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Daniela Williams

Pop Culture Intersections

September 4, 2019

The Porn Crisis: This Generations Sexual Outlet

Some may say that PornHub and Disney have nothing in common, but the truth is that both of these widely known companies, make their money in the same way: they sell fantasies to the youth of our society. Disney allows children to indulge in their imagination, in a place where toys come to life, castaway's pirates fight, princes and princess fall in love, living "Happily Ever After". While pornography presents a world in which multitudes of beautiful young woman are tied and even chained to walls while men dominate them, even if they say no. What do you think goes through the mind of a 9-year-old child witnessing these two separate worlds all at once? How will this affect the way they look at men, woman, or even themselves? A 9-year-old child hasn't experienced the beginning stages of puberty, yet has been exposed to a world of sex without the mental capability to process it. Because of the increased accessibility to the internet, this has become the reality of many girls and boys around the world.

Generation X primarily viewed pornography through magazines such as the famous "Playboy". Millennials experimented with pornographic videos and pictures through the dial up internet on desktop computers. The current post millennial generation view high speed internet pornography through devices such as iPhones, iPads, and even Game networking devices.

Popular gaming consoles have direct connection to the internet, where children are vulnerable to the exposure of sexually explicit ads, that lead to major pornographic websites. Music, social media, and even mainstream commercials contain woman posing in sexually suggestive ways to allude consumers. Pornography has undoubtedly become exponentially

popular and interwoven between the fabric of our society. Furthermore, it emphasizes how American culture is gradually being dominated by sex. Thus, I believe that exploring the effects of porn on its consumers would be beneficial for the physical and social health of our society.

Advocates for the production and consumption of pornography claim pornography to be a form of self-expression that is healthy and essential to discovering their sexual experiences. However, I will argue that the lack of regulation is contributing to the damaging effects pornography has on the consumers' psyche and behavior, it is also factoring into our society's decline of public health. I aim to support this claim from a psychological and sociological standpoint by incorporating research that verifies the negative effects of pornography usage, such as the loss of brain matter, increased compulsive tendencies, and its promotion of an askew societal perception. I will also pose possible societal options to regulate the consumption of pornography, including adding the effects of pornography into current sex education classes, conducting pornography consumption questionnaires in yearly doctor visits, and further research exploring not only the consumer but those within the pornography business as well. In a society bent on moving beyond its years of discriminatory gender practices, pornography serves only to further stereotypical gender roles by creating a brain cycle that is obsessive and difficult to control. By examining the effects of pornography, we can better understand its negative presence in American culture and begin to educate our youth in regard to this issue. Finding the direct and indirect effects of pornography consumption will help legislation build laws to protect the public health, creating a safer and more welcoming atmosphere in the process.

Background

Before understanding the psychological and sociological effects of pornography, there are key terms that must be defined.

First, “pornography” is a difficult word to define, because it has been defined differently in many settings. Interestingly enough, most papers on pornography fail to give concise definitions, if any at all. Often psychological research done on pornography consumption do not provide definitions, rather they post examples of the pornographic pictures or videos showed to the participants. Some researchers who have attempted to give their own definitions, only consider content explicitly showing genitalia as pornography. Some believe that only explicit sexual acts including penetration is considered pornography. Many researchers conclude that pornography encompasses material that can be writing, photographs or video for the purpose of sexual arousal. For instance, the famous film and novel, “50 Shades of Grey”, would be considered pornographic material under this definition. Another example would be the 2019 Grammys, where nearly 20 million viewers from across the world tuned in to witness hip hop icon, Cardi B, perform explicit acts alongside young women, while rapping about her love for sex and money. Some may say that her act was not pornographic, but because there are several definitions of pornography, it becomes difficult to draw the line. For the sake of this paper I will define pornography as, “predominantly sexually explicit material intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal” (Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012).

