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Pornography: America’s Digital Drug

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Abstract

The sexual revolution in the 50’s through the 70’s exposed America’s forbidden conversation on sexual exploration and brought it to the mainstage. Though erotica, images and writings of sexual nature, have been around for ages, with the digital age pornography moved from underneath mattresses and nightstands to the front pockets of individuals of all ages and genders.

There are some that would like one to believe that porn is simply a rite of passage for young boys and girls coming into adulthood. They present their case as there is no harm in viewing pornography, however research shows that viewing porn rewrites the brain and subjects the individual to unnecessary lifestyles later in life.

The porn industry is undergoing another transformation as it is met with new laws and opposition to its work and production within the states. The impact of pornography on society have far and wide ranging effects. The greatest impact is that on the individual who finds themselves addicted to the continual usage of sexual explicit images. The individual who consumes pornography on a regular basis is more likely to be a perpetrator or victim of sexual assault.

Introduction

Webster’s dictionary defines pornography as, “the depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement” (Webster). In American society the definition of what is or is not erotic has been incredibly skewed. Early television shows, the
only source of digital entertainment, would almost always present men clean cut, women conservatively dressed, and young children and teenagers portrayed as innocent and harmless. Times have changed though, culture has shifted, and the technology made available to us has moved from six feet in front of us on a thirteen-inch black and white screen to one foot in front of us on screens now capable of 4K resolution. Today, not only has digital entertainment been transformed so has pornography and what is considered erotic.

**Porn’s American History**

Magazines and booklets, often times in cartoon nature, featuring nude women and depicting sexual acts had been accessible in America during the late 1800’s. The French were producing these items and were being imported through the shipyards of America (Time 2008). However, it was in December of 1953 that magazine stands of America were introduced to the first publication of *Playboy* magazine, Hugh Hefner’s pornographic brainchild featuring Marylyn Monroe. It was this publication that many attribute the introduction of pornography into American society.

Even still, pornography had not entered center stage of American society. Pamela Paul, author of *Pornified: How Pornography is transforming our lives, our relationships, and our families states*, “[s]croll back to the fifties, when pornography was relegated to dusty newsstand corners or to run-down adult theaters on the wrong side of town. Or even to the eighties, when pornography was surreptitiously obtained on videocassettes via mail-order catalogs or watched in the backrooms of video stores” (Paul 2005). Hugh Hefner’s *Playboy*’s first publication sold over 50,000 copies. As America entered into the next two decades
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pornographic magazine publishers increased, by the end of the 1970’s over seven million magazines had been purchased (Time 2008). Porn had not just been introduced into society, it had found its rightful place in the American home.

America has undergone many changes throughout its brief 200+ year history. Changes in transportation, education, social classes, and technology. Few would argue against, as a whole, these changes have had an positive impact in the advancement of our society. Most would say that it through these changes that America has risen to the top of all societal and cultural accomplishments. Though these changes have advanced American society in many ways, the technological advancements have also transformed the pornography industry.

The creation of the television, computer, and mobile device brought pornography alive and active in the daily consumption of life. America can now be described as pornified. The ubiquity of pornography “has made our culture pornified, meaning that aspects of and values within pornography have seeped into popular culture. (Paula 2005). Craig Gross, in his book The Dirty Little Secret, states that today “pornography has become a staple of our culture...no longer is smut the domain of adult bookstores and private theaters. Porn is in your home at the click of a button” (Gross, 2006).

A Right of Passage

Every boy is destined to become a man and every girl is destined to become a woman. That is the social norm of society. No boy remains a young boy and no girl remains a young girl. Though there is no set time, date, or age at which a boy becomes a man, or a girl becomes a woman, there typically is a physical and cultural change that takes place.
The physical change is known as puberty. The cultural change is often recognized as a rite of passage. In most minds a rite of passage comes when a young boy shoots and tags his first deer, or when his football team wins a championship game, or even when he passes his driver’s education test obtaining his legal rights to the road. For a young lady it may be at the onset of her first dance, or when she receives her first request for a date, or even the purchase of her first bra.

Alarmingly, a growing rite of passage for males is their introduction to pornography. “For boys on the cusp of puberty, porn is a rite of passage, an entrée into adulthood, and a peep into the world of women” (Paula 2005). Because American society has been *pornified* it is not surprising that children are introduced at ages far below the legal age for viewing. John D. Foubert, Ph.D notes in his book *How Pornography Harms* that “…today’s generation of young people have more access to pornography than any generation before them… the average age a boy saw [pornography] in the 1980’s was 11...Scholars interviewed for this book suggest if a study was done today on the age boys first see porn, it would be under 10 years old” (Foubert 2017). However not everyone agrees with the age of 11. Though their number is no more satisfying. Shira Tarrant, in *The Porn Industry*, gives a figure of 14.3 for boys. The findings for the age of introduction for young girls are around the age of 13-14 (Tarrant 2016).

