

Psychology 2800

Health & Medicine, Addiction



Psychology 2800 The Dangers of Pornography Last semester in Psychology 2250 our class had the opportunity of attending a seminar that informed us about the dangers of pornography and how we need to be cautious and alert. But what is pornography? According to the free dictionary, pornography is the depiction of sexual behavior that is meant to sexually excite its audience. If you think about it there is pornography in everything that you watch. Name one PG-13 movie that does not have a love making scene that is a little explicit. Whether it is meant to arouse the audience or not, it is pornographic. While this kind of stuff might be ' gateway pornography', the kind of porn I am talking about is the hard core stuff that is very explicit. Pornography is very addictive; when full blown, its addiction can be serious and needs to be treated effectively by a professional. Pornography distorts the female role in relationships, destroys relationships, and has serious effects on the brain that can lead to dangerous actions such as rape and or murder. In Doctor Patrick F. Fagan's, *The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family, and Community* it is said that in the beginning men view pornography as innocent fun that has no consequences , emotions or effects on their relationships. This is not true. Prolonged pornography viewing leads to giving sexual activity a more important role in relationships and leads to greater promiscuity. It can be an addiction as real as a narcotic addiction. Prolonged use leads to a distortion of what is natural and leads people to more perverse behaviors. It rectifies in the minds of pornography viewers that sexual relationships are recreational and without consequence and gives them the distorted view that women are just sex objects. Pornographic habits leads to an individual having dangerous

distortions of what a relationship is supposed to be and can easily be the cause loss of intimacy in marriage as well as many other problems. In the book *Pornified*, author Pamela Paul quotes a psychologist who researched pornography at Texas A & M said, “ The problem with porn is that it’s voyeurism teaches men to view women as objects rather than to be in a relationship with women as human beings. Pornography gives men the false impression that sex and pleasure that are entirely void from any relationships they might be in. In other words, it means that pornography is inherently self-centered - something a man does for himself, by himself — by using women as the means to pleasure, as yet another product to consume. ”(80) In our textbook, *Sexuality Now: Embracing Diversity* it is said that pornography users become desensitized to sexual behaviors that used to be shocking, and it teaches users to see sex as a simple physical pleasure rather than part of a loving, committed relationship. This can lead to increasing teen pregnancy rates, the degradation of females, and even rape. Antifeminist scholars see pornography as an outright assault on women which makes them powerless and reinforces males as the dominant partner. These feelings lead men to commit sexual and physical violence against women. Catherine MacKinnon disputes that pornography is more about power than it is about sex. Mackinnon also says that defending porn using the First Amendment for freedom of does not take into consideration the effects that porn has on the everyday lives of women. She points out that a stronger argument for is the Fourteenth Amendment which states that women have the right to not be discriminated against and this is exactly what pornography does. She states so eloquently, “ Imagine that in all the

books and movies that are produced each year by porn distributors did not show women, but instead showed Jews, African Americans, handicapped, or some other kind of minority splayed naked, chained or tied up, urinated or defecated on, with foreign objects inserted into their genitals while at the same time physical and sexual assaults against that group were epidemic in society just like as it against women. In porn men are the penetrators and women are being penetrated which reflects male power and dominance. "

(505) As it was stated above that sex is treated just as pure physical pleasure rather than its other intended purpose, bringing two people together and a way of showing love and devotion to the other person, as well as procreation. Sex is a vulnerable thing and should not be treated as something that should be given away like free candy. Woman should not be objectified and treated as if her sole purpose in life is to pleasure the male. Doctor Patrick F. Fagan said pornography has significant effects during all stages of family life. The use of pornography by a parent has adverse and disturbing effects on children. It can destroy the warmth of a family relationship that should nurture growing children. Other traumas and losses due a parent's use of pornography can include: witnessing the stress between parents caused by online sexual activities, accidentally finding pornographic material misplaced by a parent, a higher risk of their parents getting divorced and a decrease in the family time that happens when a parent is addicted to pornography. There is also a serious risk of a parent losing their job and the financial problems that an addiction like this can cause. Worst of all, it has also been shown that children of parents who view pornography have an increased chance of becoming addicted to

