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Problematic pornography use and attitude toward pornography among medical interns

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Abstract

Introduction: The online porn filmography industry has seen a rapid surge in content consumption due to a global ease of Internet accessibility and technological progress. Due to rise in the Internet access and technologies, the possibilities of approach for sexual interactions, online pornography, and other type of repetitive behaviors have increased.

Aims and Objectives: The aim of the study is to assess the problematic pornography use and attitude toward pornography among the undergraduate medical students.

Material and Methods: This study consisted of 32 participants comprised of the interns from Mamata general hospital. The samples were drawn using the problematic pornography consumption scale and Attitude towards pornography scale.

Results: The current study found that the 21.87% prevalence of the problematic pornography use among the participants with mean scores of 13.51 which was statistically significant.

Conclusion: problematic pornography use is prevalent among the medical interns. Being male, and spending time on pornography by neglecting the leisure activities were associated with the problematic pornography use. Interns in a relationship had high prevalence of problematic pornography use. Therefore, it is important to create awareness and get to the knowledge of the students about the possible effects of problematic pornography use.

Keywords: Problematic pornography, intern's attitude, relationship

Introduction

Pornography was defined as professionally produced or user-generated pictures or videos (clips) intended to sexually arouse the viewer. These videos and pictures typically depict sexual activities, such as masturbation and oral sex, as well as vaginal and anal penetration, in an un concealed way, often with a close-up on genitals. Most pornography is currently accessed through the Internet, which is reflected in many studies [2].

As the ease of access to pornography on the Internet for adolescents, along with concerns regarding potentially adverse ramifications (e.g., Davis, 2012; Dombrowski, Gischlar, & Durst, 2007; Mattebo, Larsson, Tydén, & Häggström-Nordin, 2013), empirical research on adolescents' use of pornography has tremendously increased in recent years. Since 2005, more than 65 pragmatic articles have appeared, with a spire of 11 articles in 2011. However, the reviews have come to conclusions, notably about the question of whether pornography is related to adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior. Similarly, Dombrowski *et al.* (2007, p. 155) and Owens *et al.* (2012, p. 116) concluded that, except for sexual aggression, there are no proper results about whether and to what extent pornography is analogous with adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior [1].

Eroticism was a well-studied concept as seen in Kamasutra written during the second or fifth century [3]. During British rule, Indian culture was admixed with the Victorian system of ethical and moral standards. At present in India, watching porn in private is not a criminal offense; however, storing or publishing images of child sexual abuse is punishable. Due to rise in the Internet access and technologies, the possibilities of conduit for sexual. Interactions, online pornography, and other types of repetitive behaviors have increased [4]. One of the most common arguments against the use of porn is that it shows an unhealthy image about women, promiscuous behaviors in society, and leads to escalation of sexual assault on women, hence it should be proscribed. However, study reports that those who view more pornography had more favorable attitude toward females [5].

The online porn filmography industry has seen a rapid surge in content consumption due to a global ease of Internet accessibility and technological progress, particularly in streaming media that allow users to continuously watch content, usually a video, without the need to download it [6]. According to data shared by Pornhub, an paramount online website with pornography content, the figure of pornography consumers is steadily rocketing, and it is mostly from males (over 70% of all users) and young adults, below 34 years old [7]. In line with this data, over 70% of adult US citizens, aged 18–30 years old, admit that they watch online pornography at least once in a month while nearly 60% of college students admitted to viewing the pornography once a week. Although pornography has a long history, the new technological advances have made it to new heights. It is now accessible at one's fingertips in almost limitless sexual diversities for free through online websites accessible through any gadget with Internet access, primarily in the form of video pornography, which was disclosed to be substantially the sexually piquing mode of all kinds of pornography material [8, 9].

Material and Methods

A cross-sectional study was carried out to assess the prevalence of problematic pornography use and attitude toward pornography among undergraduate medical students. A self-administered questionnaire was given to the undergraduates which contained the socio demographic details and also the items in the questionnaire included the questions from the scales of problematic pornography consumption scale 6 and attitude towards pornography a 20 item questionnaire. The participants who were willing to answer the items in the questionnaire were informed about the study and consent was obtained from them. Students who were not willing to participate in the study were excluded.

Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale [10]

It was used to measure problematic Internet pornographic use. It consists of 6 items that assess the 6 core components of addiction, salience, mood modification, conflict, tolerance, relapse, and withdrawal. Each component is measured by 3 items of the scale. Responses were recorded on the following 7-point scale: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = sometimes, 5 = often, 6 = very often, 7 = all the time. A score of 20 (out of 42) can be considered as an optimal cut-off score to be classified as a problematic pornography user. The PPCS-6 had adequate reliability in terms of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values on each sample (see Table 3). The PPCS-6 and PPCS-18 had strong, positive associations with each other, and the PPCS-6 showed adequate (positive, weak-to-moderate) associations with pornography use frequency, pornography use duration, masturbation frequency, and frequency of pornography use during masturbation on each sample.

