assessing risk factors highlighted by the Confluence Model. As predicted, while we found an overall positive association between pornography consumption and attitudes, further examination showed that it was moderated by individual differences. More specifically, as predicted this association was found to be largely due to men at relatively high risk for sexually aggression who were relatively frequent pornography consumers. The findings help resolve inconsistencies in the literature and are in line not only with experimental research on attitudes but also with both experimental and non-experimental studies assessing the relationship between pornography consumption and sexually aggressive behaviour.


Objectives: The study investigated the differences between high school boys and girls in: (1) the use of pornography, (2) sexual experiences, (3) experience of sexual abuse, and (4) perceptions of sexuality and pornography. It also examined the possible predictors of experiencing sexual activities, such as sex, socio-demographic factors (high school program, household, and ethnic background), pornography consumption, experience of sexual abuse, perception of sexuality, and perception of pornography. Method: A population-based classroom survey of 16-year-old boys (n = 477) and girls (n = 400) from 53 randomly selected high school classes in two towns in mid-Sweden. Results: Almost all boys (96%, n = 453) and 54% of the girls (n = 215) had watched pornography. Regardless of sex, pornography consumers had a positive perception of pornography. There were no differences between pornography-consuming boys and girls regarding fantasies, and they had attempted sexual acts inspired by pornography. A higher proportion of girls (15%) than boys (6%) had experienced sexual abuse. Predictors for being sexually experienced (oral sex, intercourse, and anal sex) included: being a girl, attending a vocational high school program, living with separated parents, having experience of sexual abuse, stating that boys and girls are equally interested in sex, and having a positive perception of pornography (Adj. R² = 0.166). Conclusion: Boys had more experience of and a more positive perception of pornography, but there were only a few differences between boys and girls in the pornography-consumer group. Girls were more sexually experienced than boys. A positive perception of pornography predicted being sexually experienced.

Objective: To describe patterns of pornography use among high school boys and to investigate differences between frequent, average, and non-frequent users of pornography with respect to sexual experiences, lifestyles, and self-rated health. Methods: A population-based classroom survey among 16-year-old boys (n = 477), from 53 randomly selected high school classes in 2 towns in mid-Sweden. Results: Almost all boys, 96% (n = 453), had watched pornography. Frequent users of pornography (everyday) (10%, n = 47) differed from average users (63%, n = 292) and non-frequent users (27%, n = 126). Frequent users versus average users and non-frequent users had more sexual experiences, such as one-night stands (45, 32, 25%, respectively) and sex with friends more than ten times (13, 10, 2%). A higher proportion of frequent users spent more than ten straight hours at the computer several times a week (32, 5, 8%) and reported more relationship problems with peers (38, 22, 21%), truancy at least once a week (11, 6, 5%), obesity (13, 3, 3%), use of oral tobacco (36, 29, 20%), and use of alcohol (77, 70, 52%) versus average and non-frequent users. One third of frequent users watched more pornography than they actually wanted. There were no differences between the groups regarding physical and psychological self-rated health. Conclusions: The boys, defined as frequent users of pornography, were more sexually experienced, spent more time at the computer, and reported an unhealthier lifestyle compared with average and non-frequent users. No differences regarding self-rated health were detected even though obesity was twice as common among frequent users.


This qualitative research examines the influence of pornography consumption on young men with non-exclusive sexual orientations. Drawing on 35 in-depth interviews with young men from an elite university in the north-eastern United States, we examine how pornography was experienced as a leisure activity to be consumed in free time. Rather than focusing on the potential harms of pornography, we use an inductive analytic approach to explore the broader range of experiences that participants had, since the time they first consumed pornography. We demonstrate that pornography had educational benefits for these young men, related to their sexual desires, emerging sexual identities and for developing new sexual techniques. This study is part of a growing body of research that seeks to develop a holistic understanding of pornography in society, addressing the absence of the lived experience of the consumer in most pornography research.


Objective: This survey provides data about the attitudes towards women of 1,023 pornography consumers in Australia, and the relationships between these attitudes, their level of pornography consumption, and several other demographic variables. Method: A survey of 1,023 consumers of pornography in Australia recruited through mailing lists of pornography consumers, and via the Internet. Results: There was no relationship demonstrated between consumers’ attitudes towards women and the amount of pornography consumed; but there was a relationship between greater negative attitudes towards women and being older; voting for a right-wing political party; living in a rural area; having a lower level of formal education; and being a man. Conclusions: The paper suggests that consuming pornography is not a significant factor in the generation of negative attitudes towards women. Implications: The survey suggests that in seeking to understand how negative attitudes towards women are generated in society we should start by asking what issues might be most important, rather than beginning with the assumption that pornography is the major cause of such attitudes.


This study examined how levels of sexually explicit material (SEM) use during adolescence and young adulthood were associated with sexual preferences, sexual behaviors, and sexual and relationship satisfaction. Participants included 782 heterosexual college students (326 men and 456 women; M(age) = 19.9) who completed a questionnaire online. Results revealed high frequencies and multiple types and contexts of SEM use, with men’s usage rates systematically higher than women’s. Regression analyses revealed that both the frequency of SEM use and number of SEM types viewed were uniquely associated with more sexual experience (a higher number of overall and casual sexual intercourse partners, as well as a lower age at first intercourse). Higher frequencies of SEM use were associated with less sexual and relationship satisfaction. The frequency of SEM use and number of SEM types viewed were both associated with higher sexual preferences for the types of sexual practices typically...
Effects of pornography presented in SEM. These findings suggest that SEM use can play a significant role in a variety of aspects of young adults’ sexual development processes.


Previous research has largely ignored the implications of adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit online material for their sexual attitude formation. To study whether adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit material on the Internet is related to recreational attitudes toward sex, we conducted an online survey among 471 Dutch adolescents aged 13–18. In line with an orientation 1—stimulus—orientation 2—response (O1–S–O2–R) model, we found a pattern of multiple mediated relationships. Male adolescents (O1) used sexually explicit online material (S) more than female adolescents, which led to a greater perceived realism of such material (O2). Perceived realism (O2), in turn, mediated the relationship between exposure to sexually explicit online material (S) and recreational attitudes toward sex (R). Exposure to sexually explicit online material, then, is related to more recreational attitudes toward sex, but this relationship is influenced by adolescents’ gender and mediated by the extent to which they perceive online sexual material as realistic.


Drawing on a survey of 745 Dutch adolescents ages 13 to 18, the authors investigated (a) the occurrence and frequency of adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit material on the Internet and (b) the correlates of this exposure. Seventy-one per cent of the male adolescents and 40% of the female adolescents had been exposed to some kind of online sexually explicit material in the six months prior to the interview. Adolescents were more likely to be exposed to sexually explicit material online if they were male, were high sensation seekers, were less satisfied with their lives, were more sexually interested, used sexual content in other media more often, had a fast Internet connection, and had friends that were predominantly younger. Among male adolescents, a more advanced pubertal status was also associated with more frequent exposure to online sexually explicit material. Among female adolescents, greater sexual experience decreased exposure to online sexually explicit material.


The main aim of this study was to investigate whether adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) increased their sexual preoccupancy (i.e., a strong cognitive engagement in sexual issues). Further, we wanted to know (a) whether subjective sexual arousal mediated a potential influence of exposure to SEIM on sexual preoccupancy and (b) whether this process differed between male and female adolescents. Over the course of one year, we surveyed 962 Dutch adolescents aged 13–20 years three times. Structural equation modelling showed that exposure to SEIM stimulated sexual preoccupancy. This influence was fully mediated by subjective sexual arousal from SEIM. The effect of exposure to SEIM on subjective sexual arousal did not differ between male and female adolescents. The findings suggest that a sexualised media environment may affect adolescents’ sexual development beyond traditionally studied variables, such as sexual attitudes and sexual behaviour.


The aim of this study was to investigate, within a social comparison framework, the causal relationship between adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) and their sexual satisfaction. In addition, we tested which adolescents were most susceptible to a potential influence of SEIM on sexual satisfaction. Between May 2006 and May 2007, we conducted a three-wave panel survey among 1,052 Dutch adolescents aged 13–20. Structural equation modelling revealed that exposure to SEIM consistently reduced adolescents’ sexual satisfaction. Lower sexual satisfaction (in Wave 2) also increased the use of SEIM (in Wave 3). Moderator analyses showed that the negative effect of SEIM on sexual satisfaction was stronger for adolescents who had no or limited sexual experience as well as for adolescents who perceived the majority of their peers to be sexually inexperienced. The effect of exposure to SEIM on sexual satisfaction did not differ among male and female adolescents.

Although research has repeatedly demonstrated a link between adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) and sexual attitudes, the processes underlying this association are not well understood. More specifically, studies have pointed to a mediating role of perceived realism, but internally valid evidence is missing. To address these problems, the authors used data from a three-wave panel study among 959 Dutch adolescents. They investigated whether two dimensions of the perceived realism of SEIM—social realism and utility—mediated the impact of SEIM on adolescents’ instrumental attitudes toward sex (i.e., the notion of sex as primarily physical and casual rather than affectionate and relational). Structural equation modelling showed that more frequent use of SEIM increased both the perceived social realism and the perceived utility of SEIM. In turn, these two perceptions led to more instrumental attitudes toward sex. No evidence of reverse causality emerged.


Research has shown that adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is positively associated with an important characteristic of the developing sexual self, sexual uncertainty. However, the causal relation between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty is unclear. Moreover, we do not know which processes underlie this relation and whether gender moderates these processes. Based on a three-wave panel survey among 956 Dutch adolescents, structural equation modelling revealed that more frequent SEIM use increased adolescents’ sexual uncertainty. This influence was mediated by adolescents’ involvement in SEIM. The impact of SEIM use on involvement was stronger for female than for male adolescents. Future research on the effects of SEIM may benefit from greater attention to experiential states during SEIM use.


This study had three goals: first, to investigate whether sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) affects sexual risk behaviour; second, to study whether these effects differ between adolescents and adults; and third, to analyse, separately for adolescents and adults, whether gender and age moderate an influence of SEIM on sexual risk behaviour. The authors conducted a two-wave panel survey among nationally representative random samples of 1,445 Dutch adolescents and 833 Dutch adults. SEIM use increased sexual risk behaviour among adults, but not among adolescents. More specifically, moderator analyses showed that SEIM use increased sexual risk behaviour only among male adults, but not among female adults. In the adolescent sample, no moderating gender effect occurred. Neither among adolescents nor among adults did age moderate the effects. Our study shows that SEIM may influence outcomes related to people’s sexual health. It also suggests that male adults may present a potential risk group for adverse effects of SEIM.