It is important to note the age at which pornography is introduced to young children. It is extremely alarming that young children are exposed to writings, images, and videos depicting sexual acts that their young bodies are not ready for. Unfortunately, in today’s technological advanced and perverse culture it is not simply writings, images, and vides children are being exposed to. In an age where virtual reality and chatrooms are the norm children are being not
only being exposed to pornography but are also becoming targets of sexual predators. The topic of sexual crimes will be addressed further along in this paper.

**Future of Pornography**

It has been sixty-five years since Hugh Hefner released his first issue of *Playboy* magazine. Times and technology have changed drastically over those years. The digital age has just about made print material obsolete and the mobile device has replaced the in home desktop computer. As tech companies such as Apple, Microsoft, and Google continue to make advancements into what Americans are using to receive and send information, the porn industry is also exploring the most effective way to get the next wave of porn genres into the hands of individuals around the globe.

To know the future, one must understand a piece of the past. Hollywood has been home to American porn industry for year. In fact, “since the 1970s, the hills of Hollywood have played host to a booming pornography industry. A majority of American sex films are shot there in warehouses and private homes — helping the San Fernando Valley rake in $4 billion in annual sales in its ‘90s heyday” (Robinson 2013). However around 2013 a law was passed in LA County requiring the use of condoms in all porn production and filming. This law caused production of pornography in LA County to decrease by 95% in one year (Foubert 2017).

In his book, *How Pornography Harms*, Foubert interviews Dr. Gail Dines, leader of a secular anti-porn movement. Dr. Dines attributes the laws being passed to the AIDS healthcare foundation. Dr. Dines notes:
The AIDS healthcare foundation put the major nail in the coffin of the porn industry in the United States, and vowed to follow the porn industry all over the U.S. [to advocate for condom laws] if necessary...So what happened is now the industry has a diffuse production end...production is still concentrated in LA, but is probably going to move. It is moving to Eastern Europe, because you have an unending supply of poor women and children and you don’t have any health laws... (Foubert 2017).

The porn industry moving to Europe is alarming, but not as alarming as the new technology in which it is utilizing to distribute porn to users. Porn started on paper, made its way onto video tapes, and found it’s sweet spot on the web. The internet transformed the porn industry. It allowed universal access to any genre of pornography imaginable. If a user had a device that could access the internet they could have unlimited supply of pornography. Today, smart phones surpass any other device for accessing pornography (Foubert 2017).

If easier access to porn and fewer laws regulating the porn industry wasn’t scary enough, technology has now allowed for a new experiences, virtual reality and live interaction. Virtual reality and live streaming pornography allows the consumer to engage with an individual in ways magazines and videos never did. A user can type in a domain in their web browser, find a virtual reality website for porn, select their idea individual and engage in real time fantasies played out. These experiences allow for the porn star to become real and alive, not simply fictional characters being watched (Snow 2016). The danger within the future of pornography is that users are having their sexual fantasies met by unregulated, instantaneous, and unhindered access.
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**Porn Rewires the Brain**

There is no doubt that the brain is a powerful organ in the human body. It drives almost every function of our bodies. Damage to the brain is life-threatening and nothing to be taken lightly. Our brains are made up of connections. These connections are called neural pathways. These pathways build networks of information, these networks tell our brain and body how to function. As an individual develops these networks – the way our body responds to these network – become the norms of our life and function.

In his book *Your Brain on Porn*, William M. Struthers explains that the viewing and continual use of pornography has the ability to create a connection in the brain. Struthers states, “[t]he visual scanning of the naked image has a power to it that forces itself onto the…brain.” He goes on to explain that “fixating” and “repeated exposure to pornography” creates “paths” and “neurological superhighways” where the brain can become “over-sexualized and narrowed” (Struthers 2009).

To put it simple, the brain comes with what is considered normal neurological pathways. Society, family, cultural, and self-exploration help instill, deepen, challenge, and even reroute these pathways. An individual’s brain has normal pathways regarding sexuality and all that is relation to sex. Why is this cause for concern? The viewing and use of pornography – material with the intention of arousal – has potential to rewire the brains normal sexual function. “Sexual images are inherently powerful and have emotional content. As such, pornography forces itself on the brain” (Struthers 2009).