Secondly, addiction is a serious condition that impacts the brain, body and behavior, making the activity or substance difficult to control or discontinue. Addictions are often limited to substances that are either inhaled, injected or ingested, but for the sake of this research, addictions are used in a wider scope, including any behavior that inhibits daily activities, affects impulse control, creating a cycle that is difficult, if not impossible to stop.

Lastly, psychology is the scientific study of the brain and mind, and there are many subsets within the branch of psychology. This paper will explore neurology (the biological study

of the brain) and social psychology (the study of social interactions and its effects on the individual).

Biological Effects of Porn

People who consume pornography whether it be consistently or even casually have significant neurological differences affecting their behavior that directly stem from porn usage. Many people who argue against pornography being an addiction, say that there is no proof that it changes the consumers physiological state. But recently, researchers are showing interest in studying the neurological effects of pornography and recent brains scans are showing major differences. Researchers Kühn & Gallinat (2014), conducted an experiment that specifically investigated how the brain responded while consuming porn. Participants were placed in fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) while researchers presented them with sets of sexually explicit and non-sexually explicit images. Prior to their experiment, they filled out questionnaires and forms intaking pornography consumption habits. Through analysis of the brain images, researchers found distinct areas affected from porn consumption. They found that their reward system was highly affected and most importantly, grey matter was diminished in men that watched porn often. The reason that this is an alarming discovery is because grey matter consists of neuron cells bodies that are necessary for everyday activities. According to current medical discoveries once grey matter is damaged or lost it can no longer be regained; loss of grey matter has been linked to other disorders such as Bipolar, Schizophrenia, and Alzheimer's. Although the researchers were limited in their number of participants, and lack of diversity, this study launched an interest for other researchers to further expand on the conversation on the detrimental effects of pornography.

Since this ground-breaking discovery, other researchers such as Gola and colleagues (2017), found similar neurological results, as well as correlations to brains scans of gamblers and drug addicts. In this experiment the researchers recruited 57 heterosexual men to participate in various amounts of data collection regarding pornography usage. All the participants filled questionnaires, completed tasks and participated in brains scans that were related to their usage of pornography. Participants were split into three groups, each group was informed they would receive a reward after each task, (nothing, money or a sexual image), afterwards they were instructed to report how much they enjoyed their reward. Through analysis the researchers found distinct differences in men who watched porn addictively and their behaviors towards sexually explicit content. The brain scans of men who were deemed to have problematic porn usage, showed an increased activation of the Ventral Striatum- the area of the brain responsible for controlling behaviors surrounding decision making, motivation and reward processing. Men with problematic porn usage reported more pleasure from acquiring sexual rewards than monetary rewards. Researcher found a pattern of increased “wanting” rather than reward “liking” a pattern found in addiction findings, thus they concluded that porn can be addictive. (Gola et al, 2017).

The compelling evidence of this argument lies in the collection of data. Within the field of psychology there are many ethical boundaries that pose issues for researchers, one is the potential to cause harm. In previous studies of pornography only correlational claims have been made, but because this experiment manipulated images that participants witnessed over the course of time, their conclusion was not only supported, but did not cause harm. The brain scans of the individuals show that participants who were classified as problematic porn users, have similar increased reactivity for cues predicting erotic images. These findings are similar to those with addictions to drugs such as alcohol, nicotine or even gambling. This compelling evidence

shows that pornography not only affects behavior, but it changes the structure of the brain, rewiring it for addictive qualities.

