Frequent use of pornography, sexual experiences, health and lifestyles among male adolescents in Sweden

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Swedish adolescents and the Internet

• Almost all adolescents have access to the Internet
• 2/3 have a computer, 96% have a cell phone
• Enables access to pornography

Pornography

• "Sexually explicit material"
• Material – in text, pictures or audiovisually –
• Depicting sexual practices or behaviours, or exposure of genitals. Intention to create sexual arousal or lust
  "Youth, pornography, and the Internet" Thornburgh & Lin (red), 2002

Aim

• Describe patterns of pornography use among boys, and to investigate the differences between frequent, average and non-frequent users of pornography with respect to: sexual experiences, self-rated health and lifestyles

Hyptohesis

• Boys, categorised as non-frequent users and average users of pornography, reported less sexual experiences, a better self-rated health and a healthier lifestyle compared to frequent users of pornography

Methods

• Cross sectional design
• Classroom survey
• 13 senior high schools, 53 classes
• Randomly selected schools
• 877 participants (477 boys and 400 girls)
**Instrument**

- 64 multiple choice questions
- Pornography (Häggström-Nordin et al 2005)
- Sexual experiences (Häggström-Nordin et al 2005)
- Health (HBSC, ASRS, DSRS, SDQ)
- Lifestyles (SALVe)
- Gender equality (Study specific questions)

**Results**

- Average age 16 years
- 96% consumed pornography
- 10% frequent users (at least once a day)
- 63% average users (every week or few times a month)
- 27% non-frequent users (few times a year, more seldom or never)

**Pornography consumption patterns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequent users (%)</th>
<th>Average users (%)</th>
<th>Non frequent users (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More interested in pornography compared to peers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasies several times every week</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried sexual acts inspired by pornography</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sexual experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequent users (%)</th>
<th>Average users (%)</th>
<th>Non frequent users (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about sex all the time</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More interested in sex compared to peers</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex with friend more than 10 times</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Physical health and lifestyles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequent users (%)</th>
<th>Average users (%)</th>
<th>Non frequent users (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 hours at the computer several times a week</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use last 12 months</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Frequent users of pornography:
- More often tried sexual acts inspired by pornography
- Were more sexually experienced
- Spent more time at the computer
- Reported an unhealthier lifestyle
- No differences regarding health though obesity was twice as common
Implications

- Pay attention to associations between pornography consumption and health/lifestyles
- Communicate with adolescents
- Involve parents
- Maintain a constant discussion regarding pornographic exposure

......are suggestions for a preventive strategy