An implicit assumption in research on adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is that they may feel more attracted to such material than adults, given the “forbidden” character of SEIM for minors. However, systematic comparisons between adolescents’ and adults’ SEIM use and of its antecedents are missing. We conducted a two-wave panel survey among a nationally representative sample of 1,445 Dutch adolescents and a nationally representative sample of 833 Dutch adults. Adolescents’ and adults’ SEIM use was similar. When significant differences in the SEIM use occurred, they indicated that adults used SEIM more often than adolescents. Male adults were the most frequent users of SEIM. No difference in the antecedent structure of SEIM use emerged between adolescents and adults. In both groups, males, sensation seekers, as well as people with a not exclusively heterosexual orientation used SEIM more often. Among adolescents and adults, lower life satisfaction increased SEIM use. These findings suggest that the frequency of SEIM use and its antecedents are largely the same among adolescents and adults.


The goal of this review was to systematise empirical research that was published in peer-reviewed English-language journals between 1995 and 2015 on the prevalence, predictors, and implications of adolescents’ use of pornography. This research showed that adolescents use pornography, but prevalence rates varied greatly. Adolescents who used pornography more frequently were male, at a more advanced pubertal stage, sensation
Among the suggested problems and harms associated with widespread pornography use among young people, Widespread access to and use of pornography has led to concern about the potentially negative effects of exposure to pornography on emerging adults—its largest user group. Past research shows that salient social norms can influence subsequent behaviour. This study, therefore, explored the relationship between salient pornography-related norms and pornography use among emerging adults, as well as the relationship between parental mediation of pornography during adolescence and emerging adults’ salient pornography-related norms. Results revealed that emerging adults are more likely to view pornography when they hold a salient belief (norm) that their peers both approve of viewing and regularly view pornography. The study also found that parents’ provision of rules about viewing pornography during adolescence may reduce future pornography use by instilling the salient belief that the parent disapproves of viewing pornography. These findings suggest that the effect of rules in the home about adolescents’ use of pornography may persist into emerging adulthood.


Among the suggested problems and harms associated with widespread pornography use among young people, risky sexual behaviours have been frequently mentioned. To further explore this public health concern, this article analysed sexual sensation seeking (SSS) as a potential confounder of the association between pornography use and sexual risks using data collected in 2010 from a population-based sample of young Croatian adults aged 18 to 25 (n = 1,005). Significant, but small, correlations were found between the indicators of pornography use (age at first exposure, frequency of use in the past 12 months, and personal importance of pornography) and sexual risk taking. However, in a multivariate analysis, only age at first exposure to pornography remained a significant, albeit weak, predictor of sexual risk taking among both women and men. SSS, defined as the dispositional tendency toward the impulsive pursuit of sexual arousal and stimulation, neither confounded nor moderated this association. Overall, the findings do not support the notion that pornography use is substantially associated with sexual risk taking among young adults, but suggest that early exposure to sexually explicit material and high SSS are additive risk factors for sexual risk taking.


Background: Pornography can affect the lifestyles of adolescents, especially in terms of their sexual habits and practices. Among those surveyed, 1,163 (77.9%) of Internet users admit to the consumption of pornographic material, and of these, 93 (8%) access pornographic websites daily, 686 (59%) boys accessing these sites perceive the consumption of pornography as always stimulating, 255 (21.9%) define it as habitual, 116 (10%) report that it reduces sexual interest towards potential real-life partners, and the remaining 106 (9.1%) report a kind of addiction. In addition, 19% of overall pornography consumers report an abnormal sexual response, while the percentage rose to 25.1% among regular consumers. Conclusion: It is necessary to educate web users, especially young users, to a safe and responsible use of the Internet and of its contents. Moreover, public education campaigns should be increased in number and frequency to help improve knowledge of Internet-related sexual issues both by adolescents and by parents.


Widespread access to and use of pornography has led to concern about the potentially negative effects of exposure to pornography on emerging adults—its largest user group. Past research shows that salient social norms can influence subsequent behaviour. This study, therefore, explored the relationship between salient pornography-related norms and pornography use among emerging adults, as well as the relationship between parental mediation of pornography during adolescence and emerging adults’ salient pornography-related norms. Results revealed that emerging adults are more likely to view pornography when they hold a salient belief (norm) that their peers both approve of viewing and regularly view pornography. The study also found that parents’ provision of rules about viewing pornography during adolescence may reduce future pornography use by instilling the salient belief that the parent disapproves of viewing pornography. These findings suggest that the effect of rules in the home about adolescents’ use of pornography may persist into emerging adulthood.

The aim of this study was to investigate associations between pubertal timing and boys’ Internet use, particularly their viewing of pornography. We used a sample comprising of 97 boys in grade 8 (M age, 14.22 years) from two schools in a medium-sized Swedish town. This age should be optimal for differentiating early, on-time, and later-maturing boys. Boys responded to self-report questionnaires on their Internet use and pubertal timing. Early, on-time, and late-maturing boys did not differ in terms of most Internet activities. However, early maturers reported downloading and viewing pornography more often than the other boys did (p < .001). The findings build on previous research on the link between pubertal timing and sexual behaviour in adolescence. Moreover, they help further understanding of the behavioural implications of boys’ pubertal timing.

Sorbring, E. et al. (2014). Adolescent girls’ and boys’ well-being in relation to online and offline sexual activities. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 8*(1).

The aims of this study were to determine links between adolescent’s wellbeing and their sexual and romantic activities off- and online. The study includes 245 mid-adolescents (15 years of age; 55% girls) and 251 late-adolescents (18 years of age; 49% girls). Of the 496 teenagers, 54% had experiences of both online and offline sexual and romantic activities, while the remaining (46%) had only offline experiences. Teenagers’ experiences with online sexual/romantic activities were associated with experiences of offline sexual/romantic activities. Multiple regressions showed that age (older) and risk behaviour contributed to higher engagement in offline sexual/romantic activities. In contrast, only higher risk behaviour contributed to higher engagement in online sexual/romantic activities for boys, but for girl several factors, such as age (younger), lower body esteem, higher risk- and problem behaviour contributed to higher engagement in online sexual/romantic activities. We discuss this result from a gender perspective.


This article draws on a memory-work project on the childhood experiences and memories of pornography in Finland to argue that the autobiographical younger self used in these reminiscences is a creature distinct from the cultural figure of a child at risk, and that the forms of learning connected to pornography are more diverse and complex than those limited to sexual acts alone. The notion of an asexual child susceptible to media effects remains detached from people’s accounts of their childhood activities, experiences and competences. By analysing these, it is possible to critically re-examine the hyperbolic concerns over the pornification and sexualisation of culture.


Research on the risks associated with children’s use of the Internet often aims to inform policies of risk prevention. Yet paralleling the effort to map the nature and extent of online risk is a growing unease that the goal of risk prevention tends to support an over-protective, risk-averse culture that restricts the freedom of online exploration that society encourages for children in other spheres. It is central to adolescence that teenagers learn to anticipate and cope with risk – in short, to become resilient. In this article, we inquire into children and teenagers’ responses after they have experienced online content or contact risks. Pan-European findings show that especially in Northern European countries with high Internet access, parental perception of likelihood of online risk to their child is negatively associated with their perceived ability to cope. A comparison of representative surveys conducted among children in three relatively “high risk” countries (Norway, Ireland and the United Kingdom) found that although the frequency of exposure to perceived online risks, especially content risks, is fairly high, most children adopt positive (e.g., seek help from friends) or, more commonly, neutral (e.g., ignoring the experience) strategies to cope, although a minority exacerbate the risks (e.g., passing risky content on to friends). Most strategies tend to exclude adult involvement. Significant differences in both risk and coping are found by gender and age across these countries, pointing to different styles of youthful risk management.


New technology has made pornography increasingly accessible to young people, and a growing evidence base has identified a relationship between viewing pornography and violent or abusive behaviour in young men. This article reports findings from a large survey of 4,564 young people aged 14 to 17 in five European countries which illuminate the relationship between regular viewing of online pornography, sexual coercion and abuse
and the sending and receiving of sexual images and messages, known as “sexting.” In addition to the survey, which was completed in schools, 91 interviews were undertaken with young people who had direct experience of interpersonal violence and abuse in their own relationships. Rates for regularly viewing online pornography were very much higher among boys and most had chosen to watch pornography. Boys’ perpetration of sexual coercion and abuse was significantly associated with regular viewing of online pornography. Viewing online pornography was also associated with a significantly increased probability of having sent sexual images/messages for boys in nearly all countries. In addition, boys who regularly watched online pornography were significantly more likely to hold negative gender attitudes. The qualitative interviews illustrated that, although sexting is normalised and perceived positively by most young people, it has the potential to reproduce sexist features of pornography such as control and humiliation. Sex and relationships education should aim to promote a critical understanding of pornography among young people that recognizes its abusive and gendered values.


In spite of a growing presence of pornography in contemporary life, little is known about its potential effects on young people’s sexual socialisation and sexual satisfaction. In this article, we present a theoretical model of the effects of sexually explicit materials (SEM) mediated by sexual scripting and moderated by the type of SEM used. An online survey dataset that included 650 young Croatian men aged 18-25 years was used to explore empirically the model. Descriptive findings pointed to significant differences between mainstream and paraphilic SEM users in frequency of SEM use at the age of 14, current SEM use, frequency of masturbation, sexual boredom, acceptance of sex myths, and sexual compulsiveness. In testing the model, a novel instrument was used, the Sexual Scripts Overlap Scale, designed to measure the influence of SEM on sexual socialisation. Structural equation analyses suggested that negative effects of early exposure to SEM on young men’s sexual satisfaction, albeit small, could be stronger than positive effects. Both positive and negative effects—the latter being expressed through suppression of intimacy—were observed only among users of paraphilic SEM. No effect of early exposure to SEM was found among the mainstream SEM users. To counterbalance moral panic but also the glamorisation of pornography, sex education programs should incorporate contents that would increase media literacy and assist young people in critical interpretation of pornographic imagery.


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 behaviour become in their world view and the more likely they are to use those scripts to act upon real life experiences. The authors argue pornography creates a sexual script that then guides sexual experiences. To test this, they 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 behaviours with a partner. The authors conclude that pornography provides a powerful heuristic model that is implicated in men’s expectations and behaviours during sexual encounters.


Frequent use of pornography has not been sufficiently studied before. In a Swedish survey 2,015 male students aged 18 years participated. A group of frequent users of pornography (n = 200, 10.5%) were studied with respect to background and psychosocial correlates. The frequent users had a more positive attitude to pornography, were more often “turned on” viewing pornography and viewed more often advanced forms of pornography. Frequent use was also associated with many problem behaviours. A multiple logistic regression analysis showed that frequent users of pornography were more likely to be living in a large city, consuming alcohol more often, having greater sexual desire and had more often sold sex than other boys of the same age. High frequent viewing of pornography may be seen as a problematic behaviour that needs more attention from both parents and teachers and also to be addressed in clinical interviews.