Another perspective for the detrimental effects of pornography consumption is its direct effects on decreased sexual performance. Trends show that over the last decade there has been a rapid increase in men who claim to have lower sexual arousal, and difficulty performing sexually. Past medical professionals believed erectile dysfunction to be linked to old age or psychological issues such as performance anxiety. But with the increase of youthful men under the age of 40 reporting sexual dysfunction, there is cause to investigate. By compiling and analyzing past experiments, researchers found that internet pornography affects the psyche by creating motivating sex habits and conditioned sexual scripts. Through clinical reports, researchers found that eliminating pornography consumption reversed cases of erectile dysfunction and low sexual arousal. In one example, researchers recount the clinical report of an army man that used pornography to masturbate during his deployment. He visited his doctor, because of his recent inability to maintain an erection. After deliberate and direct questioning, it was made apparent that porn consumption was affecting his erection, so the doctor proceeded to question the man on his porn consumption habits. The doctor then recommended that he cease using the sexual toy he used to masturbate, and he cease consuming pornography in hopes that he would no longer have erectile dysfunction. After a few months when the man returned home from deployment, he reported to his doctor that he regained his sexual drive and was able to perform sexually once again (Park, et al, 2016).

The researchers paralleled this recovery story to another man who had the same pornography consumption problem, but was unable to quit his pornography habits. He was a

married man, who was unable to perform sexually with his wife, he was unable to reach orgasm and maintain an erection. When it became apparent in questioning that he consumed pornography and masturbated daily, the doctor recommended he cease for a couple weeks to regain sexual arousal. Months after his doctor visit, he reported inability to cease his daily masturbation and pornography use. He reported that his attempt to stop masturbating led to severe anxiety symptoms, therefore he was unable to stop his porn habits. His erectile dysfunction and low sexual arousal, continued and with time increased in severity (Park, et al, 2016).

When comparing these clinical reports with dozens of other similar reports, researchers concluded that pornography is a cause for sexual problems such as the inability to orgasm, the inability to maintain an erection, or the inability to sexually perform. Elimination of pornography consumption can reverse brain cycles that have been formed, and patients can regain sexual arousal. They also found that brain scans of problematic pornography consumers showed resemblances to other addictions such as methamphetamines. The constant flow of new images that internet pornography contains, allows for constant stimulation of the reward center of the brain. This reward system, over time, becomes wired to be stimulated only by pornographic images, which causes the brain to activate differently when viewing real life sexual images. Like the men in these case studies reported, the type of pornography consumed must increase to receive the same level of dopamine levels in the brain. That explains why the researchers requested that their patients cease porn, this allows the brain to rewire to become sexually aroused with natural images, versus pornographic ones.

Researchers have shown repeatedly that pornography consumption seriously distorts the natural functioning of the brain and creates biological wirings difficult to cease. It has become apparent that these compulsive behaviors are symptoms of a sexual addiction. Through experiments such as these, we are able to find that the direct source for bodily dysfunction is pornography consumption. Pornography has shown to reduce grey matter in the brain, produce compulsive sexual behaviors, cause erectile dysfunction and inability to orgasm. Because the brain is capable of regeneration some of these effects can be reversed, but only with the discontinuation of pornography consumption.

Social Effects of Porn

A widely debated concept of pornography is the portrayal and treatment of woman, I will argue that pornography directly negatively affects the way men view woman, but also the way men view themselves. The way humans view each other and expect others to act is related to our social scripts. Social scripts are mind maps that are created as we grow as human beings, they include how humans are expected to act in multiple scenarios. Psychologists Miller and his colleagues (2018) were interested in studying what happens to the sexual social script of men when exposed to pornographic material, and how will it affect their view of woman. They began their experiment by recruiting 500 participants, males ranging from ages 18-72. The participants were separated into four groups: two experimental groups and two control groups. One experimental group witnessed taxi cab porn, while the other experimental group witnessed workplace porn. The other two control groups witnessed a random history video on a YouTube channel. After each participant watched their respected video they were asked to fill multiple questionnaires, about past porn consumption, and demographics. They were each given sample

scenarios where they were asked to predict the outcome. For instance, for the taxi cab experimental group, they were given a scenario where a man is driving a woman around in a taxi, and the participants were asked to complete the expected outcome. After the data was collected, researchers analyzed the data to find positive correlations among men who watch porn and their social scripts of woman in “sexual scenarios”.

