

INTERNET PORN, GENDER, POOR SEXUAL HEALTH OUTCOMES: HOW DO WE BEST EQUIP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Jeff Turner

Background: Internet pornography (IP) is readily available to adolescents who are developing their sexual identity, navigating new sexual feelings, desires and establishing new forms of intimacy¹. The traumatic intersection of IP and sexual violence toward women is evidenced in displays of objectifications, aggression and verbal abuse of women seen in IP, as well as a lack of visible, informed and negotiated consent². High levels of IP use are generally associated with less realistic attitudes towards sex, poorer sexual health outcomes such as Sexually transmitted Infections (STIs) and less enjoyment of real life sexual experiences.³

Methods: A literature review was conducted using the Edith Cowan University library data base searching the following key words between the dates January 2006-December 2018: Internet pornography, young people, adolescents, gender violence, sexual violence, consent, negotiation, sexual behaviours, intimacy, sexual identity, sexual health. 26 articles were included in the review.

Results: In 2010, 60% of adolescents had ever viewed IP and that number has now risen to 100% in 2017⁴. Males seek out IP more than women and often view it as arousing, amusing or exciting. Females often have negative views and responses such as shock or distress. Rising levels of sexual violence toward women can be associated with adolescents receiving messages about sex and sexuality which have a basis in gender bias, violence and aggression rather than intimacy.

Conclusion: Efforts to prevent searching for IP in an era of accessibility and devices are not likely to be effective. This poster will outline current and evidenced-based methods to equip adolescents with the ability to critique IP, negotiate consent, and understand gender bias.

¹ Santrock, J. W. (2014). *Life span development: Australia, New Zealand*. New South Wales, Australia: McGraw-Hill.

² Vera-Gray, F. (2018). Book review: Moira Carmody, sex, ethics, and young people. *Feminism & Psychology*, 0(0), 1-4.

³ Pratt, Russ. (2015). The 'porn genie' is out of the bottle: Understanding and responding to the impact of pornography on young people. *The Bulletin of the Australian Psychological Society Ltd*, 37(2), 12-13.

⁴ Lim, M. S. C., Agius, P. A., Carrotte, E. R., Vella, A. M., & Hellard, M. E. (2017). Young Australians' use of pornography and associations with sexual risk behaviours. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 41(4), 438-444.