 Pornography is both prevalent and normative in United States’ culture; however, little is known about the psychological and relational affects that it can have on men in romantic relationships. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine theorized antecedents (i.e., gender role conflict and attachment styles) and consequences (i.e., poorer relationship quality and sexual satisfaction) of men’s pornography use among 373 young adult heterosexual men. Findings revealed that both frequency of pornography use and problematic pornography use were related to greater gender role conflict, more avoidant and anxious attachment styles, poorer relationship quality, and less sexual satisfaction. In addition, the findings provided support for a theorised mediated model in which gender role conflict was linked to relational outcomes both directly and indirectly via attachment styles and pornography use. Finally, psychometric support for the Pornography Use Scale developed for this study is provided.


Most youth and media researchers do not believe that media affect all youth in the same manner or to the same degree. While most media effects theories reflect this belief, empirical efforts often do not. Rather than conceptualising individual differences as noise or nuisance variables, we argue that the future of media effects research lies within understanding these differences. To that end, the aim of this article is to help youth and media researchers identify appropriate moderators for study inclusion. We discuss the concept of differential susceptibility, with a particular focus on the differences between orchid and dandelion children, highlighting theoretical and empirical applications of this susceptibility paradigm to media effects research. We believe that a more integrative approach to youth and media research, built on a differential susceptibility paradigm in which moderators are thoughtfully integrated a priori, can provide us with nuanced answers to the complex questions associated with youth and media effects.


In this study exposure to and preferences for three important youth media (TV, music styles/music TV, Internet) were examined in relation to adolescents’ permissive sexual attitudes and gender stereotypes (i.e., views of men as sex-driven and tough, and of women as sex objects). Multivariate structural analysis of data from a school-based sample of 480 13 to 16-year-old Dutch students revealed that preferences, rather than exposure were associated with attitudes and stereotypes. For both girls and boys, preferences for hip-hop and hard-house music were associated positively with gender stereotypes and preference for classical music was negatively associated with gender stereotypes. Particularly for boys, using Internet to find explicit sexual content emerged as a powerful indicator of all attitudes and stereotypes.


This article draws on the research findings of the Greek *Kids Go Online* project and the *EU Kids Online* I network research on children and online technologies in Europe, funded by the European Commission Safer Internet Programme, 2006–2009. It explores the experiences of young people aged between 9 and 17 with pornographic texts online, and parental perceptions of these, examines the broader sexual cultures of young children and teenagers, and argues that public concern about the harmful effects of pornography on young people needs to be put into context.


The study objectives were to evaluate the prevalence, predictors, and implications of pornographic Internet site (PIS) use among Greek adolescents. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 529 randomly selected Greek high school students. The prevalence of overall PIS use was 19.47% (n = 96). Among PIS users, 55 (57.29%) reported infrequent and 41 (42.71%) reported frequent PIS use. The predictors of infrequent PIS use included male gender (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] = 8.33; 95% confidence interval [CI] = 3.52–19.61), Internet use for sexual education (AOR = 5.26; 95% CI = 1.78–15.55), chat rooms (AOR = 2.95; 95% CI = 1.48–5.91), and purchases (AOR = 3.06; 95% CI = 1.22–7.67). The predictors of frequent PIS use were male gender (AOR = 19.61; 95% CI = 3.06–119.61), and less than ten hours per week Internet use (AOR = 3.06; 95% CI = 1.22–7.67). The predictors of problematic PIS use were male gender (AOR = 19.61; 95% CI = 3.06–119.61), and less than ten hours per week Internet use (AOR = 3.06; 95% CI = 1.22–7.67). Compared to non-PIS users, infrequent PIS users were twice as likely to have abnormal conduct problems (odds ratio [OR] = 2.74; 95% CI = 1.19–6.28); frequent PIS users were
significantly more likely to have abnormal conduct problems (OR = 4.05; 95% CI = 1.57–10.46) and borderline prosocial score (OR = 4.22; 95% CI = 1.64–10.85). Thus, both infrequent and frequent PIS use are prevalent and significantly associated with social maladjustment among Greek adolescents.


Previous research has suggested that adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) may result in sexual uncertainty because the content of SEIM may conflict with what adolescents have learned about sex. However, research on which type of adolescent is most susceptible to the relation between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty is lacking. This study therefore investigated whether the relationship between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty depends on within-gender differences in sexual dispositions (i.e., impersonal sex orientation and hypergendered orientation). Using data from a representative two-wave panel survey among 1,765 Dutch adolescents (aged 13–17), the author found that SEIM use predicted sexual uncertainty only among girls with a low hypergendered orientation and girls with a relatively high impersonal sex orientation.


Communication scholars have repeatedly highlighted the importance of studying the type of content that media users are exposed to. However, although adolescents use sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) frequently, we know little about which specific types of SEIM they are exposed to. Moreover, knowledge is lacking about the antecedents of exposure to different types of SEIM and whether these antecedents differ between boys and girls. The present two-wave panel survey among 1,557 Dutch adolescents addressed these lacunae by studying exposure to affection-themed, dominance-themed, and violence-themed SEIM. Younger adolescents were more often exposed to affection-themed SEIM, while older adolescents and adolescents with higher levels of academic achievement were more frequently exposed to dominance-themed SEIM. Hyper masculine boys and hyper feminine girls were more frequently exposed to violence-themed SEIM.


A two-wave panel study was conducted among adolescents (Mean age = 14.78; n = 639) to examine the relationship between using sexually explicit websites and sexual initiation with particular attention to adolescents’ pubertal status. Structural equation modelling and logistic regression analysis indicated that frequent users of sexually explicit websites were five times more likely to initiate sexual intercourse than nonusers. Pubertal status moderated this relationship: an increased likelihood to initiate sex was found among adolescents in an early pubertal stage who frequently viewed sexually explicit websites. However, a lower likelihood to initiate sex was found among adolescents in an advanced pubertal stage. The possibility of a reciprocal relationship was also examined but was not supported.


On the basis of an online survey of 352 teenagers aged between 16 and 19, the use of pornographic video clips and films was investigated along with the connection between this use and indicators of adolescents’ perceived autonomy, peer group influences, and notions of sexuality. We found that many adolescents regularly use pornographic video clips or films. Respondents who regard themselves as less independent of their environment, especially their parents, use pornography more frequently themselves. For girls, this also applies if they assess the use within their peer group as particularly extensive, and for boys, if they frequently discuss pornography within their peer group. A high level of consumption of sexually explicit media also goes hand in hand with the assumption that people generally have sexual intercourse earlier in life and that people generally favor more varied sexual techniques.


Estimates suggest that up to 90% or more youth between 12 and 18 years have access to the Internet. Concern has been raised that this increased accessibility may lead to a rise in pornography seeking among children and adolescents, with potentially serious ramifications for child and adolescent sexual development. Using data from the Youth Internet Safety Survey, a nationally representative, cross-sectional telephone survey of 1,501 children and adolescents (ages 10–17 years), characteristics associated with self-reported pornography seeking behaviour,
both on the Internet and using traditional methods (e.g., magazines), are identified. Seekers of pornography, both online and offline, are significantly more likely to be male, with only 5% of self-identified seekers being female. The vast majority (87%) of youth who report looking for sexual images online are 14 years of age or older, when it is developmentally appropriate to be sexually curious. Children under the age of 14 who have intentionally looked at pornography are more likely to report traditional exposures, such as magazines or movies. Concerns about a large group of young children exposing themselves to pornography on the Internet may be overstated. Those who report intentional exposure to pornography, irrespective of source, are significantly more likely to cross-sectionally report delinquent behaviour and substance use in the previous year. Further, online seekers versus offline seekers are more likely to report clinical features associated with depression and lower levels of emotional bonding with their caregiver. Results of the current investigation raise important questions for further inquiry. Findings from these cross-sectional data provide justification for longitudinal studies aimed at parsing out temporal sequencing of psychosocial experiences.

Self-esteem


It is generally accepted that pornography is widely consumed by young men and that mainstream heterosexual pornography is characterised by a dynamic of male sexual dominance and female submission. What is less agreed upon is whether such pornography is a source of “sexist education” (Flood, 2010) for men or whether men engage with it in an empathic and ethical manner. In this study, we discuss findings from interviews with twenty-one young men about pornography and its consumption. They described it as normative for men to watch pornography and they described “extreme” content as “normal.” It was clear that they were unused to having to account for the appeal of pornography. Men’s discussion of male sexual dominance and female submission, and violence against women, within pornography was characterised by detachment. Most of the men did not take up the challenge to notice and critically respond to the sexism within the material they described. There were some exceptions, with a minority of the participants reflecting on the ethical dilemmas posed by their consumption of such pornography.


Although a growing body of literature addresses the effects of young people’s use of sexually explicit Internet material, research on the compulsive use of this type of online content among adolescents and its associated factors is largely lacking. This study investigated whether factors from three distinct psychosocial domains (i.e., psychological wellbeing, sexual interests/behaviours, and impulsive-psychopathic personality) predicted symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material among adolescent boys. Links between psychosocial factors and boys’ compulsive use symptoms were analysed both cross-sectionally and longitudinally with compulsive use symptoms measured 6 months later (T2). Data were used from 331 Dutch boys (M age = 15.16 years, range 11–17) who indicated that they used sexually explicit Internet material. The results from negative binomial regression analyses indicated that lower levels of global self-esteem and higher levels of excessive sexual interest concurrently predicted boys’ symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material. Longitudinally, higher levels of depressive feelings and, again, excessive sexual interest predicted relative increases in compulsive use symptoms six months later. Impulsive and psychopathic personality traits were not uniquely related to boys’ symptoms of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material. Our findings, while preliminary, suggest that both psychological well-being factors and sexual interests/behaviours are involved in the development of compulsive use of sexually explicit Internet material among adolescent boys. Such knowledge is important for prevention and intervention efforts that target the needs of specific problematic users of sexually explicit Internet material.


In an open-ended survey question to European 9 to 16 year olds, some 10,000 children reported a range of risks that concern them on the Internet. Pornography (named by 22% of children who mentioned risks), conduct risk such as cyberbullying (19%) and violent content (18%) were at the top of children’s concerns. The priority given to violent content is noteworthy insofar as this receives less attention than sexual content or bullying in awareness-raising initiatives. Many children express shock and disgust on witnessing violent, aggressive or gory online content, especially that which graphically depicts realistic violence against vulnerable victims, including
from the news. Video-sharing websites such as YouTube were primary sources of violent and pornographic content. The findings discussed in relation to children's fear responses to screen media and the implications for the public policy agenda on Internet safety are identified.


