

**Pornography and young
people**
**Online access and its effects
on body image and
behaviours**

Welcome

Jeanne Gregory

Health Improvement Service

Accessibility of pornography

- Sex is the one of the most commonly searched word on google 2,840,000,000 sites
- Pornhub receives over 1.68 million visits per hour. (Pornhub, 2013)
- The sex industry is largest and most profitable industry in the world. "It includes street prostitution, brothels, 'massage parlors', strip clubs, human trafficking for sexual purposes, phone sex, child and adult pornography, mail order brides and sex tourism – just to mention a few of the most common examples." (Andersson et al, 2013)

Accessibility of pornography

- A Google trends analysis indicates that searches for “teen porn” have more than tripled between 2005-2013, and teen porn was the fastest-growing genre over this period.
- Total searches for teen-related porn reached an estimated 500,000 daily in March 2013, far larger than other genres, representing approximately one-third of total daily searches for pornographic web sites (Dines, 2013).
- Internet porn in the UK receives more traffic than social networks, shopping, news and media, email, finance, gaming and travel (Arthur, 2013).

Young people, sex and relationships - the new norms (IPPR 2014)

Young peoples' voices

- Eight out of 10 say it is too easy for young people to accidentally see pornography online.
- Seven out of 10 say 'accessing pornography was seen as typical' while they were at school; the consensus view is that this is typical between the ages of 13 and 15.
- Almost half (46 per cent) say 'sending sexual or naked photos or videos is part of everyday life for teenagers nowadays'.
- Seven out of 10 (72 per cent) say 'pornography leads to unrealistic attitudes to sex' and that 'pornography can have a damaging impact on young peoples' views of sex or relationships'

Young people sex and relationships the new norms (IPPR 2014)

Young people's voices

- Two-thirds of young women (66 per cent) and almost half of young men (49 per cent) agree that 'it would be easier growing up if pornography was less easy to access for young people'.
- Two-thirds (66 per cent) say 'people are too casual about sex and relationships'.
- Almost eight out of 10 young women (77 per cent) say 'pornography has led to pressure on girls or young women to look a certain way', while almost as many (75 per cent) say 'pornography has led to pressure on girls and young women to act a certain way'.

Sexting

- More than 1/3 of 11 -18 year olds have been sent messages containing sexual content.
- By the time they are 16 years old, 90% of young people have been exposed to Internet porn – usually while doing their homework – often by accident. On average, their first exposure to porn was at age 11.

<http://www.safeinternet.org.uk/>

The impact of pornography on attitudes and behaviour

Despite the high levels of concern, the impact is not clearly evidenced; research is often based on small sample sizes and dependent on varying definitions of pornography and access. While there isn't a clear picture from across the evidence base, some studies have found links between accessing pornography and a variety of impacts, including:

- Unrealistic attitudes to sex and relationships
- More sexually permissive attitudes
- Greater acceptance of casual sex
- Beliefs that women are sex objects
- More frequent thoughts about sex
- Sexual uncertainty (the extent to which children and young people are unclear about their sexual belief and values)
- Less progressive gender role attitudes.

What have we noticed in Bromley

Bromley HealthCare's Sexual Health Team along with School Nurses have been going into secondary schools for the last 10 years delivering sex and relationship education to year 9 pupils in 17 secondary schools. The program is called "Your Choice Your Voice". We also deliver a year 10 session top up session on consent, in addition to Bitesize Your Choice Your Voice sessions for youth centres, colleges and pupil referral units. Young people used to tell us they learnt about sex from magazines, friends, and parents. Now 10 years later Pornography is the main way young people learn about sex. They even tell us the porn sites that they use.

What we have noticed in Bromley

Quotes and questions from young people

- My boyfriend slaps me when we have sex. I don't know why but I don't like it.
- Why do boys want you to act like a porn star?
- My boyfriend wants anal sex but I don't like it.
- Its disgusting not shaving your pubic hair.
- My boyfriend told me that if he punches me and knocks me out before I orgasm it will be better for me is that true?
- Is it ok to send nude pictures if your head is not in the picture?
- I'm frightened of using condoms because they could get lost inside you if they come off.
- How often is it safe to masturbate?
- My boyfriend asked me to dress like a porn star for sex.

