

## The Disturbing Link Between Porn Use and Sex Crimes

In writing this article, it is not our intention to prove scientifically, or otherwise, that behind every violent sex crime there is a pornography problem. Clearly, violent sexual crimes existed long before dirty magazines and porn sites came into the picture. The purpose of this article is to address the concerning misinformation that many pro-porn defenders promote by saying that pornography is harmless or by saying that we lack the necessary “conclusive scientific data” that pornography causes sex crimes. (We have heard countless people even argue that pornography is helpful because it allows people to view their deviant sexual fantasies, rather than practicing them on another person.) These pro-porn people contend that pornography actually decreases instances of rape because it is an acceptable sexual outlet. However, there is already enough evidence of a causal link between porn and sex crimes to make the claim that pornography is extremely harmful.

Everyone’s brain is wired to repeat what it sees and hears; it’s a major part of how we learn. And the more senses you get involved in the learning process, the more consistent the message, and the more often you see it, the more likely you are to be influenced by it (30). That’s just one more reason why viewing pornography is dangerous. It’s only a short jump from watching something in porn to actually imitating it in real life. And sometimes the things you see can really hurt yourself and other people.

Did you know that there’s been a correlation found between people who view pornography and people who commit sexual crimes? Now we’re not saying that watching porn will make you become a serial rapist, but the way pornography affects you, it can definitely influence your judgment, which is porn is connected with sexual violence. Proving this point is kind of tough, because an accurate study, as one researcher put it, “would require a sampling of much more than a thousand males, exposed to pornography through puberty and adolescence, while the other group is totally isolated from its influence in all its forms and varying degrees. Each group would then have to be monitored—through the commission of violent crimes or not” (1).

Obviously, a study that is invasive and complex would be next to impossible to set up. But that doesn’t mean the facts aren’t already there. “In spite of the lack of formal research, though, the FBI’s own statistics show that pornography is found at 80 percent of the scenes of violent sex crimes, or in the homes of the perpetrators” (1). Now we think that’s kind of tough to ignore. The people who promote pornography think that is actually easy to overlook. They say that porn is harmless, or that science doesn’t support the claims. Sounds about right coming from someone who stands to make a profit in the porn industry. The fact is that there is more than enough evidence, like findings from the FBI, that prove there is a link between pornography and sex crimes.

*In fact, here’s a bunch of evidence about that link:*

- The University of New Hampshire did a study that showed that the states with the highest readership of pornographic magazines like Playboy and Penthouse, also have the highest rape rates (2).
- The Michigan State Police Department found that pornography is used or imitated in 41 percent of the sex crimes they have investigated (3).

- Dr. Victor Cline did research that showed how men who become addicted to pornographic materials begin to want more explicit or deviant material and end up acting out what they have seen (5).
- Dr. James Dobson interviewed Ted Bundy, one of the nation's most notorious serial killers, on the day before his execution. Bundy said that the "most damaging kinds of pornography are those that involve sexual violence . . . The wedding of those two forces, as I know only too well, brings about behavior that is just, just too terrible to describe" (1).
- Two doctors noted in their research-based book, *Pornography and Sexual Aggression*, that "Certain [aggressive] forms of pornography can affect aggressive attitudes toward women and can desensitize an individual's perception of rape. These attitudes and perceptions are, furthermore, directly related to actual aggressive behavior against women." They also found that adult pornography was connected with each of the 1,400 child sexual molestation cases in Louisville, Kentucky, and child pornography was connected with the majority of them (21).
- Another review of controlled studies found that extensive viewing of the type of pornographic material commonly sold at adult bookstores was positively correlated with an increased self-reported willingness to commit rape or other forced sexual acts (28).
- The Kingston Sexual Offenders Clinic in Canada found "an unexpected finding" when they conducted a study of their patients over a period of six years. "One of the rapists reported that he used consenting sex depictions to incite rape images in the process of preparing himself to attack a woman. Subsequent questioning revealed a further five rapists who made similar claims, and 10 of the 10 rapists who currently used (pornography) for enjoyment (not necessarily preparatory to offending) also said they used it to incite rape fantasies (22).
- \*Dr. Dolf Zillman and Dr. Jennings Bryant showed that continued exposure to pornography had serious negative effects on beliefs about sexuality in general, and on attitudes toward women in particular. They also found that pornography desensitizes people to rape as a criminal offense, and that massive exposure to pornography encourages a desire for increasingly deviant materials that depict violence (such as sadomasochism and rape) (29).
- Individuals with a predisposition for aggression (i.e., men who are at relatively high risk for aggression) have shown to be particularly drawn to images of pornography and are more likely to expose themselves to such images in the future than lower-risk individuals. Moreover, a number of priming studies have shown that men with earlier risk characteristics may interpret sexually explicit material differently than lower-risk individuals, such that pornography activates and reinforces inappropriate cognitive representations (e.g., hostility toward women) and fosters the development of sexual preoccupation in these men (14).

The facts are clear: pornography is harmful and research is proving it. No matter what people say to try and make pornography seem normal or harmless, there's enough evidence out there that says it's not. With porn being so available, affordable, and accessible, you've got to know what you're up against. Learn the facts about the negative effects of porn—all of them, there's way more than just the link between porn and sexual crime—and you'll think twice before looking at it.

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