Aims And scope: The usage of mobile phones and the Internet by young people has increased rapidly in the past decade, approaching saturation by middle childhood in developed countries. Besides many benefits, online content, contact or conduct can be associated with risk of harm; most research has examined whether aggressive or sexual harms result from this. The authors examine the nature and prevalence of such risks, and evaluate the evidence regarding the factors that increase or protect against harm resulting from such risks, so as to inform the academic and practitioner knowledge base. They also identify the conceptual and methodological challenges encountered in this relatively new body of research, and highlight the pressing research gaps. Methods: Given the pace of change in the market for communication technologies, we review research published since 2008. Following a thorough bibliographic search of literature from the key disciplines (psychology, sociology, education, media studies and computing sciences), the review concentrates on recent, high quality empirical studies, contextualising these within an overview of the field. FINDINGS: Risks of cyberbullying, contact with strangers, sexual messaging (sexting) and pornography generally affect fewer than one in five adolescents. Prevalence estimates vary according to definition and measurement, but do not appear to be rising substantially with increasing access to mobile and online technologies, possibly because these technologies pose no additional risk to offline behaviour, or because any risks are offset by a commensurate growth in safety awareness and initiatives. While not all online risks result in self-reported harm, a range of adverse emotional and psychosocial consequences is revealed by longitudinal studies. Useful for identifying which children are more vulnerable than others, evidence reveals several risk factors: personality factors (sensation-seeking, low self-esteem, psychological difficulties), social factors (lack of parental support, peer norms) and digital factors (online practices, digital skills, specific online sites). Conclusions: Mobile and online risks are increasingly intertwined with pre-existing (offline) risks in children's lives. Research gaps, as well as implications for practitioners, are identified. The challenge is now to examine the relations among different risks, and to build on the risk and protective factors identified to design effective interventions.


There is a widespread concern in Western society about the visibility of pornography in public places and on the Internet. What are the consequences for young men and women, and how do they think about gender, sexuality, and pornography? Data was collected, through 22 individual interviews and seven focus groups, from 51 participants (36 women and 37 men aged 14–20 years) in Sweden. The results indicated a process of both normalisation and ambivalence. Pornography was used as a form of social intercourse, a source of information, and a stimulus for sexual arousal. Pornography consumption was more common among the young men than among the women. For both the young men and women, the pornographic script functioned as a frame of reference in relation to bodily ideals and sexual performances. Most of the participants had acquired the necessary skills of how to deal with the exposure to pornography in a sensible and reflective manner.


Objectives: To describe and get a deeper understanding of how groups of young women and men reflect on and discuss pornography and its spread in the media and society, and its possible influence on sexual behaviour and relationships. Methods: Six focus group interviews were conducted with teenagers, three with women (n = 17) and three with men (n = 18). Open questions about pornography and its spread in the media and society were discussed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed according to Grounded Theory. Results: The core category “A discriminatory sexuality” illustrates how participants felt regarding the messages conveyed by pornography portraying a man's role as dominant and a woman's role as subordinate. Pornographic messages were described as “fiction” depicting a distorted reality. Feelings of ambivalence towards pornography were expressed: anxiety and fear, but also inspiration. Participants said pornography occurred everywhere in the media and society, and felt pressured by messages relating to looks and sexual techniques. Conclusions: Pornography and its spread in the media and society were considered as presenting a discriminatory image of body ideals, sexuality and relationships. Despite this awareness, both men and women considered pornography as sources of knowledge and inspiration: an apparent paradox.
The main aim of this study was to investigate whether adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) increased their sexual preoccupancy (i.e., a strong cognitive engagement in sexual issues). Further, we wanted to know (a) whether subjective sexual arousal mediated a potential influence of exposure to SEIM on sexual preoccupancy and (b) whether this process differed between male and female adolescents. Over the course of one year, we surveyed 962 Dutch adolescents aged 13–20 years three times. Structural equation modelling showed that exposure to SEIM stimulated sexual preoccupancy. This influence was fully mediated by subjective sexual arousal from SEIM. The effect of exposure to SEIM on subjective sexual arousal did not differ between male and female adolescents. The findings suggest that a sexualised media environment may affect adolescents’ sexual development beyond traditionally studied variables, such as sexual attitudes and sexual behaviour.


The aim of this study was to investigate, within a social comparison framework, the causal relationship between adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) and their sexual satisfaction. In addition, we tested which adolescents were most susceptible to a potential influence of SEIM on sexual satisfaction. Between May 2006 and May 2007, we conducted a three-wave panel survey among 1,052 Dutch adolescents aged 13–20. Structural equation modelling revealed that exposure to SEIM consistently reduced adolescents’ sexual satisfaction. Lower sexual satisfaction (in Wave 2) also increased the use of SEIM (in Wave 3). Moderator analyses showed that the negative effect of SEIM on sexual satisfaction was stronger for adolescents who had no or limited sexual experience as well as for adolescents who perceived the majority of their peers to be sexually inexperienced. The effect of exposure to SEIM on sexual satisfaction did not differ among male and female adolescents.

Research has shown that adolescents’ use of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) is positively associated with an important characteristic of the developing sexual self, sexual uncertainty. However, the causal relation between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty is unclear. Moreover, we do not know which processes underlie this relation and whether gender moderates these processes. Based on a three-wave panel survey among 956 Dutch adolescents, structural equation modelling revealed that more frequent SEIM use increased adolescents’ sexual uncertainty. This influence was mediated by adolescents’ involvement in SEIM. The impact of SEIM use on involvement was stronger for female than for male adolescents. Future research on the effects of SEIM may benefit from greater attention to experiential states during SEIM use.


Concern about the influence of pornography on adolescents and emerging adults is growing due to widespread access to pornography. Past research shows that parent–child conversations about media content can alter the extent and effects of exposure to media content. This study, therefore, explored the predictors of negative active mediation of pornography—parent–child conversations that are critical of pornography—as well as the relationship between negative active mediation delivered during adolescence and emerging adults’ pornography use, attitudes about pornography, and self-esteem of those whose sexual partner regularly views pornography. Results revealed that the inverse relationship between negative active mediation and emerging adults’ pornography use was mediated by attitudes about pornography and that active mediation protected the self-esteem of those whose sexual partner regularly views pornography. These findings suggest that active mediation of pornography may be one way to reduce negative indirect effects of pornography exposure and prevent future pornography use.


There are societal concerns that looking at pornography has adverse consequences among those exposed. However, looking at sexually explicit material could have educative and relationship benefits. This article identifies factors associated with looking at pornography ever or within the past 12 months for men and women in Australia, and the extent to which reporting an “addiction” to pornography is associated with reported bad effects. Data from the Second Australian Study of Health and Relationships (ASHR2) were used: computer-assisted telephone interviews (CASIs) completed by a representative sample of 9,963 men and 10,131 women aged 16 to 69 years from all Australian states and territories, with an overall participation rate of 66%. Most men (84%) and half of the women (54%) had ever looked at pornographic material. Three-quarters of these men (76%) and more than one-third of these women (41%) had looked at pornographic material in the past year. Very few respondents reported that they were addicted to pornography (men 4%, women 1%), and of those who said they were addicted about half also reported that using pornography had had a bad effect on them. Looking at pornographic material appears to be reasonably common in Australia, with adverse effects reported by a small minority.


Research on the risks associated with children’s use of the Internet often aims to inform policies of risk prevention. Yet parallelizing the effort to map the nature and extent of online risk is a growing unease that the goal of risk prevention tends to support an over-protective, risk-averse culture that restricts the freedom of online exploration that society encourages for children in other spheres. It is central to adolescence that teenagers learn to anticipate and cope with risk—in short, to become resilient. In this article, we inquire into children and teenagers’ responses after they have experienced online content or contact risks. Pan-European findings show that especially in Northern European countries with high Internet access, parental perception of likelihood of online risk to their child is negatively associated with their perceived ability to cope. A comparison of representative surveys conducted among children in three relatively “high risk” countries (Norway, Ireland and the United Kingdom) found that although the frequency of exposure to perceived online risks, especially content risks, is fairly high, most children adopt positive (e.g., seek help from friends) or, more commonly, neutral (e.g., ignoring the experience) strategies to cope, although a minority exacerbate the risks (e.g., passing risky content on to friends). Most strategies tend to exclude adult involvement. Significant differences in both risk and coping are found by gender and age across these countries, pointing to different styles of youthful risk management.

In spite of a growing presence of pornography in contemporary life, little is known about its potential effects on young people’s sexual socialisation and sexual satisfaction. In this article, we present a theoretical model of the effects of sexually explicit materials (SEM) mediated by sexual scripting and moderated by the type of SEM used. An online survey dataset that included 650 young Croatian men aged 18–25 years was used to explore empirically the model. Descriptive findings pointed to significant differences between mainstream and paraphilic SEM users in frequency of SEM use at the age of 14, current SEM use, frequency of masturbation, sexual boredom, acceptance of sex myths, and sexual compulsiveness. In testing the model, a novel instrument was used, the Sexual Scripts Overlap Scale, designed to measure the influence of SEM on sexual socialisation. Structural equation analyses suggested that negative effects of early exposure to SEM on young men’s sexual satisfaction, albeit small, could be stronger than positive effects. Both positive and negative effects—the latter being expressed through suppression of intimacy—were observed only among users of paraphilic SEM. No effect of early exposure to SEM was found among the mainstream SEM users. To counterbalance moral panic but also the glamorisation of pornography, sex education programs should incorporate contents that would increase media literacy and assist young people in critical interpretation of pornographic imagery.


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 behaviour become in their world view 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 behaviours with a partner. We conclude that pornography provides a powerful heuristic model which is implicated in men’s expectations and behaviours during sexual encounters.


Very little thought or research has been directed to the topic of teen sexual addiction. This status quo is due to differences in opinion regarding the concept of sexual addiction as it applies to teens. This article examines this concept. Its definitions, definitional problems, epidemiology, etiology and prediction, prevention and treatment are described. It is concluded that there probably does exist a phenomenon of sexual addiction that applies across the life course (including the teenage years) that deserves much more study.


Pornography is both prevalent and normative in United States’ culture; however, little is known about the psychological and relational affects that it can have on men in romantic relationships. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine theorised antecedents (i.e., gender role conflict and attachment styles) and consequences (i.e., poorer relationship quality and sexual satisfaction) of men’s pornography use among 373 young adult heterosexual men. Findings revealed that both frequency of pornography use and problematic pornography use were related to greater gender role conflict, more avoidant and anxious attachment styles, poorer relationship quality, and less sexual satisfaction. In addition, the findings provided support for a theorized mediated model in which gender role conflict was linked to relational outcomes both directly and indirectly via attachment styles and pornography use. Finally, psychometric support for the Pornography Use Scale developed for this study is provided.