John Foubert, Ph.D reports that “several studies examining brain scans of pornography users (not addicts, but users) found that with increasing porn use comes a weaker brain,
reduced sense of reward from everyday activities, and weaker willpower. Therein lies one of the insidious elements of porn, it hooks a [person] and with more use, weakens [their] ability to leave it behind” (Rouberts 2017). Dr. Donald Hilton in his book *He Restoreth My Soul*, reveals research that “the more people watch pornography each week, the more their brains shrink (Hilton 2012).

**Repulsed to Desensitization**

Very few, if any wake up and desire to become addicted to hardcore pornography. However study after study is showing that the continual viewership of pornography leads one to becoming addicted to extreme genres of porn. In his research book *Pornography's Effects on Adults and Children*, psychologist Victor Cline states that desensitization occurs when “pornography which was originally perceived as shocking, taboo-breaking, illegal, repulsive, or immoral, though still sexually arousing, in time came to be seen as acceptable and commonplace...even though the [pornography] was possibly illegal and contrary to their previous moral belief and personal standards” (Cline 2001).

The move from being repulsed by the actions of others looking at pornography to an individual’s eventual consumption and addiction to it is related back to the rewiring of their brain. Pornography becomes a stimulus to the brain via the release of hormones. Those hormones produce sensations, which produce desire, and the cycle starts over.

In 2012, a study was done among young men who struggled with pornography. Out of 1500 young men, 56% stated that as they continued to view pornography their taste had
changed. These changes in taste of porn resulted in pornography usage that was described as “increasingly extreme or deviant” (Deem, 2017).

**Erectile Dysfunction**

The frequent usage of pornography is often attributed to men, and research proves that to be the case. Rouberts found “among all ages of adults in the United States, 64% of men...view pornography at least monthly...among men 18-30 year old, 63% viewed pornography more than once per week, 79% viewed pornography at least monthly” (Rouberts 2017).

When one understands the significant damage that viewing pornography does on the brain it should come as no surprise the effect it then has on the body. For males dealing with pornography addiction many “experience both erectile dysfunction and decreased attraction to live partners. In fact, over half of porn addicts have one or the other of these two experiences...if a man’s use of porn is compulsive, there is greater than 50% chance he will have difficulty achieving an erection with a real partner but will have no trouble having erections with porn” (Rouberts 2017). This information reinforces the fact that viewing pornography has the ability to rewire the brain and its function.

**The Addicted**

“Pornography addiction is being described in the US as ‘our newest and most challenging mental health problem’, but despite the numbers of people suffering serious consequences from habitual porn use, few therapists feel confident addressing their concerns”
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(Maltiz, 2009). Because of the release of hormones into the brain during viewing pornography it should come as no surprise that many men and women who view pornography become addicted to it. In Rouberts findings in porn usage “42% of women view pornography at least monthly...among 18-30 year old women, 19% viewed porn more than once a week, 34% viewed it at least monthly” (Rouberts 2017).

Pages upon pages could be written on the cause of porn addiction, many of which would deal with the brain’s rewiring. But one must also recognize the infiltration porn and it’s like have made into society. It has become culturally normal to see a sexualized body, no matter the gender. “In a pornified world, pornography has become seamlessly woven into the wake-up routine, the workday Internet break, and the bedtime ritual” (Paul 2017). In 2004 a survey was conducted by Cerberian, a web-filtering company. That study found 75% of people have visited a pornographic site at work, be it intentional or accidental, and 15% of those have done so more than 10 times (Paul 2017).

How much porn is too much porn? Rouberts research found that of those who stated they were addicted to pornography viewed over 40 hours of internet porn weekly (Rouberts 2017). That is an additional full-time job for most individuals. When one understands the addictive nature of pornography and the effect it has on the brain, any pornographic usage and viewing is too much porn.

When Viewing Is Not Enough

Pornography has had major impacts on American society, too numerous and too widespread to fully address in a singular writing. One area in-particular to warn the reader of is
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that of what happens when to an individual, who is addicted to the sexual stimulation achieved through viewing pornography, is no longer satisfied with images and video across a screen.

“The growing prevalence of sexual images, innuendo and objectification is a constant threat” to our daily lives (Leahy & James, 2008).

Rouberts writes that over 100 studies have been conducted showing “pornography use is both correlated with and is the cause of a wide range of violent behaviors; 50 studies show a strong connection between pornography and sexual abuse...and pornography use increases the likelihood that a man will commit sexual violence against a woman” (Rouberts 2017).