Attitudes toward Pornography Scale [11]

The 20-item scale was used to assess attitude toward

pornography. Some of the examples of items within scale are: "Viewing pornography is a fun way to relieve stress", "Pornography leads to rape", and "Individuals who engage in pornography are unsuccessful". Participants' responses were recorded on 7-point linear scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Total score ranges from 20 to 140. The items with negative statements were reverse scored so that higher scores indicate more positive attitudes toward pornography. The reliability of the scale was 0.84.15 This scale shows satisfactory psychometric property for the current study using Cronbach's alpha (0.74).

Statistical Analysis

Data entry and analysis was done using Microsoft Excel and Epi-Info software. The sociodemographic profiles of participants have been expressed in terms of frequency and percentage. Problematic pornography use of among different variables such as gender, relationship status, age groups, weekly, and daily consumption of pornography was assessed using chi-square test. Independent *t*-test was used to assess the relation of gender, relationship status of participants, and problematic pornography use with attitude toward pornography score. While one-way ANOVA test was used to assess relation of different age group with attitude toward pornography score.

Results

96 students participated in the study out of which 57 females and 39 were males. The average age group of the participants was 23-25 yrs and majority of them were Hindus. 15 participants were in relationship and remaining were single. Prevalence of problematic pornography use among the participants was among the males who participated in this study. no statistically significant difference was not found among the age groups. Females in the study showed no problematic use of pornography. 40.6% of them felt that porn was never important part of their lives while 25% of them felt that its sometimes important and they even were not at all stressed when they were prevented from watching it for a longer period. Watching porn relieved the tension for 18.8% of them.

Table 1: Demographic Details of the participants

Demographic Variable		No. of Participants	Percentage
Gender	Male	39	40.6%
	Female	57	59.4%
Religion	Hindu	81	87.1%
	Muslim	6	6.4%
	Christian	6	6.4%
Geographical area	Urban	84	87.5%
	Rural	12	12.5%
Age group in years	22-23	42	43.2%
	24	36	37.5%
	25	18	18.8%
Relationship Status	Single	81	84.37%
	In relation	15	15.62%

Table 2: Relation of Problematic Pornography Use with Different Variables

Problematic pornography use					
Variables	No of participants	Yes	No	Chi-Square	P value
Gender	Male	39	18(8.53)	21(30.46)	22.655
	Female	57	3(12.46)	54(44.53)	<.05
Porn is important part of my life	Never	96	39(25.00)	57(71.00)	19.794
	Sometimes	96	24(25.00)	72(71.00)	<.05
Released tension by watching	Often	96	12(25.00)	84(71.00)	
	Never	96	39(23.00)	57(73.00)	22.985
Porn	Sometimes	96	12(23.00)	84(73.00)	<.05
	Often	96	18(23.00)	78(73.00)	
Neglected leisure activities for	Never	96	60(27.00)	36(69.00)	84.405
Watching porn	Sometimes	96	9(27.00)	87(69.00)	<.05
	Often	96	12(27.00)	84(69.00)	
Relationship status	Single	81	24(30.38)	57(50.62)	13.700
	In relationship	15	12(5.62)	3(9.38)	<.05

Table 3: Comparison of Mean Attitude toward Pornography Score with Different Variable

Attitude towards pornography score			
Variables		Mean (SD)	Statistical value
Gender	Male	64.31(14.88)	F—2.717
	Female	57.6(8.10)	P<0.1
Age group	22-23	56.13(6.09)	F—2.086
	24-25	62.22(14.79)	P<0.1
Relationship status	single	60.74(11.00)	F—0.780
	In relationship	65.66(13.96)	P<0.3
Problematic pornography	Present	68(13.51)	F—3.319 use
	Absent	59.2(10.67)	P<0.07

Table 2 shows that the participants who were feeling that porn is an important part of their life were less and with chi-square test (19.794) with significant p value of <.05. Most of the are with the intention that porn was never an part of their life, while some of them accepted it to be at sometimes they felt its importance. Participants in the study never neglected their leisure activities for watching porn with chi-square test (84.405) with a significant P value of <.05. Participants who were in the relationship had a prominent problematic use in the pornography when compared to that of those who were single or not in any kind of relationship with a chi-square value of (13.700) and a significant P value at <.05 similarly, the tension released by watching porn was significantly lower among the study population.