The study objectives were to evaluate the prevalence, predictors and implications of pornographic Internet site (PIS) use among Greek adolescents. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 529 randomly selected Greek high school students. The prevalence of overall PIS use was 19.47% \( (n = 96) \). Among PIS users, 55 (57.29%) reported infrequent and 41 (42.71%) reported frequent PIS use. The predictors of infrequent PIS use included male gender (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] = 8.33; 95% confidence interval [CI] = 3.52–19.61), Internet use for sexual education (AOR = 5.26; 95% CI = 1.78–15.55), chat rooms (AOR = 2.95; 95% CI = 1.48–5.91), and purchases (AOR = 3.06; 95% CI = 1.22–7.67). The predictors of frequent PIS use were male gender (AOR = 19.61; 95% CI = 4.46–83.33), Internet use for sexual education (AOR = 7.39; 95% CI = 2.37–23.00), and less than ten hours per week Internet use (AOR = 1.32; 95% CI = 1.10–1.59). Compared to non-PIS users, infrequent PIS users were twice as likely to have abnormal conduct problems (odds ratio [OR] = 2.74; 95% CI = 1.19–6.28); frequent PIS users were significantly more likely to have abnormal conduct problems (OR = 4.05; 95% CI = 1.57–10.46) and borderline prosocial score (OR = 4.22; 95% CI = 1.64–10.85). Thus, both infrequent and frequent PIS use are prevalent and significantly associated with social maladjustment among Greek adolescents.


Within objectification theory research, sexual objectification is typically operationalised as interpersonal sexual objectification—being targets of body evaluation and unwanted sexual advances. We argue that women’s male partners’ pornography use could be integrated within objectification theory as another form of sexual objectification and negatively linked to women's wellbeing. College women \( (n = 171) \) rated how often their current and previous male partners viewed pornography and whether pornography use bothered them. They also completed measures of objectification theory constructs, internalisation of cultural beauty standards, relationship attachment, self-esteem, body appreciation, and negative affect. The extent to which women were bothered by partner pornography use was controlled in all analyses. Path analysis revealed that previous partners’ pornography use (a) directly predicted interpersonal sexual objectification, internalisation, and eating disorder symptomatology and (b) indirectly predicted body surveillance and body shame through internalisation. In hierarchical regressions, previous partners’ pornography use inversely predicted self-esteem and body appreciation and positively predicted relationship anxiety and negative affect. Current partners’ pornography use was not linked to any criterion. Researchers should more comprehensively examine partners’ pornography use in relation to women’s distress. Practitioners may consider exploring male partners’ pornography use in female clients’ relationship histories and its potential associations with their wellbeing when relevant to them.


Previous research has suggested that adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) may result in sexual uncertainty because the content of SEIM may conflict with what adolescents have learned about sex. However, research on which type of adolescent is most susceptible to the relation between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty is lacking. This study therefore investigated whether the relationship between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty depends on within-gender differences in sexual dispositions (i.e., impersonal sex orientation and hypergendered orientation). Using data from a representative two-wave panel survey among 1,765 Dutch adolescents (aged 13–17), I found that SEIM use predicted sexual uncertainty only among girls with a low hypergendered orientation and girls with a relatively high impersonal sex orientation.


This study \( (n = 911) \) investigated how exposure to sexualising prime-time television programs, music television, men’s magazines, and pornographic websites was related to the internalisation of appearance ideals, self-objectification, and body surveillance among adolescent boys. A structural equation model showed direct relationships between exposure to sexualising television and pornographic websites and the internalisation of appearance ideals. Indirect relationships between these types of sexualising media, and self-objectification and body surveillance through the internalisation of appearance ideals were also reported. A direct relationship with self-objectification was only found for sexualising pornographic websites. Discussion warns attention for adolescent boys at risk of sexualisation.

When high speed Internet became widely available a few years ago, growing numbers of people began to worry that their porn use was running out of control. Far from preparing them for fulfilling relationships, viewing an endless stream of porn videos led to unexpected symptoms. Perhaps most surprisingly, for the first time in history erectile dysfunction was becoming a significant problem for young men. This led to one of the largest informal experiments in the history of science. Tens of thousands of people have tried abstaining from sexually stimulating material in a process they call "rebooting". Many of them reported startling changes, from improved concentration and elevated mood to a greater capacity for real-life intimacy. Gary Wilson has listened to the stories of those who have tried giving up Internet porn and related them to an account of how the reward system of the brain interacts with its environment. And now a growing body of research in neuroscience is confirming what these pioneers have discovered for themselves—Internet pornography can be seriously addictive and damaging. In *Your Brain on Porn* Wilson provides a concise introduction to the phenomenon of Internet porn addiction that draws on both first-person accounts and the findings of cognitive neuroscience. In a voice that is generous and humane, he also offers advice for those who want to stop using Internet pornography. The publication of *Your Brain on Porn* is a landmark in our attempts to understand, and remain balanced in, a world where addiction is big business.


Estimates suggest that up to 90% or more youth between 12 and 18 years have access to the Internet. Concern has been raised that this increased accessibility may lead to a rise in pornography seeking among children and adolescents, with potentially serious ramifications for child and adolescent sexual development. Using data from the Youth Internet Safety Survey, a nationally representative, cross-sectional telephone survey of 1,501 children and adolescents (ages 10–17 years), characteristics associated with self-reported pornography seeking behaviour, both on the Internet and using traditional methods (e.g., magazines), are identified. Seekers of pornography, both online and offline, are significantly more likely to be male, with only 5% of self-identified seekers being female. The vast majority (87%) of youth who report looking for sexual images online are 14 years of age or older, when it is developmentally appropriate to be sexually curious. Children under the age of 14 who have intentionally looked at pornography are more likely to report traditional exposures, such as magazines or movies. Concerns about a large group of young children exposing themselves to pornography on the Internet may be overstated. Those who report intentional exposure to pornography, irrespective of source, are significantly more likely to cross-sectionally report delinquent behaviour and substance use in the previous year. Further, online seekers versus offline seekers are more likely to report clinical features associated with depression and lower levels of emotional bonding with their caregiver. Results of the current investigation raise important questions for further inquiry. Findings from these cross-sectional data provide justification for longitudinal studies aimed at parsing out temporal sequencing of psychosocial experiences.

**Effects—method and critique**


This article reviews qualitative research into the consumption of pornography and other sexually explicit media emerging from a range of subject areas. Taking a critique of quantitative methods and a focus on measuring sexual effects and attitudes as a starting point, it considers the proposition that qualitative work is more suited to an examination of the complex social, cultural, and political constructions of sexuality. Examining studies into the way men, women, and young people see, experience, and use explicit media texts, the article identifies the key findings that have emerged. Qualitative work shows that sexually explicit media texts are experienced and understood in a variety of ways and evoke strong and often contradictory reactions, not all of which are represented in public debates about pornography. These texts function in a range of different ways, depending on context as a source of knowledge, a resource for intimate practices, a site for identity construction, and an occasion for performing gender and sexuality. The article reviews these studies and their findings, identifying what they suggest about directions for future research, both in terms of developing methodology and refining approaches to sexuality and media consumption.
In this paper, the author focuses on what has been called a paradigm shift in pornography research, driven by the development of particular theoretical and political concerns and by changing material conditions, and on the academic work that has emerged from this. They describe the current situation where studies in the area are more diverse than ever before, while public debate continues to draw on a relatively limited approach based on a concern with what media “does” to behaviour. The author outlines two areas in particular which currently dominate public and political discussions; namely the sexualisation of mainstream media and “extreme” imagery on the fringes of culture, and suggest ways in which these present new challenges and opportunities for developing pornography research.


The Confluence Model of sexual aggression (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000) states that pornography use, thought to promote sexual coercion of women through presentation of submissive female imagery, works in conjunction with sexual promiscuity (SP) and hostile masculinity (HM), proposed sexual aggression risk factors, to produce anti-woman sexual aggression. An Internet-based survey (n = 183 adult males) replicated results of previous Confluence Model research, such that men who were high in HM and SP were more likely to report sexual coercion when they frequently, rather than infrequently, used pornography. Exploring new ground, this study also found that HM and SP together were strong predictors of consumption of violent sexual media, in comparison to non-violent sexual media, which suggests that men at high risk of sexual aggression consume different types of sexual material than men at low risk. Further, individual differences in sex drive were found to account for the effects previously attributed to pornography use in statistical tests of the Confluence Model. In the light of third variable considerations, these findings warrant a careful reappraisal of the Confluence Model’s assertion that pornography use is a causal determinant of anti-woman sexual aggression.


The increase in exposure to sexually explicit material has been cited as a significant factor influencing adolescent sexuality and health. Concern about the negative impact of this material is increasingly prominent within policy, professional groups, and the media. Little research, however, has been conducted within this area. This article presents findings from my research, which is located at the intersection of public health, sociology, media and cultural studies. It explores young people’s perspectives of sexuality, sexual identity and health within the context of sexualised culture and examines how young people discuss these issues, providing a critical account of young people’s engagement with, and experiences of, sexualized culture as “agents” in their own right. My findings are set against historical debates about the nature and impact of sexualised culture and the development of sexual health policy in the United Kingdom.


This paper provides a brief overview of mainstream psychological research on pornography, which has mainly focused on determining the effects of pornography on human attitudes and behaviour and the possible mechanisms for these effects. The methodological problems with such research are well known in the field of porn studies. Rather than using this as a reason simply to dismiss the contribution of psychology, attention to methods and analyses may be one thing that psychology can particularly offer to work in this area going forward. Just as it is important that we recognise that we are studying pornographies (plural), there are a number of psychologies beyond the classic experimental behaviourist psychology with which people are generally familiar. This paper will argue that critical and applied psychologies, in particular, have much to contribute, with their ability to analyse the ways in which pornographies, sex and gender are constructed, and to hold on to the lived experiences of those engaging with pornographies. Like the rather more conventional forms of experimental psychology, critical and applied psychologies have the potential to offer a useful “signal jam” to polarised debates in this area.


The relationship between children, sex and the media is, in some respects, an old issue. The presence of “sexually explicit” material in the media has routinely generated concern on the part of many commentators, even if...
what counts as “explicit” has changed markedly over time. In recent years, however, this debate seems to have taken on a new urgency. The advent of new technologies—video, cable, satellite and the Internet—has made it increasingly difficult to prevent young people from gaining access to such material; and it is of course a premise of this book that Western culture has in general become more “sexualised”.


This paper examines the many factors that underpin pornography exposure, and stresses how the risk factors for exposure and problematic sexual behaviours intersect to contribute to harm. An understanding of the complex interplay of factors such as gender, age, attitude, personal characteristics and social context of use is important in the development of strategies that will assist young people to avoid any potential adverse outcomes. The available evidence remains highly incomplete, and its interpretation is highly contested, so the paper highlights the need for longitudinal studies of use and of actual behaviour, and for studies that focus on cultural contexts and emerging media.


