

ALL PORN IS... WHAT, EXACTLY? A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF VIDEO-BASED PORNOGRAPHY CONTENT ANALYSES

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Background:

In the Internet age, pornography is more popular and accessible than ever before. Due to concerns about pornography's impact on viewers, several researchers have used content analysis methodology to determine what pornography depicts. This study aimed to systematically review the results of quantitative content analyses of video pornography and identify the degree to which the following behaviours are depicted: 1) sexual behaviours and themes, 2) condom use and other safe sex practices, 3) aggression and violence, 4) coercion and rape, and 5) domination, power and other inequalities.

Methods:

A systematic search of seven databases, covering all years until the search date, was conducted in March, 2016. The search was applied to Medline, PsycINFO, Scopus, EMBASE, CINAHL Plus, Communication and Mass Media Complete, and Cochrane Library databases. Results were analysed using a narrative approach.

Results:

Twenty studies met eligibility criteria. Studies varied in quality and definitions of behavioural variables. Condom use and other safe-sex practices were more commonly depicted in gay male pornography (36-78%) compared to heterosexual pornography (2-3%). 'Normative' sexual behaviours were the most frequently depicted in pornography samples (e.g. vaginal intercourse in 52-88% of heterosexual videos, fellatio in 67-92%). Extreme violence (1-3%) and rape (0-6%) were relatively rare. However, more subtle forms of aggression, such as spanking (5-75%), were more common, and unequal sexual relations (e.g. domination, 14-56%) were also common. These latter behaviours were nearly ubiquitously directed towards women.

Conclusion:

These results indicate that condom non-use and gender inequalities are common in heterosexual pornography, which has implications for the development of healthy sexual relationships among viewers. Higher quality research, including study replication and consistent methodological choices, is needed.

Disclosure of Interests:

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