



## **Pornography & Sexual Addiction**

Pornography addiction is a controversial topic in medical circles. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) does not list an official diagnosis for pornography addiction, and therefore some practitioners refuse to acknowledge it as an addiction in the traditional sense.

However, a proposed DSM definition for addiction includes the following characteristics:

- A process that produces pleasure or relieves pain
- That cannot be controlled; and
- Continues despite significant negative consequences

Based on this definition, excessive pornography use qualifies as an addiction.

Similarly, On August 15, 2011 the American Society of Addiction Medicine issued a public statement defining all addiction (including sexual behavior addiction) in terms of brain changes. "Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry."

Recent studies have shown the same fundamental brain changes in pornography addiction that are normally seen in drug addiction. According to Dr. Jeffrey Satinover ". . . [M]odern science allows us to understand that the underlying nature of an addiction to pornography is chemically nearly identical to a heroin addiction."

### **Prevalence**

According to Alexa Research, the number one search term used on search engine sites is "sex." Users searched for "sex" more than other terms, such as "games, travel, music, jokes, cars, weather, health," and "jobs" combined. "Pornography/porno/porn" was the fourth-most searched for subject. Also falling within the top 20 search terms were "nude" (including "nudes"), "xxx, playboy," and "erotic stories" (including "erotica").

According to comScore Media Metrix, 71.9 million visits were made to adult sites in August 2005, reaching 42.7 percent of the Internet audience.

A study conducted in 2007 by researchers at Brigham Young University found that 21% of male

college students view pornography "every day or almost every day," and another 27% view pornography "1 or 2 days a week."

In March 2005 Christianity Today published the results of a study called "Christians and Sex" in their Leadership Journal. Out of 680 pastors surveyed, 57% said addiction to pornography is the most sexually damaging issue to their congregation.

In August 2006, a survey reported 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women are addicted to pornography. 60% of the women who answered the survey admitted to having significant struggles with lust; 40% admitted to being involved in sexual sin in the past year.

Perhaps the most telling statistic about prevalence has to do with the billboard advertising done by TWC. Two billboards were placed on I-15 in Salt Lake County. One had a message about depression treatment and the other about pornography addiction. The pornography billboard consistently produced 10 times as many client leads as the depression billboard.

### **Costs**

According to Covenant Eyes (a pornography watchdog group) the pornography industry brought in over \$13 billion in 2006. If this statistic is accurate, then the adult industry brings in more than the NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball combined. Keep in mind these are 2006 numbers. The trend is only upward, and likely much higher now.

### **Consequences**

According to the Journal of Adolescent Health, prolonged exposure to pornography leads to:

- An exaggerated perception of sexual activity in society
- Diminished trust between intimate couples
- The abandonment of the hope of sexual monogamy
- Belief that promiscuity is the natural state
- Belief that abstinence and sexual inactivity are unhealthy
- Cynicism about love or the need for affection between sexual partners
- Belief that marriage is sexually confining
- Lack of attraction to family and child-raising

According to sociologist Jill Manning, research indicates pornography consumption is associated with the following six trends, among others:

1. Increased marital distress, and risk of separation and divorce
2. Decreased marital intimacy and sexual satisfaction
3. Infidelity
4. Increased appetite for more graphic types of pornography and sexual activity associated with abusive, illegal or unsafe practices
5. Devaluation of monogamy, marriage and child rearing
6. An increasing number of people struggling with compulsive and addictive sexual behavior

The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (divorce lawyers) reports that the most salient factors present in divorce cases are as follows:

- 68% of divorces involve one party meeting a new lover over the Internet
- 56% involve one party having “an obsessive interest in pornographic websites”
- 47% involve spending excessive time on the computer
- 33% involve excessive time spent speaking in chat rooms

A recent article by Stanford Professor Dr. Philip G. Zimbardo highlighted current research showing video game and pornography addiction are inhibiting men's ability to have normal human relationships. This so-called “arousal addiction” leads to continuous stimulation at the expense of other important parts of life. In extreme cases, even leading to death.



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### **Treatment**

Current treatment for pornography addiction centers on talk therapy and group support. 12-step groups for pornography and sex addiction are becoming common.

Treatment success statistics are not readily available, but anecdotal evidence suggests such treatments have a very low success rate. Because the addiction is chemically so similar to heroin

addiction, it follows that talk therapy alone likely has about the same success rate as it does for heroin addiction, which is typically around 10%.

### **Theta Wellness Centers Are Different**

At Theta Wellness Centers, we use a drug-free, scientific, neurological approach to correct chemical imbalances in the brain, which are the root cause of common problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, pornography addiction, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, PTSD, video game addiction, and other unwanted behaviors.

Theta combines several cutting-edge technologies in a single treatment program that has been clinically shown to produce results that are up to 3 times faster and 11 times more effective than traditional treatment methods, with a much lower recidivism rate than higher-priced “revolving-door” in-patient or residential treatment programs. Some of these treatment tools include:

- Gentle electrical stimulation
- Binaural audio stimulation
- Visual stimulation
- Vestibular (motion) stimulation
- Light therapy
- Detoxification
- Relaxation techniques

Unlike talk therapy or pharmaceutical intervention, these treatments induce the brain's “Theta” state, and then signal the brain to return to normal, healthy production of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine. Results of the treatment include reduced cravings, elevated mood, enhanced well being, and greater self control.

Theta's typical treatment program can be completed in under 2 hours a day, in 21 days or less, making it easy to fit comfortably into even the busiest of schedules.

More than 30 years of research, comprising hundreds of studies dating back to 1959 as well as recent first-hand patient outcomes, have shown Theta's treatment protocols to be safe and effective. As science, technology and computers have advanced, these treatments have become more practical, less expensive and easier to obtain. They are now available at every comfortable, professional Theta Wellness Center.