Despite the proliferation of writing on pornography generally, much of the literature that focuses on gay pornography specifically conforms to either a pro- or anti-porn framework. This overly simplistic dichotomy positions pornography as a homogeneous construct, albeit one that is either “good” or “bad.” Even theorists who situate pornography on a continuum, with erotica at one end and hardcore at the other, tend to reify these discourses. Further, it is not uncommon for researchers to draw conclusions about the effects of pornography consumption without defining exactly what pornography is. This ethnographic research draws on qualitative interviews with 20 consumers of gay pornography in Toronto, Canada. By using a thematic analysis to document the ways in which gay men define, distinguish, and conceptualise gay pornography, five definitional categories were developed: Mellow; Commercial; Raunch; Amateur; and Bareback. These broad conceptualisations are discussed in reference to writing on gay pornography. These research results emphasise the importance of clear definitions of pornography within pornography research.


Gottfredson and Hirschi’s (1990) general theory of crime and Akers’ (1998) social learning theory have received strong empirical support for explaining crime in both the physical and cyberworlds. Most of the studies examining cybercrime, however, have only used college samples. In addition, the evidence on the interaction between low self-control and deviant peer associations is mixed. Therefore, this study examined whether low self-control and deviant peer associations explained various forms of cyberdeviance in a youth sample. We also tested whether associating with deviant peers mediated the effect of low self-control on cyberdeviance as well as whether it conditioned the effect. Low self-control and deviant peer associations were found to be related to cyberdeviance in general, as well as piracy, harassment, online pornography, and hacking specifically. Deviant peer associations both mediated and exacerbated the effect of low self-control on general cyberdeviance, though these interactions were not found for the five cyberdeviant types examined.


Purpose: The purpose of this research was to explore the trends in youth reports of unwanted online sexual solicitation, harassment, and exposure to pornography over time. Methods: The study was based on three separate cross-sectional national telephone surveys of approximately 1,500 youth Internet users, aged 10 through 17 years. Data were collected in 2000, 2005, and 2010. Results and conclusion: Nine per cent of youth reported an unwanted sexual solicitation in 2010. This continued the decline in unwanted sexual solicitations that occurred between 2000 (19%) and 2005 (13%), resulting in a total 50% decrease between 2000 and 2010. Twenty-three per cent of youth reported an unwanted exposure to pornography, a decline from 34% in 2005, following an increase between 2000 and 2005 (25% to 34%). However, marking the only trend to show an increase over the past five years, 11% of youth reported an online harassment experience, which was an increase from 9% in 2005, and 6% in 2000. Some differences in these trends were noted for subgroups of youth across age, gender and race. The trends in unwanted experiences online over the past decade identified by three Youth Internet Safety Surveys may contradict impressions that the general population, professionals and the media have about what is happening. Trends provide evidence for some optimism that protective adaptations to the online environment have been successful; however, online harassment appears to be increasing for youth, particularly girls, and may require additional mobilisation.

The influence of pornography on attitudes and behaviours has been a longstanding question that has provoked considerable debate among researchers (Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000; Marshall, 2000). Evidence associating pornography consumption with aggression would be important, not only for public policy and legislation, but in the assessment and treatment of special populations, such as sexual offenders. In this commentary, we briefly discuss the methodologies in which pornography’s putative effects have been examined, with particular note of the aggregate approach employed by Diamond, Jozifkova, and Weiss (2010). The authors conclude with a brief review of the literature on pornography’s role in affecting negative attitudes and behaviours among certain individuals.


According to radical feminist theory, pornography serves to further the subordination of women by training its users, males and females alike, to view women as little more than sex objects over whom men should have complete control. Composite variables from the General Social Survey were used to test the hypothesis that pornography users would hold attitudes that were more supportive of gender non-egalitarianism than nonusers of pornography. Results did not support hypotheses derived from radical feminist theory. Pornography users held more egalitarian attitudes toward women in positions of power, toward women working outside the home, and toward abortion than nonusers of pornography. Further, pornography users and pornography nonusers did not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the traditional family and in their self-identification as feminist. The results of this study suggest that pornography use may not be associated with gender non-egalitarian attitudes in a manner that is consistent with radical feminist theory.


Aims and scope: The usage of mobile phones and the Internet by young people has increased rapidly in the past decade, approaching saturation by middle childhood in developed countries. Besides many benefits, online content, contact or conduct can be associated with risk of harm; most research has examined whether aggressive or sexual harms result from this. We examine the nature and prevalence of such risks, and evaluate the evidence regarding the factors that increase or protect against harm resulting from such risks, so as to inform the academic and practitioner knowledge base. We also identify the conceptual and methodological challenges encountered in this relatively new body of research, and highlight the pressing research gaps. Methods: Given the pace of change in the market for communication technologies, we review research published since 2008. Following a thorough bibliographic search of literature from the key disciplines (psychology, sociology, education, media studies and computing sciences), the review concentrates on recent, high quality empirical studies, contextualising these within an overview of the field. Findings: Risks of cyberbullying, contact with strangers, sexual messaging (sexting) and pornography generally affect fewer than one in five adolescents. Prevalence estimates vary according to definition and measurement, but do not appear to be rising substantially with increasing access to mobile and online technologies, possibly because these technologies pose no additional risk to offline behaviour, or because any risks are offset by a commensurate growth in safety awareness and initiatives. While not all online risks result in self-reported harm, a range of adverse emotional and psychosocial consequences is revealed by longitudinal studies. Useful for identifying which children are more vulnerable than others, evidence reveals several risk factors: personality factors (sensation seeking, low self-esteem, psychological difficulties), social factors (lack of parental support, peer norms) and digital factors (online practices, digital skills, specific online sites). Conclusions: Mobile and online risks are increasingly intertwined with pre-existing (offline) risks in children’s lives. Research gaps, as well as implications for practitioners, are identified. The challenge is now to examine the relations among different risks, and to build on the risk and protective factors identified to design effective interventions.

This article focuses on the effects of exposure to pornography on teenagers, particularly males, and concentrates on sexually aggressive outcomes and on the characteristics of the individual as crucial in determining whether pornography consumption may or may not lead to sexually aggressive outcomes. In future work, it is important not to use an overly simplistic lens of focus in which pornography exposure is seen as generally harmful or not. Depending on particular constellations of personality characteristics, the effects of pornography may differ considerably among different teenagers as well as within different cultures. The research suggests that particular concerns may be needed for those who are highly frequent consumers of pornography, those who seek out sexually violent content, and those who also have other risk factors.


It has been an assumption of most anti-pornography discourse that porn damages women (and children) in a variety of ways. In Porno? Chic! the author interrogated this assumption by examining the correlation between the incidence of sexual violence and other indicators of misogyny, and the availability and accessibility of pornography within a number of societies. This article develops that work with a specific focus on the regulatory environment as it relates to pornography and sexual representation. Does a liberal regulatory regime in sexual culture correlate with a relatively advanced state of sexual politics in a given country? Conversely, does an illiberal regime, where pornography and other forms of sexual culture are banned or severely restricted, correlate with relatively strong patriarchal structures? A comparative cross-country analysis seeks to explain the correlations identified, and to assess the extent to which the availability of porn can be viewed as a causal or a consequential characteristic of those societies where feminism has achieved significant advances.


This study considers the relation between a number of theoretically relevant individual difference variables and individuals’ online pornography use and arousal patterns. In doing so, an attempt is also made to determine whether self-reports of arousal can be collapsed into meaningful empirically derived content groupings. An exploratory factor analysis produces three factors for men: standard fare, specialised, and male-focused; and two factors for women: standard fare and specialised. Findings indicate that sexual disposition is a strong predictor of standard fare use and arousal for both genders. Men and women higher in psychopathy were more likely to use all forms of content. For those high in psychopathy, however, men were only slightly, and women not at all, more likely to find standard fare content arousing. Results are discussed in terms of their potential value for understanding an often overlooked first step in the process of pornography consumption.


Previous research on the influence of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) on adolescents' stereotypical beliefs about women's sexual roles has three shortcomings. First, the role of peers has been neglected; second, stereotypical beliefs have rarely been studied as causing the use of SEIM and the selection of specific peers; and third, it is unclear whether adolescents are more vulnerable to the effects of SEIM than adults. We used data from two nationally representative two-wave panel surveys among 1,445 Dutch adolescents and 833 Dutch adults, focusing on the stereotypical belief that women engage in token resistance to sex (i.e., the notion that women say “no” when they actually intend to have sex). Structural equation modelling showed that peers who supported traditional gender roles elicited, both among adolescents and adults, stronger beliefs that women use token resistance to sex. Further, the belief that women engage in token resistance predicted adolescents’ and adults’ selection of gender-role traditional peers, but it did not predict adolescents’ and adults’ use of SEIM. Finally, adults, but not adolescents, were susceptible to the impact of SEIM on beliefs that women engage in token resistance to sex.
The aims of this article are to analyse exposure to pornography, its content, and the associations between victimisation and pornography in a sample of 303 students (49.2% female). The questionnaire included questions on pornography exposure, psychological and physical family violence, and sexual violence. Almost all male students and 67% of female students had ever watched pornography; 42% and 32%, respectively, had watched violence against women. Female students exposed to family psychological violence and to sexual violence were significantly more likely to watch pornography, especially violent pornography than those who had not been exposed. No such association was found among male students.


In Chapter 15, media scholar Andy Ruddock investigates the academic research on pornography’s effects. He outlines what cultivation theory can contribute to our understanding of pornography’s significance. In “Pornography and Effects Studies: What Does the Research Actually Say?” Ruddock compares different research paradigms, highlighting what they share and how they differ in order to discern the most productive approaches for assessing the social impact of pornography.


This article draws on a memory-work project on the childhood experiences and memories of pornography in Finland to argue that the autobiographical younger self used in these reminiscences is a creature distinct from the cultural figure of a child at risk, and that the forms of learning connected to pornography are more diverse and complex than those limited to sexual acts alone. The notion of an asexual child susceptible to media effects remains detached from people’s accounts of their childhood activities, experiences and competences. By analyzing these, it is possible to critically reexamine the hyperbolic concerns over the pornification and sexualization of culture.


Previous research has suggested that adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) may result in sexual uncertainty because the content of SEIM may conflict with what adolescents have learned about sex. However, research on which type of adolescent is most susceptible to the relation between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty is lacking. This study therefore investigated whether the relationship between SEIM use and sexual uncertainty depends on within-gender differences in sexual dispositions (i.e., impersonal sex orientation and hypergendered orientation). Using data from a representative two-wave panel survey among 1,765 Dutch adolescents (aged 13–17), I found that SEIM use predicted sexual uncertainty only among girls with a low hypergendered orientation and girls with a relatively high impersonal sex orientation.


