

Abstract

Adolescents' views on pornography and sexual health: A systematic review of research

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Interest in the use and influence of pornography among adolescents has increased in recent years due to ease of access to the Internet through computers and mobile devices. Quantitative research suggests pornography exposure is associated with adolescent sexual development, attitudes and behaviors; however, causality has not been established. Qualitative studies can provide valuable insight into how adolescents conceptualize pornography use and what messages they are receiving from pornography. For this study, a systematic review following PRISMA reporting guidelines was conducted to understand young peoples' views on how pornography use influences their sexual development, attitudes and behaviors. Qualitative studies published in English after 1997 of young peoples' (ages 10-24) views of pornography were included in the review. Three databases yielded 28 studies. Narrative synthesis revealed that adolescents' motivations for using pornography include arousal and sexual gratification; sexual exploration and identity development; to fulfill curiosity; and for entertainment alone and in social settings. Adolescents demonstrated critical thinking towards pornography's influence on themselves and their peers, including identifying positive effects (e.g., a safe space for sexual exploration, reduced anxiety related to early sexual experiences) and negative effects (e.g., experiencing coercion and harassment related to porn, unrealistic sexual expectations). Adolescents and researchers suggested expanding sexuality education and pornography literacy programs to provide realistic information about bodies, sexuality and pleasure while building applicable critical thinking skills. These findings have implications for youth development and sexual health education programs. Such programs should reflect the realities of adolescents' pornography use and respond to adolescent needs.

Advocacy for health and health education Planning of health education strategies, interventions, and programs Social and behavioral sciences