pornography themselves. Pornography can ruin marriages through distressing the wives and giving them deep psychological wounds, feelings of betrayal and sexual inadequacies. This may lead to severe depression which can eventually require clinical treatment. Viewers of pornography put a higher importance on sexual relationships over intimacy with their spouse. The statistics show that pornography viewers see marriage as sexually confining. That attitude towards marriage naturally ruins them from having a good relationship with their spouse. Forty percent of sex addicts end up getting divorced, 58% percent suffer huge financial losses because of their addiction and about thirty percent lose their jobs. In a study of reports done by divorce lawyers about the biggest factors and causes of divorces, 68% of their divorce cases involved the spouse who views pornography meeting a new partner over the internet; 56% involved the pornography viewer having an obsessive interest (addiction) in viewing porn; 47% of those viewers spent excessive time on their computer instead of doing other family related things; and 33% spent excessive amounts of time having cybersex in chat rooms. (Fagan) I completely agree with all of these statements that are put forth in this paper. I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and two times a year we have General Conference. During the intermission of General Conference there was an hour long segment on addictions. Amongst the many people who were overcoming their addictions with drugs and alcohol, there were several that were overcoming a pornography addiction. There was one man whose marriage was one step away from divorce because his relationships with his wife and children had diminished as his relationship with pornography grew. He talked about how

there was a lack of communication between him and wife, and how most of the time he felt that he did not want to be around his wife and kids. Not only was he pushing his away his family for his own selfish reasons but he was dealing with depression due to the guilt that he felt from this addiction. In Victor B. Cline's research he states that as the pornography addiction escalates it can lead to more deviant behavior as the individual becomes desensitized to pornography that once excited and turns to pornography that is more prurient than what was previously viewed. This can cause individuals to crave sexually acting out what they view. Some examples of this behavior are manifested in rape and molestation of children. The most frequent consequence of pornography however is not rape or sex crimes, but is the destruction of a healthy and loving relationship and intimacy bonds with marriage partners. (Cline) In Mohamed Ghlian's article he states that his addiction is attained because the brain creates dopamine through a series of electrical synapsis within the brain as a response to a person viewing pornography. The dopamine excites the person and after the viewing is over, the brain craves the same pleasure it received from the release of dopamine as it had when the person was viewing the pornography. In the same way that cocaine stimulates the brain by releasing dopamine, pornography does as well only in a natural way, rather than in a chemical way. The more a person views pornography, the more engrained within the brain these synapsis or shortcuts to the dopamine pleasure rush become; the more the brain craves the release of dopamine and receives it through additional viewing of pornographic material, the more the brain becomes re-wired to want this stimulation, the more it becomes addicted to it through these

prolonged series of synaptic rushes. This process in neurological terms is called Synaptic Plasticity. (Ghilan) I think that an addiction to pornography is just as serious as a drug addiction. The treatment for a pornography addiction is not like how one would be treated for drugs because there is not detoxification of the system for a pornography addiction. For one to beat their addiction to porn they need to re-wire their brain by training their synapses to be re-wired in a constructive way that does not crave such stimulation. The longer a person goes without seeing pornography the less the brain will crave the synapse connections to instant gratification. This might sound easy but ask any psychologist who has dealt with addictions and they will tell you otherwise. References Addiction Recovery Program . 2011. Film. 7 Mar 2013. . Carroll, Janell L. Sexuality now embracing diversity. 4. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010. 494-507. Print. Fagan, Patrick. " Marri Research." . N. p., n. d. Web. 7 Mar 2013. . Ghilan , Mohamed. Suhai Webb. N. p., 23 01 2012. Web. 9 Mar 2013. . Hilton , Donald L., and Clark Watts. " Pornography: A Neuroscience Addiction." Surg Neurol Int.. (2011): n. page. Web. 9 Mar. 2013. . Paul, Pamela. Pornified: How Pornography Is Damaging Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families . New York, New York : Henry Holt and Company LLC, 2005. Print. " pornography." West's Encyclopedia of American Law, edition 2. 2008. The Gale Group 8 Mar. 2013 <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/pornography>