The author reviews the books, Everyday Pornography edited by Karen Boyle and Pornland: How Porn has Hijacked our Sexuality by Gail Dines (2010). The books under review make no pretense of being fair and balanced analyses of pornography. Several of the authors are self-described antiporn activists and, given their strong political views on the subject, it is no surprise that they are critical of pornography, say nothing positive about it, and offer sweeping generalisations to condemn it. The first book is meant to convey the idea that the porn described in the book is utterly mainstream, not extreme fringe material. But this is simply an assertion by the editor; readers have no way of knowing if the book indeed reflects representations in mainstream pornography or if, instead, worst cases have been cherry picked for discussion. This book is lacking in several key areas. First, some of the chapters are either quite uninteresting or filled with so much jargon as to be unreadable. Second, solid original data are scarce, and anecdotes are abundant. Little secondary data are discussed as well. Third, there is an underlying assumption that viewing porn affects both attitudes and behaviour, but no convincing supporting evidence is offered. Fourth, many claims are made about porn performers and consumers, but these claims are superimposed on them by the writers. The second book author did not conduct a systematic and rigorous review of porn websites or scenes, nor does she cite studies that do so. Neither are readers told how many websites or scenes she examined, nor how they were selected. Second, grand generalisations are made throughout the book. Third, nothing is said about gay male porn, lesbian porn, alternative porn, porn made by

women—which, together, constitute a sizeable share of the market. Fourth, Dines acknowledges that there is very little data on actual porn consumers—those who watch porn in the real world (vs in laboratory experiments)—but then proceeds to make many far-reaching claims about them. Whatever one’s personal views of porn, for those who wish to know more about its content and the experiences of viewers and performers alike, the books under review offer little useful, evidence-based information. Overall, these books present an extremely biased picture of pornography that stands in stark contrast to sound scholarly research.


Section II includes eleven chapters focusing on cultural issues and effects. The section begins with Ronald Weitzer’s chapter, “Interpreting the Data: Assessing Competing Claims in Pornography Research.” Weitzer highlights issues of empirical data, explaining the methodological shortcomings of research limited by ideological frameworks that presuppose pornography’s harmful effects on individuals and society. In questioning methodologically embedded bias, Weitzer calls for objective approaches to research on pornography.
Interventions

Australia

Crimes Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Act 2014 (Vic.).

Summary Offences (Filming Offences) Amendment Act 2013 (Vic.).


Criminal Code Act (Cth), No. 12 (Commonwealth of Australia 1995).


Think U Know. (2016). Technology and Youth; Privacy; Relationships; Reputation Management; Resources. Retrieved from <www.thinkuknow.org.au/site/>


**International**


Bell, K. J. (2009). Wake up and smell the condoms: An analysis of sex education programs in the United States, the Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, France and Germany. *Inquiries Journal, 1*(11).


Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015.


Research

Parental education


Guided by a feminist perspective, the authors examined young men's recollection of their reactions to and the familial and social contexts in which they realised that they were seeing an explicit sexual image for the first time. The sample consisted of 199 young men enrolled in a human sexuality class who responded to questions regarding the what, when, where, with whom, and how they felt about and reacted to seeing a sexualised image. On average, participants were in elementary school and without adult supervision when they found their first image in a form of media that was readily available in the home. Implications for family life education for both parents and children include direct and knowledgeable communication about sexuality to counter the often sensationalising, objectifying, and entitled culture in which boys are informally initiated into adult sexuality.


To discover adolescent Internet users' experiences with, exposure to, and perceptions of sexually oriented websites (SOW) and sexually explicit websites (SEW), four web-based focus groups (n= 40) were conducted. Participants (ages 14–17) reported high levels of exposure to SEW and SOW, which was intentional for some and unsolicited for others. Female adolescents found SEW to be socially distasteful; some adolescent males avoided SEW while others were willing consumers. Participants believed exposure to SEW had no influence on them, and reported that their parents were unaware of what they view online. Future research should explore the effects of exposure to SEW and to SOW and mediating factors.


Over the past 20 years, the Internet has provided an expedient mode of communication and access to a wealth of information. The Internet is a valuable tool; however, it can also be detrimental to the wellbeing of children due to numerous online hazards. There is the potential for children to be abused via cyberspace through online sexual solicitation and access to pornography. Indeed, the Internet is replete with inappropriate material, including pornography, chatrooms with adult themes and access to instant messaging wherein others could misrepresent themselves. Because children are actively utilising the Internet where unknown others can have access to them or where they can be exposed to inappropriate sexual materials, they require safeguarding and education in safe Internet use. The purpose of this article is to provide a discussion of how to safeguard children from and educate them about online sexual solicitation and pornography. We contend that society needs an overall conceptual shift in its attitude towards young people's Internet use.


A survey was conducted among 692 Australian 13 to 16 year olds to examine aspects of their Internet use and, in particular, their exposure to inappropriate material and behaviours online and their online safety practices. Significant differences were found in the amount of exposure to inappropriate material or behaviours online according to sex and frequency of usage, with males and more frequent Internet users showing greater exposure. No differences were found according to whether blocking or filtering software was installed. Significant differences in online safety practices were also found, with younger participants (13 to 14 year olds) and those participants whose parents had not discussed Internet safety with them being less safety conscious.


Literature indicates that 72% of adolescent girls are exposed to sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) before the age of 18, and between 2% and 30% of girls report intentionally seeking SEIM. Despite the recognition that adolescent girls are consuming SEIM, and that their use impacts behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes, there has been limited attention paid to their experience of SEIM use. Findings have suggested that adolescent girls often use SEIM as a tool for sex education, posing high risks in the development of ideas about sex, sexuality, intimacy,
and relationships based on unrealistic depictions of sex in SEIM. This dissertation examined the psychosexual impacts on adolescent girls viewing SEIM and factors, such as caregiver-teen communication, that protect adolescent girls from the negative impacts of their SEIM use. The dissertation explored how exposure and use of SEIM affects adolescent girls’ ideas of sex, perceptions of self, beliefs, attitudes, sexual relationships, sexual behaviours, and health. Grounded in an extensive review of the literature within the topic area, the dissertation addressed protective factors against the negative impacts of SEIM exposure and discussed the development of a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls. Open and honest communication between the primary caregiver and adolescent about sex and sexuality has been found to reduce adolescents’ risky sexual behaviours and contribute their development of a healthy sexual self. As a means to disseminate the literature findings, a psycho-educational booklet for primary caregivers of adolescent girls was developed within the framework of Protection Motivation Theory.


Objective: The aims were to gain a deeper understanding of how personnel, who work with adolescents, reason about the effect of pornography and its spread in the media, and to explore how well prepared they consider themselves to be in addressing sexual health and gender equality. Design and sample: An inductive, exploratory, qualitative study with focus group discussions was selected. Seventeen participants with different professions were invited into five heterogeneous groups. Measures: Data were analysed according to grounded theory. Results: Conflicting messages about sexuality became the core category. Participants were of the opinion that pornography conveyed a contradictory message compared with national public health goals, societal laws, and regulations. They believed that young people use pornography as a source of information and stimulation. Furthermore, they thought that pornography contributed to norm-creating ideals and a demanding sexuality, thus, confirming the traditional gender order. The participants opined that a professional approach was required when addressing sexuality and gender equality issues and requested better training tools and more cultural competence. Conclusions: Professionals working with adolescents perceived that pornography conveys a conflicting message about sexuality. They expressed a need for adequate tools for improving education on health and sexuality, including gender equality aspects and critical media analysis.


Research has argued that adolescents are at risk for harmful effects of sexual media, but little is known about the role of parents and friends on adolescents’ media use in regard of these effects. The present two-wave study investigated whether prior parental and friends’ influences on adolescents’ use of sexual media shape their sexual attitudes and behaviours, and vice versa if prior sexual attitudes and behaviours predict parental and friends’ media mediation. At two measurement points 18 months apart, 528 adolescents (12–17 years; 51.3% girls) reported on permissive sexual attitudes, sexual experience, perceived parental and friends’ mediation of sexual media use, and communication with parents and friends about sex. Structural Equation Modelling shows that parents’ mediation activities on adolescents’ media use were not followed by less sexual experience and less permissive attitudes. On the contrary, parental restrictive mediation of girls’ media use unexpectedly was followed by somewhat more sexual experience. Friends’ interventions with media use did not predict adolescents’ sexual experience and attitudes neither. Inverse relationships showed that prior sexual experience was followed by less restrictive parental mediation among boys, and both among boys and girls that permissive sexual attitudes were followed by less restrictive and less active parental mediation. At the same time, sexually more experienced and more permissive boys and girls did report more media pressure from and sexual communication with their friends later on. Our study thus indicates that the opposite agent roles of parents and friends for adolescents also applies to their usage of sexual media.


Background: Pornography can affect the lifestyles of adolescents, especially in terms of their sexual habits and porn consumption, and may have a significant influence on their sexual attitudes and behaviours. Objective: The aim of this study was to understand and analyse the frequency, duration, and perception of web porn utilisation by young Italians attending high school. Materials and methods: A total of 1,565 students attending the final year of high school were involved in the study, and 1,492 have agreed to fill out an anonymous survey. The questions representing the content of this study were: 1) How often do you access the web? 2) How much time do you remain connected? 3) Do you connect to pornographic sites? 4) How often do you access pornographic
Widespread access to and use of pornography has led to concern about the potentially negative effects of exposure to pornography on emerging adults—its largest user group. Past research shows that parent–child conversations about media content can alter the extent and effects of exposure to media content. This study, therefore, explored the predictors of negative active mediation of pornography—parent–child conversations that are critical of pornography—as well as the relationship between negative active mediation delivered during adolescence and emerging adults’ pornography use, attitudes about pornography, and self-esteem of those whose sexual partner regularly views pornography. Results revealed that the inverse relationship between negative active mediation and emerging adults’ pornography use was mediated by attitudes about pornography and that active mediation protected the self-esteem of those whose sexual partner regularly views pornography. These findings suggest that active mediation of pornography may be one way to reduce negative indirect effects of pornography exposure and prevent future pornography use.


Widespread access to and use of pornography has led to concern about the potentially negative effects of exposure to pornography on emerging adults—its largest user group. Past research shows that salient social norms can influence subsequent behaviour. This study, therefore, explored the relationship between salient pornography-related norms and pornography use among emerging adults, as well as the relationship between parental mediation of pornography during adolescence and emerging adults’ salient pornography-related norms. Results revealed that emerging adults are more likely to view pornography when they hold a salient belief (norm) that their peers both approve of viewing and regularly view pornography. The study also found that parents’ provision of rules about viewing pornography during adolescence may reduce future pornography use by instilling the salient belief that the parent disapproves of viewing pornography. These findings suggest that the effect of rules in the home about adolescents’ use of pornography may persist into emerging adulthood.