They argue that people who view pornography are more likely to expect similar behaviors from their partners, or even strangers in similar situations. Men are more likely to expect porn like sex from woman, depending on the frequency of porn consumption. They found a direct cause and effect between the views men have of sex, sexual experiences/situations and porn consumption. (Miller, McBain, & Raggatt, 2018). Most of pornography consumption research involves people reporting their personal porn trends, but this experiment actually placed participants in positions to watch porn and see the effects, this limited availability for false data. Another reason that this argument is sound is because of its large sample size, it is not very common to have studies with over 500 individuals. When you have an extensive amount of data, it is easier to spot outliers and there is a better chance you can generalize this data to the public. This data contained a diverse group of participants including, LGBTQ participants, different cultures, ethnicities and ages. This data not only represents the world population of pornography consumers but implies that the effects of pornography and its view of woman are not exclusive to heterosexual men.

Some believe that pornography increases the confidence of the consumers because of the sexual freedom it produces, but studies show the opposite to be true. The social script of pornography is that men are dominate, they are forceful, and this increases their status as men. In

order to study how the script of pornography affects men's view of themselves, and their view of other masculine social norms, researchers recruited over 500 men ranging ages from 18-80. Each participant was given 4 different forms (a demographic form, a pornography usage questionnaire, conformity to masculine norms inventory, and a self-liking scale). Once all the data was collected, the researchers analyzed the correlations between the data and found that different levels of self-esteem affected pornography use. Specific aspects of the masculine social norms, such as dominance over woman, and emotional control significantly affected pornography consumption, more particularly in men with lower self-esteem. The researchers are arguing two main points: adherence to the masculine norms such as power over woman, playboy, violence and emotional control are predictive of problematic porn usage. The researchers are also arguing that self-esteem is a moderator for problematic porn usage. In other words, people with high self-esteem can consume porn but not have the same devastating problematic effects that men with low self-esteem have. (Borgogna, McDermott, Berry & Browning, 2019).

If self-esteem is moderating pornography usage, this puts the younger generation at a higher risk. Low self-esteem is often linked with mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, and suicide rates, which in recent years have risen exponentially. Adolescence is already a sensitive time period in development, often many young children experience feelings of self-doubt because of it. With the rise of social media, and its 24/7 opportunity for social comparison, self-esteem is worsening. If pornography is exposed to a generation that is already struggling with self-esteem, this further exploits their sensitivity and as this study shows, leads to porn addiction. This is yet another reason why pornography can become detrimentally problematic for teenagers, and it one more reason for regulation.

The most popular argument against porn consumption is the overwhelmingly negative and sexual view of woman. But porn is more than just discriminatory towards woman, pornography supports abusive treatment of individuals, it encourages racist stereotypes, and supports sex with minors. Words such as “teen” , “mom”, “gangbang” “bondage ” “public ” all came out as top searched terms of 2018 (PornHub Insights, 2018). In America having sexual relations with a family member is illegal, but as we can see from search terms on this sex site, we can see that people were eager to pursue these fantasies in the virtual world. Videos such as “2 Black Men Dominate Sexy White Girl” send signals of violence, racism and illegal sex practices- at the same time America is trying to move forward from shameful years of slavery of the African American community. Coming from a country where black men were often accused of raping white woman, and put to death, video titles such as these only push to further encourage this stereotype. Topics such as “abuse” “crying” and “bondage” have increased in popularity, showing the increase in more graphic material to achieve the same level of sexual arousal. Pornography is a threat to the social health of society in its promotion of violent and illegal sexual practices, the lack of regulation will only increase the severity of these video productions.

