

Chapter 12

Deviant Pornography Use: Linkages to Individual Differences and Early-Onset Adult Pornography Use

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ABSTRACT

The impact of both intentional and unintentional exposure to internet pornography on adolescents has been debated in the literature for decades. However, the differences in the operational definitions of pornography and exposure, not to mention the differences in methodology and sampling, make it difficult to synthesize findings and identify patterns across studies. In addition, the majority of the research has employed a rather broad measure of “exposure to general pornography” by adolescents in order to understand the impact of early exposure to pornography; however, internet pornography includes a wide range of sexually explicit materials, not just adult pornography. Thus, the goal of this chapter is to explore the relationship between nondeviant pornography use and deviant pornography use (e.g., child pornography) by discussing the Seigfried-Spellar study which examined the role of individual differences and age of onset in deviant pornography use.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of technology, specifically the Internet, has profoundly influenced pornography consumption as a result of the Triple-A engine (i.e., affordable, accessible, anonymous; Cooper, 1998). In a study by Wolak, Mitchell, and Finkelhor (2007), 42% of internet users aged 10-17 years reported being exposed to online

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pornography within the last year, with 66% of them reporting only unintentional exposure to internet pornography. In addition, males and youths between 13 to 17 years of age were 9x more likely to report intentional exposure to internet pornography (Wolak et al., 2007). The impact of both intentional and unintentional exposure to Internet pornography on adolescents has been debated in the literature for decades (Bloom & Hagedorn, 2015; Dombrowski et al., 2007; Flood, 2009; Flood & Hamilton, 2003; Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012; Peter & Valkenburg, 2016; Sabina, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2008; Springate & Omar, 2013; Svedin, Akerman, & Prieve, 2011; Tsitsika et al., 2009). However, this debate is biased in that the majority of the research focuses on the negative impact of adolescents viewing pornography (see Harper & Hodgins, 2016; Peter & Valkenburg, 2016).

In addition, the definition of pornography, or sexually explicit material (SEM), varies in the literature (Owens et al., 2012). Owens et al. (2012) defined pornography according to the 1986 Attorney General Commission on Pornography “as any material that is predominately sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal” (p. 103). However, Peter and Valkenburg (2011) provided a more descriptive definition of pornography, specifically sexually explicit internet materials (SEIM), as:

Professionally produced or user-generated pictures or videos (clips) on or from the internet that are intended to arouse the viewer... and depict sexual activities, such as masturbation as well as oral, anal, and vaginal penetration, in an unconcealed way, often with a close-up on genitals. (p. 1015-1016)

The definition of *exposure* also differs in the literature as intentional (deliberate, wanted), unintentional (unwanted, accidental), or not specified (any exposure; see Peter & Valkenburg, 2016). Overall, differences in the operational definitions of pornography, not to mention the differences in methodology and sampling, make it difficult to synthesize findings and identify patterns across studies in the literature (see Bloom & Hagedorn, 2015; Dombrowski et al., 2007; Owens et al., 2012; Peter & Valkenburg, 2016; Short, Black, Smith, Wetterneck, & Wells, 2012; Springate & Omar, 2013).

Overall, the majority of the research has employed a rather broad measure of “exposure to *general* pornography,” by adolescents (i.e., self-reported pornography use; Seigfried-Spellar, 2016) in order to understand the impact of early exposure to pornography. However, internet pornography includes a wide-range of sexually explicit materials, not just adult pornography. In addition, research indicates there are personality differences between consumers and non-consumers of Internet pornography. Thus, the goal of this chapter is to explore the relationship between nondeviant pornography use (adult-only pornography) and deviant pornography use

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