As individuals see scenes played out across their devices, at a rate of whatever is pleasing to themselves, the brain begins to build a pathway that states “I can have what I want, when I want it, how I want it”. To an individual whose brain has been rewired to seek and achieve sexual satisfaction this can be a dangerous situation.

Another danger of the individual addicted to pornography is that they fail to see individuals as humans and begin seeing others as objects for their own sexual satisfaction. “For the addict, pornography becomes the means to ‘get’ someone, to ‘have’...and control. Sex is the means to an end, and the [person] is a tool who performs the transaction” (Paul 2017). It is through this thought process that sexual assaults are lived out, because the addicted needed to have a sexual release and the victim was viewed as an object, not a person.

Is there help?

If a brain can be rewired in a negative way, thus creating addiction and sexual problems, could it not be rewired back to its healthy state? Absolutely yes! Struthers states that society
should “use this knowledge about how we neurologically form emotional attachments as a necessary part of process of sanctification” concerning addiction to pornography (Struthers 2009).

Some call the process of rewiring of the brain back to its normal state as rebooting it. Gary Wilson, in his book *Your Brain On Porn*, states “the first step toward regaining control is to give your brain a rest from all artificial sexual stimulation for several months. Shift your attention to real life (Wilson 2014). It takes time. Most individuals fail to realize how deep, and long, the brain built connections around the sexual stimulation while viewing pornography.

Because of the dehumanizing of others, those addicted to pornography may struggle with overcoming their porn addiction when trying to satisfy their sexual desires with human interaction. This is because the brain has been trained to only find satisfaction from one kind of stimulation, one that is not from other humanly contact.

Wilson also maintains that it takes time to overcome addiction and to reboot the mind. Some of his suggested helps are: manage access to porn, change environmental settings, web-filtering, keeping track of porn free days, find a support group, keeping a journal, manage stress, self-care, get outside, socialize, meditate, hobbies, educate yourself, and find inspiration (Wilson 2009).

“Groups like NoFap and Fight the New Drug argue that Internet pornography is starting to overload our brains and that addiction is inevitable” (Wiesman, 2015). These groups exist to help end the influence of pornography on the lives of individuals young and old alike. Resources can be found and help is just a few clicks of a button away. However it is important to state that “internet pornography in particular is so new that more time will be required for a more in-
depth study of the phenomenon” to provide the best resources for help (Eberstadt & Layden, 2009).

**Conclusion**

There is still much to be researched, studied, and written on the topic of pornography and its stronghold in American society. The dangers of habitual usage go far beyond rewiring the brain and erectile dysfunction. One therapist who deals with sexual assault perpetrators and victims stated that out of everyone she’s ever worked with, everyone one of her cases has a link back to pornography usage. The dehumanization of others is at the top of the list for dangers. When one human being can look at another and not see humanity, but rather see an object for sexual gratification there is no telling as to what a sex-craved individual might do.

Pornography going digital exploded and exploited its impact on American society. The porn industry feeds the addicted. It is a machine made to make money, and in order to make money they must continue to push the envelope on what is being produced for the consumer. As new laws are passed that regulate porn production and organizations continue to push for safer sex initiatives the industry will continue to mutate. If moving across the ocean is the future of porn, then those fighting against it must find new and creative ways to block its powerful infiltration of American society.

As one pursues healing and recovery it must be understood that the brain has been rewired. One cannot simply go to the doctor to have a new brain put in, nor is there a way to physically shut off the brain and restart it. There is help though. Healing comes through daily decision to reject porn. It may require extreme measures, such as rearranging furniture or even
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moving to a new environment, but the benefits of overcoming pornography addiction far outweigh the dangers.
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Material: AlGaInP, InGaN, InGaN.

Chip, Emitted Color: Red, Green, Blue.

Lens Color: White diffused.

Electrical / Optical Characteristics at TA=25°C:

The literature research gap is the missing or incomplete piece of data in the literature, which has not been explored or ventured into so far. It can be anything from everything to everything from a population of sample-sizes, types, etc. It may arise due to not understanding the working of particular instruments, new technological advances or studying a new organism that has been recently discovered. Research Gaps can be located in the introduction section of research articles, discussions and future research sections in research papers or journals, which researchers have already published. Finding the Organization technologies, AMT and competent workers Exploring relationships with manufacturing performance. Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management, 20 (3), 298–313. Google Scholar. Mishra, R., Pundir, A.K. & Ganapathy, L. Manufacturing Flexibility Research: A Review of Literature and Agenda for Future Research. Glob J Flex Syst Manag 15, 101–112 (2014). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40171-013-0057-2. Download citation.