Studies are showing that the increase of this kind of pornographic material is causing severe problems in the way we socialize. Exposure to internet pornography at young ages has shown to be detrimental in many aspects. The main aspects that internet pornography effects are, sexual aggression, social development, neurological development, and self-concept/body image. Research shows that children exposed to this “abuse” and “bondage” videos, develop “cognitive dissonance” or “conflicting sexual beliefs attributed to increased sexual uncertainty” (Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012) . The younger children are exposed, the more likely they are to

become entrenched in discriminatory gender roles and are more likely to have sex at younger ages. Researchers also found that this kind of abusive porn videos was correlated with violent sexual behaviors such as rape, and harassment. Adolescents “who are intentionally exposed to violent sexually explicit material were six times more likely to be sexually aggressive than those who were not exposed”(Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012).

With current media attention on the dilemma of rape and sexual violence towards men and woman, porn only helps to aid rape culture. We are humans that learn by example, if pornographic videos show woman refusing sex, but men choosing to dominate them anyway, this sends a message to the viewers that this behavior is acceptable. Studies have also found pornography links to other crimes, such as “theft, truancy, manipulating others, arsons and forced sexual intercourse” (Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012). By default, this glorification of promiscuity has resulted in lower levels of bonding with their caregivers and higher levels of clinical psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety. The videos that pornography produces are indirectly perpetuating false standards of sex, that promote harm to the consumers in more ways than one.

America started off as a country that viewed African Americans as slaves and woman as property, but it is slowly progressing to leave these discriminatory practices. Our beliefs of others change the way we interact and the way we see ourselves. The continued belief that woman are sexual objects, or that black men are sexual predators are examples of the damage that porn is doing the social health of our society. The United States of America is currently experiencing a mental health epidemic, were suicidal rates are at an all-time high, rates of depression and anxiety are rising especially in the younger generations. Part of this may be due

to the underlying beliefs that pornography continues to produce. The moment that we strip intimacy away from sexuality, which is what the pornography business is doing, we view humans as sexual objects for our sexual pleasure. It is no wonder why many individuals across America are experiencing depressive and anxious symptoms, when we are being inundated with pornography and it is risking our social and mental health.

Effects of Porn for Underage Children

Pornography is highly addictive, especially among young adolescents and children because of their highly sensitive reward system, and underdeveloped brain. Within different branches of psychology, adolescent psychology has gained popularity and with it, a growing interest on impulse control studies. Social media, movies and tv shows depict adolescents as unable to control impulses for dangerous activities, they are viewed as reckless in their driving, drinking and sexual behaviors. Researchers from around the world have begun investigating whether this behavior is due to societal factors, or are teenagers biologically programmed this way?

A collection of data of adolescents show that during teenage years, the “amygdala” the center of emotions such as fear and anger, are extremely sensitive (Brown, & Wisco, 2019). Researchers have also found that the brain of teenagers is undeveloped in the frontal cortex. This is important to understand because the frontal cortex is responsible for decision making and planning behaviors. Which explains inability to understand the consequences of promiscuous sexual behavior that stem from pornography consumption (Bryant, 2010). Pornography at early ages was found to be correlated with pronounced and hindered underdeveloped pre-frontal cortex’s as well as enhanced activation of the reward circuit. Researchers also found that

frequent and infrequent exposure to pornography was associated with mal-adjustment to brain development (Mead, 2016). In addition to the neurological changes, it is during this time that the body is undergoing many physiological changes in the form of increased hormones. It is through researches such as these, that we begin to understand why teenagers are more prone to think about sex and have a stronger desire for sex.

Popular and stereotypical scripts surrounding pornography consumption, say that pornography is strictly a male problem, but statistics show that this upcoming generation does not follow this pattern. In the last 5 years the pornography business experienced a rapid increase of female consumers, currently, 30% of consumers are females (PornHub Insights, 2018). A major reason for this trend is due to the widespread acceptance of sexual “freedom”, which causes curiosity in many young adolescents and children to pursue sexual pleasure (Bryant, 2010). Girls and boys equally report feelings of anxiety and feeling underqualified for real sexual intercourse. Boys report feelings that they are unable to perform as well as porn stars, or last the same amount of time, while girls report feeling low levels of self-esteem because their bodies are “less than” those of porn stars (Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012). Pornography can no longer be seen as a masculine issue, or an adult problem, unfortunately this problem is spreading across genders and across generations. Pornography poses a direct threat to the health of its consumers but specifically to underage children due to the sensitivity of the brain, therefore more research is needed to explore these effects.