Table 3 shows that the attitude towards pornography score was higher among the males in the study group with an independent *t* test significantly. (F2.717, *p*-<0.1) and the age group shows it is higher among the age group of 24-25 with the independent *t* test significantly (F-2.086, *p*-<0.1). Similarly higher results were obtained from the people who were in relationship with the independent *t* test (F0.780, *P*<0.3). ANOVA test revealed the higher scores of attitude towards pornography among the participants with higher problematic pornography use scores with (F-3.319, *P*-<0.07).

Discussion

The current study found that the 12.8% prevalence of the problematic pornography use among the participants. Kumar *et al.* study found the 12.5% prevalence among the study conducted in the medical students [12]. Dwulit *et al.* [13] in a cross-sectional study among Polish University students found 12.2% prevalence of self-perceived pornography addiction. Mennig *et al.* [14] found that 7.1% participants have problematic use of pornography. Sachdev *et al.* [15] in a

study among university students reported 80% prevalence of masturbation. While prevalence rate of premarital sex was reported as 19% by Kaur *et al.* [16] and more than 25% by Sharma *et al.* [17]. Ybarra *et al.* [18] in a study among children and adolescents of age group 12 to 18 years reported that 90% youth have access to pornography. This increased consumption of pornography may be due to easy accessibility and greater access of such material with increasing access to the Internet.

The present study showed that male participants have greater prevalence of problematic pornography use than females other similar results were obtained from the studies by Kvaem *et al.* [19] among young adults of Scandinavia reports high consumption of pornography material by males. Chowdhury *et al.* [20] in study among university students in Bangladesh observed that male students consumed more Internet pornography than their female counterparts. Emmers Sommer *et al.* [21] in his study tried to explain these gender differences through an evolutionary concept such as men being more aggressive, and this implies to more pornography usage than women. He found that it is difficult to differentiate whether gender differences are due to biological or social influence or higher testosterone in males, or if it is impacted by cultural constraints placed on genders [21].

The current study found that participants in any relation (such as romantic relation) have high prevalence of problematic pornography use. Dwulit *et al.* [13] reported similar findings; the frequency of pornography use was higher among participants engaged in a romantic relationship as compared to singles. It may be due to pornography being described as arousing, exciting, or stimulating.²² Government of India banned 857 porn websites; this step may help in reducing pornography consumption and problematic use [12]. Morrison *et al.*

significant negative correlations were obtained between exposure to pornographic imagery on the Internet and levels of genital and sexual esteem; pornography use was associated with poor quality of life, and depressive and anxiety symptoms^[23]. Therefore, it is important to provide education to students about the adverse effects of pornography. A case report by Darshan *et al.*^[24] about pornography addiction with “dhat” syndrome found that psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy were effective in reducing compulsion to watch pornography. Targeted treatment for pornography abuse, sexual addiction, and sexual abuse are needed to support the individuals who are addicted to pornography.

The current study found that male participants have more positive attitude toward pornography than females. Study by Häggström-Nordin *et al.*^[25] Swedish high school students reported that male participants have significant positive attitude toward pornography; both male and female participants stated that they got inspiration and new ideas from pornography, but female participants have opinion that pornography created uncertainty and demands.

The current study found that participants having higher problematic pornography use had more positive frame of mind about pornography. Study by Häggström-Nordin *et al.*^[25] reports that participants who had looked at hardcore pornography have positive attitude toward pornography than soft-core porn viewer.

The current study found that participants with higher age group had more positive opinion toward pornography. The results may be due to increased knowledge with age that changes the attitude. The current study found that participants in any relationship have more positive attitude toward pornography.

Conclusion

In accordance with the existing studies on the pornography consumption and its effect on the medical interns, our current study by the same token shows the similar significant statistics and results which shows that the problematic pornography use is prevalent among the medical interns. Being male, and spending time on pornography by neglecting the leisure activities were associated with the problematic pornography use. Participants who are in a relationship had high prevalence of problematic pornography use. Therefore, it is important to create awareness and get to the knowledge of the students about the possible effects of problematic pornography use. Male participants, participants with problematic pornography use, and participants in any relationship have more positive attitude toward pornography. This attitude of without adequate knowledge is harmful, causing increasing rates of STDs, and involving in premarital as well as extramarital sex which can cause family disharmony which eventually leads to higher levels of depression anxiety and stress. Many studies showed the significance of this aspects. Gender specific discussions to promote sexual health, and participation in sex education campaigns, would be advantageous for younger generations in changing their perspective toward pornography.

Limitations

There was a limited sample size of the participants. Due to the ongoing pandemic and availability of the leisure time may also led to the increased severity of the pornography

addiction, which otherwise may not be applicable to the general scenario. These factors might affect the study results. The study is cross-sectional and not a blind.

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