

Capstone, week 5 (literature review)

Psychology



Week 5 Literature Review A teenager's access to pornography has been greatly enhanced because of their access to the Internet. Parents cannot monitor a teen's every move because teens are usually active and have many friends. If a teen cannot access a porn site at home, they can always go to a friend's house to view it. The reference for this part of the literature review is taken from a rehabilitation blog that gives specific information about pornography and its possible link to sexual addiction ("Teens", 2011). The blog has information that has been taken from a variety of sources including some peer reviewed sources. They suggest that there is also a link to sexual addiction because of the excitement and positive feelings that a teen can associate with one of those sites. This blog is a good starting point for someone looking for information about this issue. The blog post is written in simple language and it gives good quality information. Much of the information has been taken from other studies and it is probably written for parents because it also gives some of the signs, including the behaviors, that parents can watch for to suspect their children are addicted to Internet porn. Kernshaw (2009) states that six to ten percent of Internet users are addicted to going online and that those who have this addiction are often depressed and they often use the Internet to further their addictions that they already struggle with. Freeman (2000) explained how easily a teen can access porn on the Internet at the time of his research there were already tens of thousands of porn sites that could be accessed simply by creating a Google search with the word, "sex" in it. In fact, sex is one of the words that is typed into search engines across the globe. The challenge when teens find these porn sites is that they can begin compulsive behavior that can start with compulsive masturbation and end in sexual addiction (Freeman, 2000).

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Also, teens can access adult sites by stating that they are 18 or older because there are no specific ways to tell whether a teen is of age or not. Chat rooms are another way that teens have access to porn because it is a way that they can communicate with others about sex. Melby (2010) states that teens can look at thousands of ads that show explicit sexual scenes before they talk to their parents about what they are seeing. There are also studies quoted that state that 90% of boys and 62% of girls saw porn sites before they were 18 years of age. Other studies have shown that some teens can discern whether they are seeing “ real” sex at these sites or fantasy play (Melby, 2010). Haggstrom-Nordin, Tyden, T., and Larsson (2009) found that teens use of pornography was not limited to teens in the United States but that it was in other parts of the world. In a study they did with teens in Sweden, they found that males in high school found pornography healthy. They found that males had the most positive attitudes towards sex because of porn while girls had more negative views.

Consequences of Exposure to Porn

Several researchers and authors have described the consequences that teens have when they are exposed to porn. Flood (2009) states that there are three issues that will decide how a teen is effected by pornography exposure over a period of time: “ the characteristics of the viewer, their engagement with the material and the character and context of exposure” (p. 387). What this means is that it will depend on the gender, age and degree to which an individual is exposing themselves to pornography as to how they will be affected by it. The type of pornography content is very important as to how a teen reacts to it and whether it is violent or non-violent will have an effect on them. In a study by Lo and Wei (2005) Taiwanese adolescents were studied to see how they were affected by

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regular use of pornography. The study showed that about 38% of these students were exposed to some type of Internet porn and that this exposure gave them a greater idea of permissiveness in sex. This usually meant that their attitudes were that it was okay to participate in sex at their age. Boys had a higher frequency of exposure than girls. Another way that teens are able to access porn is through what is known as sextexting, which is the sending of sexually explicit pictures through text messaging. Eraker (2010) suggests that sextexting is akin to streaking in past years, but that the picture is more permanent. The reason for this is because of cellphones with pictures that allow someone to store the picture on their phone for as long as they want. He states that many teens are able to produce pictures of themselves in sexual poses which they send to their friends; he states that some teens use this for cyber bullying. Sexual Addiction Lundrigan (2004) suggests that there are two views of how sexual addiction happens for anyone. The first view is that it is something that is learned. In other words, the teen may see their parents or friends using these sites on a regular basis. The other view is that some people become compulsive in their behavior and like other addicts, must act out in ways that provide them with sexual release. Sussman (2007) defines sexual addiction as “ a pattern of sexual behavior that is initially pleasurable but becomes unfulfilling, self-destructive, and that a person is unable to stop” (p. 258). When teens are involved in this situation, they can also have compulsive behavior as a negative consequence of what they are doing. As an example, many teens feel depressed, feel degraded, feel that they are doing something wrong but they do not have a way to stop or they may feel regret, numb or totally upset by the events that lead them to sexual addiction (Sussman, 2007).

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