Experiments on the consumption of sexually explicit material for children and adolescents under the age of 18 pose an ethical obstacle for data collection. However, gaps in statistics released from popular pornographic websites contain information gaps that correlate with underage consumption patterns, creating an opportunity to research porn trends within our

youth. Every year for the past 5 years PornHub releases statistics of pornography consumption, ranging from “most popular term used”, “to the age of the visitors”. In 2018 PornHub reported that the average age of their consumer was 35.5 years old, and the majority of their consumers were reported to be between the ages of 18-24, but they failed to report the underage consumers due to legal issues (PornHub Insights, 2018). PornHub also reported the popular hours that porn is consumed per day; they reported an unusual “above average peak” between 3pm- 5pm (PornHub Insights, 2018). This 3-5pm spike led me to focus on my own research on underage consumption.

In my experiment, I decided to conduct a correlational designed research project. For my research I began with constructing my own questionnaires, one with basic demographic information, and another for porn consumption history/habits. The demographic questionnaire consisted of questions regarding (schooling, age, gender, sexuality etc.) The other form collected data regarding pornography consumption habits such as ex. “at what age where you first exposed to pornography” “How often do you watch Pornography?” etc. After receiving consent from all 52 of the participants, they each filled the questionnaires. 70.2% of the participants were female, 29.8% were male participants, ranging from ages 18-65. The diverse group of participants reported data that showed that 53.2% of the participants claimed to have witnessed pornography by the age of 18. 42.6% reported viewing pornography through internet searches, 31.9% reported viewing pornography through social media, and only 2.1% reported viewing pornography through photographs in magazines. Because of this raw data, I was interested in finding correlations with the statistics of the world biggest pornography site, PornHub.

A question posed in my porn consumption questionnaire, seemed to correlate with PornHub “unusual 3-5pm spike”. In my data collection, participants reported that the first time

they watched pornography were at times when the parents we're not home. When you consider that the average work day in America is from the 9 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon, but the average school day is between 8 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon, that means from hours 3-5pm children are unattended. I suspect that the unaccounted age gap in PornHub statistics along with the peak viewing hours, correlates with my data collection. During the hours 3-5 in the afternoon, the sudden peak of pornography usage, may be due to the increased unregulated access children have to the internet at this time.

Analysis of underage pornography consumption in after school hours, led me to investigate popular mediums used by children and adolescents, such as gaming consoles and social media. According to PlayStation, the world's most widely used gaming console, the average age of its consumers/players is 35.5 years old. What is puzzling from this statistic, is that the stereotypical age of PlayStation users are boys and young men ages 8-18. It didn't seem correct for the average age of a user to be 35, upon further research I found another gap in the trends. The rules and regulations of PS4 state that in order to make an account the user must be 18 years of age or older, so if a 12-year-old makes an account they must lie about their age. The reason I researched this topic is because according to PornHub's statistics on the release of viewers through gaming consoles, 54.4% of gaming console consumers, consumer pornography through the PS4.

A few years ago in 2017, the now world famous "Fortnite" was released. The game quickly gained popularity among many young children due to the infamous celebration dances after a team win. In July of 2019, Kyle Giersdori, a 16-year-old won 3 million dollars in the Fortnite world championship, among him were other teenagers the youngest being 13 years old. Understanding the average age of Fortnite players is necessary to analyze the data from

PornHub's statistics of the crash of Fortnite July 12, 2018. At 9pm when the game crashed, and Fortnite was not available, so Fortnite searches on the PornHub website exponentially increased 116% (PornHub Insights, 2018). A similar trend was found when YouTube crashed October 16, 2018 traffic for YouTube searches arose 21% (PornHub Insights, 2018). The pattern is consistent when other popular social media platforms crash, there is a rise in PornHub consumers. Even though the statistics report that consumers for products must be 18 years or older, they fail to report the real statistics because of the legal issues it will cause. PornHub, may not be releasing the complete set of data, but when you read within the gaps you can understand that underage children are being subject to this material. Understanding the danger that pornography poses to the health and well-being of the youth in our society, as well as understanding popular media trends is essential to understanding the magnitude of the pornography problem.