During the anatomy section of YCYV the majority of young women do not know where they pass urine from. And are also unsure about periods and their monthly cycle.

What are our concerns?

- Desensitisation
- Emulating behaviours seen in online pornography
- Self generated pornographic material
- Performance anxiety
- Unprotected sex
- Self esteem and body image issues
- 74% Of 11 -18 year old said that porn should be discussed in sex education (NSPCC 2013) sex education survey

It gives an unrealistic view of sex and our bodies and makes us more self conscious and question why our bodies are not developed like we see on line. *(quote from NSPCC "I wasn't sure it was normal to watch it...! Report June 2016)*

What are our concerns?

- Porn addiction
- There is a growing body of research looking into the impact that porn has on the brain. Watching porn can become "a high" similar to the way addicts feel when they take drugs ([Voon et al, 2014](#)). Scientists are discovering that excessive porn use can have a negative impact on key parts of the brain ([Kühn and Gallinat, 2014](#)). For children and young people, these effects can be greater as their brains are still developing ([Voon et al, 2014](#)).
- ChildLine has seen a 6% increase in counselling sessions where a young person specifically mentioned concerns about online porn or websites containing harmful content. (NSPCC 2015)

What are our concerns?

Studies have also shown that when children and young people are exposed to sexually explicit material, they are at greater risk of developing:

- Unrealistic attitudes about sex and consent
- More negative attitudes towards roles and identities in relationships
- More casual attitudes towards sex and sexual relationships
- An increase in 'risky' sexual behaviour
- Unrealistic expectations of body image and performance.
- An increase in sexual harassment and sexual violence

How can we support young people

Ensure young people have effective SRE

Effective SRE should include:

- The qualities of relationships / partnerships
- Respect and caring for self and partner
- The importance of consent and resisting pressure
- The fun, pleasure and fulfilling aspects of sex as well as inherent risks
- The biology of sexual arousal and behaviour
- Body image and self esteem issues
- Gender roles and stereo types
- Alternatives to sex for meeting comfort, affection and affirmation needs
- The law and sex
- Delay and the ability to say no, assertiveness and confidence building

How can we support young people

- Provide young people with the opportunity to discuss pornography and its impact.

Through improved knowledge and attitudes young people are more likely to be able to resist the messages of pornography, and any pressures to participate in sexual behaviours that they are not happy with.

- Use the media in popular youth culture to look at and discuss a variety of issues including body image and how sex is 'used' in many contexts.

Dove self esteem activity guide. A collection of resources to increase self esteem and body image.

<http://selfesteem.dove.co.uk/Articles/Written/Youth-leaders.aspx>

How can we support young people

- Have an organisational SRE policy in place – To cover both responding to child protection/safeguarding issues involving pornography, and incidents with young people where pornography might have been involved.
- Its important that questions and discussions about pornography are dealt with appropriately, so that young people are supported to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to make informed decisions about their sexual behaviour and relationships.
- Ensure training is in place for professionals working with young people to gain the confidence, skills and knowledge to tackle issues around pornography

<http://www.bromleyhealthcare.org.uk/explore-our-services/health-improvement-training-for-professionals/>

How can we support young people

- <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/teachers/>
- <http://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx> 0800 1111
- <http://familylives.org.uk/free-resources>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenge-porn-be-aware-b4-you-share>
- www.scarlteen.com
- <http://www.paceuk.info>
- www.fpa.org.uk
- <http://selfesteem.dove.co.uk/Articles/Written/Youth-leaders.aspx>

How can we support young people

- www.brook.org.uk
- <http://www.ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/AnnualReviewCentrePlan2013.pdf>
- www.sexexperienceuk.channel4/sex-education
- www.thepleasureproject.org
- www.wgn.org.uk/resources/myth-facts
- www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/sex-educational-supplement.aspx
- http://www.barnardos.org.uk/cc126b-barnados-lft-englishversion-web_final_version.pdf (information booklet for young people)
- <http://www.barnardos.org.uk/aboutcutthemfree>
- http://www.barnardos.org.uk/ctf_puppetonastring_report_final.pdf
- <http://www.paceuk.info/> For advice and support for parents of sexually exploited children: