

Sexual health professionals' perceptions of social influences on young people's sex lives.

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Pornography: Trial by media

The New York Times

'Porn is always just t
all in survey on porr

ABC News Breakfast By Patrick Wood
Updated Fri at 12:23pm

SEX BEFORE KISSING: HOW 15-YEAR-OLD GIRLS ARE DEALING WITH PORN-ADDICTED BOYS

April 1, 2016

THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigour, journalistic flair

Arts + Culture Business + Economy Educati

It may be awkward, but we n
kids about porn

November 26, 2015 6:08am AEDT

internet pornography causing long term public health
crisis amongst Australian children, seminar hears

By Danuta Kozaki
Updated 9 Feb 2016, 10:15pm

Background: Porn impacts young people

- ▶ Young people use porn as sexual education! (Rothman et al., 2015; Scarcelli, 2015; Litras, Latreille, Temple-Smith, 2015).
- ▶ Empirical research has linked pornography to a range of:
 - ▶ Attitudes (e.g. Brown & L'Engle, 2009; Hald, Malamuth & Yang, 2013; Morgan, 2011; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006; Peter & Valkenburg, 2007; Peter & Valkenburg, 2008b; Peter & Valkenburg, 2009).
 - ▶ Behaviours (e.g. Brown & L'Engle, 2009; Kraus and Russell, 2008; Morgan, 2011; Lo & Wei, 2005; Rogala & Tyden, 2003; Rothman et al., 2012; Morgan, 2011)

Background: Young people's perspectives

- ▶ Young people report a range of perspectives:
 - ▶ Increased comfort with range of sexual activities and communication with partner (McKee et al., 2008; McKee, 2007; Rogala & Tyden, 2003 and 2004).
- BUT
- ▶ Young women in particular feel pressured and anxious to conform to sexual behaviours from pornography (Haggstrom-Nordin, Hanson, & Tyden, 2005; Marston & Lewis, 2014; Walker et al., 2015)

Background: Other social influences

- ▶ Many social influences on young people's sexual attitudes and behaviour, including porn viewing, such as:
 - ▶ **Peers** (Doornwaard, Bickham, Rich, ter Bogt, & van den Eijnden, 2015; Weber et al, 2012)
 - ▶ **Gender identification** (Brown & L'Engle, 2009; Flood, 2007; Löfgren-Mårtenson & Månsson, 2010; Morgan, 2011; Scarcelli, 2015; Weber et al., 2012)
 - ▶ **Parents** (Brugman et. al., 2010; Wouters, 2013)
 - ▶ **Sex education** (Brugman et. al., 2010; Wouters, 2013; Smith et al., 2011)

Research aims

- ▶ To explore sexual health professionals' perceptions of the impact of pornography on heterosexual young people's (13-25) sex lives.
- ▶ And to explore the additional influences of parents, peers, gender identification and sexual education on heterosexual young people's sex lives.

Method: Recruitment and participants

- ▶ Purposive sampling via professional networks, sexual health clinics and public profiles.
- ▶ 21 semi-structured qualitative interviews with sexual health professionals who work with young people in Australia.
- ▶ Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1h20

Method: Analysis

- ▶ Interview data transcribed verbatim and analysed with Nvivo
- ▶ Thematic analysis utilised within a 'critical realist' perspective (Braun and Clarke, 2006)
- ▶ A combination of inductive (bottom up) and deductive (top down) coding (Braun and Clarke, 2006)
- ▶ The themes presented today are mainly deductive and drawn from the research aims and interview questions.

Preliminary results

- Impacts of pornography
 - Positive trends
 - Concerns
- Impacts of other social influences
 - Parents
 - Peers
 - Sex education
- What do sexual health professionals want?

Impact of pornography: Positive trends

- A helpful tool to see what sex actually looks like, understand and express themselves sexually
- Young women more open to the idea that sex might be pleasurable

"So, ya , I think for girls, it [porn] has helped some of them, to feel a little bit more comfortable with the process of what it's [sex] going to be." - **School Youth Health Nurse**

Impact of pornography: Concerns

- Mis-representation of female pleasure
- Pressure and consensual 'grey areas'
- Intimacy

"I've had loads of conversations with young guys and young girls about their experiences around it. I've had young girls come to me and say that they're afraid because they know that they've watched porn, they've watched porn with a boyfriend and then they're like 'do I have to do that stuff?'"

- **Sexual health nurse and school youth health nurse**

Impact of other social influences

- Parents
- Peers
- Sex education in schools

"... I don't think I've met, maybe a very small number of people who say that their sexual education at school was helpful. But, most of them say, 'nup, it was horrible. It was just like all you learnt about was STDs and pregnancy and that's it'. And then by default porn becomes the sexual education tool." -

Psychologist

What to sexual health professionals want?

- Broad sex education!!

"For me giving education to young people at schools is part of my job. How can you do that without offense to teachers, every parent, everyone being on board? Because that's what they [young people] want; they don't want a lot of the stuff we talk about anymore. They want the nitty gritty: relationships, consent, how to have sex and enjoy it" - **Sexual Health Nurse and Sex Educator**

Conclusion

According to sexual health professionals:

- Pornography can have a range of impacts on young people's sex lives
- There is a perceived need to broaden sex education

Next steps:

- Interviewing young people