Because the brain of an adolescent is specifically sensitive to sexual experiences, exposure during these times can lead to severe porn addiction. "As pornography is fantasy-based it provides little information that is constructive, and possibly even some that is detrimental, about sexual rights and responsibilities" (Bryant, 2010). It is undoubted, that the majority of the upcoming generations spend large amounts of time in front of screens, whether it be laptops, phones, televisions, even in school environments. Being in constant exposure of pornographic material through electronics, is only adding to the temptation posed by the sexual development they are undergoing. With underdeveloped brains, with over enhanced emotions but undeveloped decision-making capabilities, it is only a matter of time the curiosity of sex will lead them into the world of pornography. Porn addiction has been proven to be evident among adult males, but trends from the younger generations prove pornography to be even more addicting across cultures, genders and generations.

Future Regulation Strategies

By studying the successes and failures of regulating explicit material in companies and other countries, America can learn how to stop the rise in porn that is being exposed to the public. There is a large debate surrounding the regulation of porn. There are 2 major problems that surround its regulation, one is legislation currently does not have a definition for what constitutes as pornographic material. The second problem is an issue of “Freedom of Speech”, the producers of pornography claim porn to be an art form, with real actors and performers, they argue that limiting their production is limiting their free speech. Because of this, the line is blurred between what is real and what is acting. Some believe that by eliminating pornography completely from the internet, it will produce more extreme porn in the dark web, and it will promote illegal activity. Even though American laws restrict porn containing child or animal abuse, these videos along with other XXX material are available on a variety of pornography sites.

Recently, Instagram blocked all explicit or graphic material in their network, there is no longer availability to witness pornographic images, and individuals have the opportunity to report images and videos for violating guidelines. YouTube has similar guidelines that removes explicit material, if this guideline is violated, the account will be removed along with the material. In the same way video game consoles should be obligated to block access to pornographic websites from their gaming consoles, pop up ads, and searches for pornographic material should be restricted. Companies such as PornHub, should require accounts to access material, in which only 18+ individuals can access, this can be verified with credit card information. The government needs to enforce strict punishment to owners of websites

containing child pornography, revenge porn, abuse, or animal containing porn. The pornography business receives billions every year for the production of sexually explicit material, the industry is a monopoly that unfortunately will not be able to be completely regulated, due to the connection to global sex trafficking. But small steps such as setting strict guidelines from social media services, and criminalizing offenders is essential to keeping a safer internet space.

In the UK there was a widespread availability of porn material. Parliament set a committee to investigate the matter, and they decided to change current legislative laws to criminalize the possession of child pornography. A mixture of legislation and self-regulation was necessary to reduce this explicit content from the internet. The Internet Watch foundation (IWF) was key in decreasing the content; the IWF was a UK hotline that was used to report the illegal content, and this group assessed the adult content, sent notice to the provider and was obligated to remove from the internet. The mixture of both the legislation and the IWF showed a reduction from 18% to less than 1% of child pornography on the internet (Nair, 2010). The form of regulation seemed to be fruitful only when combined with the public help. I believe that in order for this to happen in America, awareness of the harm of pornography is necessary to create a need for the country to help participate in the end of internet pornography. When we reach a time in a country where legislation can criminalize the production of pornography and public action is combined, we can reduce the harmful effects of pornography on our society.