Research on the risks associated with children’s use of the Internet often aims to inform policies of risk prevention. Yet paralleling the effort to map the nature and extent of online risk is a growing unease that the goal of risk prevention tends to support an over-protective, risk-averse culture that restricts the freedom of online exploration that society encourages for children in other spheres. It is central to adolescence that teenagers learn to anticipate and cope with risk—in short, to become resilient. In this article, we inquire into children and teenagers’ responses after they have experienced online content or contact risks. Pan-European findings show that especially in Northern European countries with high Internet access, parental perception of likelihood of online risk to their child is negatively associated with their perceived ability to cope. A comparison of representative surveys conducted among children in three relatively ‘high risk’ countries (Norway, Ireland and the United Kingdom) found that although the frequency of exposure to perceived online risks, especially content risks, is fairly high, most children adopt positive (e.g., seek help from friends) or, more commonly, neutral (e.g., ignoring the experience) strategies to cope, although a minority exacerbate the risks (e.g., passing risky content on to friends). Most strategies tend to exclude adult involvement. Significant differences in both risk and coping are found by gender and age across these countries, pointing to different styles of youthful risk management.

Frequent use of pornography has not been sufficiently studied before. In a Swedish survey, 2,015 male students aged 18 years participated. A group of frequent users of pornography (*n* = 200, 10.5%) were studied with respect to background and psychosocial correlates. The frequent users had a more positive attitude to pornography, were more often “turned on” viewing pornography and viewed more often advanced forms of pornography. Frequent use was also associated with many problem behaviours. A multiple logistic regression analysis showed that frequent users of pornography were more likely to be living in a large city, consuming alcohol more often, having greater sexual desire and had more often sold sex than other boys of the same age. High frequent viewing of pornography may be seen as a problematic behaviour that needs more attention from both parents and teachers and also to be addressed in clinical interviews.


This article draws on the research findings of the *Greek Kids Go Online* project and the *EU Kids Online* I network research on children and online technologies in Europe, funded by the European Commission Safer Internet Programme, 2006–2009. It explores the experiences of young people aged between 9 and 17 with pornographic texts online, and parental perceptions of these, examines the broader sexual cultures of young children and teenagers, and argues that public concern about the harmful effects of pornography on young people needs to be put into context.


On the basis of an online survey of 352 teenagers aged between 16 and 19, the use of pornographic video clips and films was investigated along with the connection between this use and indicators of adolescents’ perceived autonomy, peer group influences, and notions of sexuality. We found that many adolescents regularly use pornographic video clips or films. Respondents who regard themselves as less independent of their environment, especially their parents, use pornography more frequently themselves. For girls, this also applies if they assess the use within their peer group as particularly extensive, and for boys, if they frequently discuss pornography within their peer group. A high level of consumption of sexually explicit media also goes hand in hand with the assumption that people generally have sexual intercourse earlier in life and that people generally favour more varied sexual techniques.

**School education**


This article examines the sexually explicit comments and references to pornography in young men’s answers to a survey about sexuality education. Instead of viewing these remarks as simply impertinent and therefore discountable, I argue that they offer insights into the constitution of masculine identity and an erotic deficit in sexuality education. Many of these comments make requests for the inclusion of enfleshed (female) bodies in sexuality programs and the use of pornographic materials (i.e., videos, magazines). These responses can be seen to represent a challenge to school authority in the way they are laden with “shock” value and push at the discursive limits of “sexual respectability”. In a school environment that seeks to deny the sexual and contain student sexuality, these statements symbolise an assertion of young men’s sexual agency. Young men’s remarks also offer a critique of sexuality education that is de-eroticised and which denies them as positive and legitimate sexual subjects. The implications of these comments for how sexuality education might be conceptualised are considered.


It is generally accepted that pornography is widely consumed by young men and that mainstream heterosexual pornography is characterised by a dynamic of male sexual dominance and female submission. What is less agreed upon is whether such pornography is a source of “sexist education” (Flood, 2010) for men or whether men engage with it in an empathic and ethical manner. In this study, we discuss findings from interviews with twenty-one young men about pornography and its consumption. They described it as normative for men to watch pornography and they described “extreme” content as “normal.” It was clear that they were unused
to having to account for the appeal of pornography. Men’s discussion of male sexual dominance and female submission, and violence against women, within pornography was characterised by detachment. Most of the men did not take up the challenge to notice and critically respond to the sexism within the material they described. There were some exceptions, with a minority of the participants reflecting on the ethical dilemmas posed by their consumption of such pornography.


The Internet has made sexually explicit media more accessible to young people. Online pornography is diverse, can be very graphic, and a large amount is available free of charge with restrictions varying by country. Many young people are accessing online pornography, intentionally or unintentionally, and there are fears that this could impact on their sexual development and future relationships. Current research into the effects of viewing pornography on attitudes and behaviours of young people is patchy and often contradictory. Via an anonymous survey of 218 young people and focus group discussions with 23 teaching professionals in outer London schools, this study examines whether young people and teaching professionals consider pornography use to have harmful effects, and if they feel schools should be incorporating teaching about online pornography in their educational programs. Findings reveal that young people and teachers perceive there to be many negative effects of viewing pornography, particularly at a young age. Young people and teachers agree that schools should teach about the risks associated with online pornography viewing. Recommendations for schools about how to facilitate discussion of issues surrounding pornography use as part of the wider sex education programme are made, including the involvement of parents.

Bell, K. J. (2009). Wake up and smell the condoms: an analysis of sex education programs in the United States, the Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, France, and Germany. *Inquiries Journal, 1*(11).

The ability to control one’s sexuality and make informed, responsible decisions about one’s sexual health is a basic human right. The Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, France and Germany protect this right by providing comprehensive sex education in their schools and implementing public programs to promote sexual health. Abstinence-only education in the United States denies American youth the right to sexual autonomy and prevents them from developing healthy sexual identities. Youth in the United States are far less sexually healthy than youth in these other countries. This paper will examine sex education policies and sexual health agendas in each of these countries and look to them for inspiration in proposing a new sex education and public health agenda for the United States.


The relationship between children, sex and the media is, in some respects, an old issue. The presence of “sexually explicit” material in the media has routinely generated concern on the part of many commentators, even if what counts as “explicit” has changed markedly over time. In recent years, however, this debate seems to have taken on a new urgency. The advent of new technologies—video, cable, satellite and the Internet—has made it increasingly difficult to prevent young people from gaining access to such material; and it is of course a premise of this book that Western culture has in general become more “sexualised”.


Over the past 20 years, the Internet has provided an expedient mode of communication and access to a wealth of information. The Internet is a valuable tool; however, it can also be detrimental to the wellbeing of children due to numerous online hazards. There is the potential for children to be abused via cyberspace through online sexual solicitation and access to pornography. Indeed, the Internet is replete with inappropriate material, including pornography, chatrooms with adult themes and access to instant messaging wherein others could misrepresent themselves. Because children are actively utilising the Internet where unknown others can have access to them or where they can be exposed to inappropriate sexual materials, they require safeguarding and education in safe Internet use. The purpose of this article is to provide a discussion of how to safeguard children from and educate them about online sexual solicitation and pornography. We contend that society needs an overall conceptual shift in its attitude towards young people’s Internet use.
The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of and attitudes among young people toward pornography. Although most had seen pornographic movies, the youngest boys reported viewing the most pornography. The male objective: The aims were to gain a deeper understanding of how personnel, who work with adolescents, reason about the effect of pornography and its spread in the media, and to explore how well prepared they consider themselves to be in addressing sexual health and gender equality. Design and sample: An inductive, exploratory, qualitative study with focus group discussions was selected. Seventeen participants with different professions were invited into five heterogeneous groups. Measures: Data were analysed according to grounded theory. Results: Conflicting messages about sexuality became the core category. Participants were of the opinion that pornography conveyed a contradictory message compared with national public health goals, societal laws, and regulations. They believed that young people use pornography as a source of information and stimulation. Furthermore, they thought that pornography contributed to norm-creating ideals and a demanding sexuality, thus, confirming the traditional gender order. The participants opined that a professional approach was required when addressing sexuality and gender equality issues and requested better training tools and more cultural competence. Conclusions: Professionals working with adolescents perceived that pornography conveys a conflicting message about sexuality. They expressed a need for adequate tools for improving education on health and sexuality, including gender equality aspects and critical media analysis.


In spite of a growing presence of pornography in contemporary life, little is known about its potential effects on young people’s sexual socialisation and sexual satisfaction. In this article, we present a theoretical model of the effects of sexually explicit materials (SEM) mediated by sexual scripting and moderated by the type of SEM used. An online survey dataset that included 650 young Croatian men aged 18–5 years was used to explore empirically the model. Descriptive findings pointed to significant differences between mainstream and paraphilic SEM users in frequency of SEM use at the age of 14, current SEM use, frequency of masturbation, sexual boredom, acceptance of sex myths, and sexual compulsiveness. In testing the model, a novel instrument was used, the Sexual Scripts Overlap Scale, designed to measure the influence of SEM on sexual socialisation. Structural equation analyses suggested that negative effects of early exposure to SEM on young men’s sexual satisfaction, albeit small, could be stronger than positive effects. Both positive and negative effects—the latter being expressed through suppression of intimacy—were observed only among users of paraphilic SEM. No effect of early exposure to SEM was found among the mainstream SEM users. To counterbalance moral panic but also the glamorisation of pornography, sex education programs should incorporate contents that would increase media literacy and assist young people in critical interpretation of pornographic imagery.


Frequent use of pornography has not been sufficiently studied before. In a Swedish survey 2,015 male students aged 18 years participated. A group of frequent users of pornography (n = 200, 10.5%) were studied with respect to background and psychosocial correlates. The frequent users had a more positive attitude to pornography, were more often “turned on” viewing pornography and viewed more often advanced forms of pornography. Frequent use was also associated with many problem behaviours. A multiple logistic regression analysis showed that frequent users of pornography were more likely to be living in a large city, consuming alcohol more often, having greater sexual desire and had more often sold sex than other boys of the same age. High frequent viewing of pornography may be seen as a problematic behaviour that needs more attention from both parents and teachers and also to be addressed in clinical interviews.


The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of and attitudes among young people toward pornography and their sources of information about sexuality. Eight hundred and seventy-six young people ages 15–25 years (555 females and 321 males) who visited a youth centre in Sweden for a period of one year answered a questionnaire about their use of pornography, their attitudes toward pornography, and sources of information about sexuality. Although most had seen pornographic movies, the youngest boys reported viewing the most pornography. The male participants reported that the most common reason they viewed pornography was to get aroused and to masturbate, whereas the female participants stated that they viewed pornography out of curiosity. The most frequent source of information about sexuality was peers. These results illustrate the importance of sex education to give factual information about sexuality and to counteract the messages about sexuality presented in pornography.
Further references


Murnen, S. K., Wright, C., & Kaluzny, G. (2002). If “boys will be boys,” then girls will be victims? a meta-analytic review of the research that relates masculine ideology to sexual aggression. *Sex Roles, 46*(11/12), 359–375.


