

Pornography – The Facts

Scale

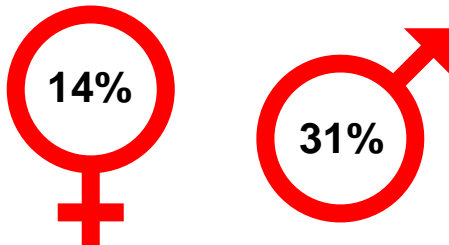
The pornography industry is booming. According to PornHub, the world's largest provider of free online pornography, there were **33.5 billion** visits to their sites in 2018, up **17.54%** from the previous yearⁱ.

This equates to **962** searches per second. And there is a lot to consume, with **4.79 million** new videos and over **1 million hours** of pornographic content uploaded last year.

But is the increasing use of pornography a private matter or a public concern?

Addiction

Accessibility, affordability and anonymity have led to more people viewing pornography than at any time in history.



This has driven a huge rise in pornography addiction; Some **31% of men and 14% of women** who consume pornography admit to struggling with addictionⁱⁱ. This is unprecedented and rising.

The latest neuroscientific researchⁱⁱⁱ supports the assumption that the “underlying neural processes involved in [pornography] addiction are similar to substance addiction”. This is because “behaviours, which are repeatedly reinforcing the reward, motivation and memory circuitry, are all part of the disease of addiction”.

Unlike with addictive substances, people have no idea that pornography can be addictive until they are forced to seek help.

Consequences of Addiction

Typically, those suffering with addiction withdraw from partnered sex as they become more and more dependent on pornography.

Impotence

Pornography induced erectile dysfunction (PIED) is a relatively new phenomenon.

- ✗ Around **one third of men** aged 18-40 who seek help from their GP about impotence have PIED^{iv}.
- ✗ Figures from the early 2000s, before high-speed streaming, show only between **2-5 per cent** of this age group suffered from PIED^v.

Relationship Breakdown

- ✗ A large-scale American study of relationship breakdown found that **56%** of divorces had one partner with an obsessive interest in porn^{vi}.

Paula Hall, Accredited Sexual and Relationship Psychotherapist and founder of the Laurel Centre^{vii}, says of pornography addiction:

“I’ve worked with students who have flunked their degree because of it. Business people who have been sacked from work because they’ve been using the office computer, or just not doing their job... Almost half of porn addicts lose their jobs as a result of choosing to view pornography in the workplace”.

Industry View

As LA-based porn actor Anthony Hardwood notes^{viii}:

“You know when I started it was like very lovey dovey sex, not tough like Gonzo... After three years they wanted to get more energy, more rough, they do like one girl with you know like four guys and they just take over and destroy her.”

Algorithms Drive Desire

Pornographers have a vested interest in getting people hooked. Complex advertising algorithms lure users into viewing more extreme content^x. This targeted marketing both shapes and tracks the interests and behaviours of pornography users. Over time users become desensitised, and so turn to more extreme content.

Impact on Children & Adolescence

Over **4 in 10** UK girls (age 13-17) say they have been coerced into sex acts^x.



✗ 10 per cent of 12 to 13-year-olds fear they are addicted to porn^{xi}

✗ 1/3 of sexual assaults against children is committed by their peers^{xii}

Recent research by the Universities of Bristol and Central Lancashire^{xiii} found that **a fifth of girls** had suffered violence or intimidation from their teenage boyfriends, a **high proportion** of whom regularly viewed pornography, with **one in five boys** harbouring “extremely negative attitudes towards women.”



20% of girls report violence or intimidation

Violence on Screen & Off

✗ **88 per cent**^{xiv} of scenes included physical aggression such as gagging, choking and slapping.

✗ **94 per cent**^{xv} of those scenes the aggression was directed towards women.

The compulsive viewing of assault has had an indisputable effect; extreme acts are seeping into the bedroom.

Doctors report an increase in anal injuries, with a growing number of teenage girls treated for internal injuries caused by frequent anal sex^{xvi}. Research suggest this is because anal sex^{xvii} has been so normalised by pornography boys expect it and girls feel pressured despite feeling pain and humiliation.

Strangulation and ‘Sex Gone Wrong’

‘Breath Play’ is strangulation. This once niche, dangerous practice has been normalised by pornography, with websites and publications like Teen Vogue offering ‘breath play’ tips.

Dr Catherine White, Director of St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre, explained that one in five sexual assault victims is strangled by their partner^{xviii}.

Studies have shown that if a victim is strangled by a partner, then they are seven times more likely to be murdered later by that same partner.

This use of “rough sex” defences in court has become so common a website, <https://wecantconsenttothis.uk/> has been set-up to document these deaths. The site contains the names of 58 UK women killed in this way.

This issue has become so prevalent during the second reading of the Domestic Abuse Harriet Harman MP explained^{xix}:

“Men are now, literally, getting away with murder by using the “rough sex” defence.”

For more information visit www.clickoff.org

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