It has become apparent that pornography has many blurred lines that have caused problems in developing legislation around pornography consumption and pornography production. With the development of the internet and technology there has been the creation of a pseudo porn. Pseudo porn is described as porn that may contain real individuals but is digitally altered. This can be a woman with the face of child, a combination of multiple woman, or even

life like cartoons (Nair, 2010). If a child is involved should this be considered child pornography? If so, who is held accountable, the people producing and even the people consuming it? The criminalization of child pornography in England, came with severe push back, protestors argued that the pseudo porn created was considered art. The main argument was that, no person was directly harmed in the making of pseudo films, because of the distorted images, so why is it considered illegal? The same argument was used when legislation was trying to ban extreme pornography; if two of the adults were consenting then why should it be illegal? The problem the courts have encountered is that until there is enough evidence that pornography causes direct or indirect harm, pornography will not be banned.

Legislation seems to argue that because there is no evidence that pornography is directly or indirectly harmful then there is no reason to interfere. But if it is proven that it harms the consumer and producers of pornography, then there will be strict guidelines and punishments. Over the past decade pornography has proven to be harmful and it violates the fundamental human rights that protect the public health of society. Because of problems such as these, the next step that is necessary for regulation, is to firmly define the line of pornography and what is directly and indirectly harmful.

Future Next Steps

Research must continue to find the longitudinal effects of pornography consumption. In order for these experiments to take place, researchers must first get permission to track individuals over the course of their lifetime and see how pornography has changed their brains and their behaviors. Only through longitudinal experiments, we will begin to see patterns in society regarding self-image, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships and its connection to

pornography consumption. It necessary for these experiments to be inclusive in its collection of participants, because we have already noticed that pornography is not exclusive to only men.

Future research should also begin to investigate the direct harms of pornography. We should begin to investigate the psychological and physiological effects the pornography business has on the individuals inside of it. Researchers should conduct studies, on the prostitutes, pimps and film makers within the pornography business. Once we can begin to find evidence of psychological and physiological damages we can begin to build a case for legislation to see the direct harm pornography is doing for the public health.

Steps that should and can happen soon, may include inventory questionnaires at a doctor's offices. Doctors should ask questions about sexual dysfunction, and masturbation/pornography consumption to better diagnose and treat patients. We should also implement a pornography consumption portion in sex health classes as early as middle school. This will be beneficial to teach children at young ages the importance the brain plays in our decisions and behaviors. This portion of the class can be easily connected to other lectures of drug use or safety sex practices because of its similar effects. It is important to stress that pornography is a universal problem among all sexualities, all cultures and across genders. If the government continues to refuse to regulate the public porn problem, it becomes the societies job to create awareness and teach the youth of our society, who happen to be most at risk. The rapid increase of pornographic content on the internet needs to be paralleled with regulation.

Conclusion

Public health is arguably to most important aspect of a properly functioning society. Without healthy individuals, businesses would close, death and crime would arise, society would

deteriorate, which would cause the destruction of the world as we know it. Health has often been limited to simply the physical well-being of individuals, but health encompasses more than just biology. Because the public health is of utmost importance, it should be heavily protected from anything attempting to destroy it. The rise of the internet has simultaneously allowed for pornography to be more easily accessible for the public, it has directly affected the public health in a negative way.

Inattention to the problem of pornography consumption, will continue to affect the public health and the way we interact with one another. I will continue to stress its importance to create a safer space for children in the following generation. It is impossible to grow as a healthy mature individual when you are being plagued with the social comparison and social scripts of pornographic material. It has become undeniable, that pornography companies are not concerned for the wellbeing of those within the business nor its consumers, but it is our job as the public, to proactively fight this crisis. The closer we get to strictly regulating this issue, we will have a society where girls and boys are safe to dream in a way that promotes equality and value within each other as human beings. It is furthermore the responsibility of the public to actively teach others, specifically the younger generations, to the dangers that pornography poses to the brain, mind, body and behavior.

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