



Research article

CYBER PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION AMONGST MEDICAL STUDENTS OF WESTERN RURAL MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Cyberpornography is an act of using cyberspace to create, display, distribute, impart or publish pornography or obscene materials, especially materials depicting children engaged in sexual acts with adults. Cyberpornography on one hand, has opened up the new terrain of “safe sex”, and a positive space for sexual non-conformists. At the same time, it has negatively impacted many offline relations, and a new space for sexual predation and exploitation. **Objective:** To find out the prevalence, type and form of risk towards cyber pornography addiction amongst the students. **Methods & Materials:** A prospective cross sectional study was conducted after obtaining an ethical approval from the institute and an informed consent from volunteers fulfilling the eligibility criteria. The Internet sex screening test (ISST) questionnaire with score sheet was used and was collected by complete anonymity and confidentiality. 300 medical students were considered for the study and data collected was analysed by Microsoft-office excel. **Results:** 57.15% of the volunteer are in low-risk group whereas 30% are vulnerable and 12.85% are in highest-risk group. For boys, 65% are vulnerable whereas 21% in low-risk and the remaining 14% are in highest-risk group. For girls, 73% are in a low-risk, 19% are vulnerable and 8% are in highest-risk group. **Conclusion:** It is concluded that the majority of boys come under vulnerable category whereas the girls comes in low-risk group showing male preponderance towards addiction. The study reveals that, questions coming under the subgroup of online sexual behaviour-isolated have been answered the maximum number of times, by both the sexes. Whereas, the questions coming under the subgroup of online sexual spending has been answered the least by both the sexes.

KEYWORDS: Cyberpornography, addiction, sexual behaviour, ISST Questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION

In this world of technology where everything is so easily accessible, cyber sexuality and cyber pornography have both sparked a great deal of controversy. Just for the sake of understanding the gravity of situation here's a scenario “you get up in the middle of night to get a late snack, a small beam of light is shining in the living rooms corner. Then, in the part of the screen not blocked by your child's head, you see a woman exposing her breast. What do u do?”

The movement of porn from the darkest corners of the society into millions of homes is being noticed in these decades. Cyber pornography is the issue in the world that is not talked about at all. The question which arise in our mind is what is cyber pornography? It is nothing but an act of using cyberspace to create, display, distribute, impart or publish pornography or

obscene materials, especially materials depicting children engaged in sexual acts with adults ^[1]. There are tons of material on internet which a person can access just by a single click. Almost 50% of websites exhibits pornographic material on the internet today ^[2].

Apart from still pictures and images, full motion video clips and complete movies are also available. Another great disadvantage with a media like this is, its easy availability and accessibility to children who can now log on to pornographic websites from anywhere in relative anonymity and the social and legal deterrents associated with physically purchasing adults magazine from the stand are no longer present. Pornography not only raises the issue of sexual morality, but also has been deeply tied to an era of increased human sexual trafficking.

On the one hand, the internet has opened up the new terrain of very “safe sex”, and a positive space for sexual non-conformists. At the same time, it has negatively impacted many offline relations, and provided a new space for sexual predation and sexual exploitation of all kinds.

Cyber pornography plays an accessory role in negative social issues like child abuse, violence against women, rape, inequality, relationship and family breakdown, youth crime, promiscuity and sexually transmitted diseases [3]. To the children out there, it is leading them in a wrong direction. I know there are several kids out there who likes to look at nude women and men. But this is not what they are meant for. Instead of this they should be looking up information for a research report, or surfing through the sports activities sites, not pornographic sites. Parents are supposed to be watching out for their children, and teaching them to respect women. Lack in this thing may lead to sexual harassment cases and divorces from marriages later on in life.

A survey done in rural pre – university students of India showed internet pornography addiction rate of 75 % [4]. 80% of Indians are exposed to porn during their school life and the age of first exposure has decreased from 14 to 10 years [5]. India ranks third after US in number of internet users with penetration of 12.5% only [6].

Out of total college students watching porn, 76% said that watching rape porn leads to the desire of raping a woman [7]. A survey carried over 8000 girls and women in India shows that 49% of them learned about sex from watching porn videos [8]. India ranks 5th on the consumption of porn. Total pornography viewer around the world ranges up to 18.35 billion in which 48.6 million viewers are under the age of 13 and its increasing exponentially [9].

According to various authors of various literatures published in the journal of sex research like sex on the internet, feminist views of cybersex, etc. and book “your brain on porn –by Garry Wilson” pornography has a great impact over the psychological and physiological functioning of the individual.

Aims and Objectives:-

1. To find out the prevalence of the risk of cyber pornography addiction amongst the students.
2. To distinguish the form of cyber pornography addiction between males and females.
3. To find out the type of risk of cyber pornography addiction amongst the students.
4. To find out the proportion of students using internet for searching obscene materials online.

MATERIALS & METHODS

It was a prospective cross sectional descriptive study done with the help of a pre-tested questionnaire¹⁰ amongst the medical students of Western Rural, Maharashtra. Total 600 medical students voluntarily enrolled for the study from various batches perusing medical education. All the enrolled

students were subjected to the simple random sampling by using block randomization to achieve a sample size of 300. The study was conducted only after obtaining an ethical approval from the institute and consent was taken from the volunteers after properly explaining them the procedure of the study. All the selected volunteers were taken into confidence by briefing all the details of the questionnaire, anonymity and issues related to confidentiality so that maximum true data related to various variables in the study could be extracted.

The **criteria for the study** were as follow:-

Inclusion criteria: - Medical students between the ages 18 – 24 years of both the sexes. Students willing to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria: - Students with any psychiatric disorder and those unable to give consent for the study.

300 medical students satisfying the above eligibility criteria were selected using simple random sampling amongst the 600 students enrolled for the study.

Study tool: All the selected students were subjected to ISST questionnaire [10]

The Internet sex screening test (ISST) questionnaire consisted of (total 34 Questions):

- **Internet related sexual behaviour (1 to 25 questions):**
Divided into four sub groups-
 - Online sexual content social context
 - Online sexual content behaviour isolated
 - Online sexual spending
 - Interest in online sexual behaviour.
- **General sexual compulsive behaviour (26 to 34 questions).**

Complete anonymity and confidentiality was maintained with the filled proformas and **questionnaire collected.**

Study conduct:-

Each volunteer was given 30 minute to fill the questionnaire and return it by putting the form in the ballot box. Complete schedule for this was prepared in advance and permission from the authorities was taken prior to the conduct of the study.

Internet sex screening test score counting was done with the help of the ISST score sheet which is as given below: After counting the number of ticks, the individual was placed in the appropriate group with the help of ISST scorecard.

Table 1: **Internet sex screening test score card**^[10]

Groups towards addiction	Total No. of ticks(v)
Low-risk	<8
Vulnerable	9-18
Highest-risk	>19

All the data collected was analysed by using Microsoft excel 2013.

Confidentiality:-

It was maintained by not asking any identifying information like name, class, faculty, etc. while the study. And they were

informed about not to make any marks other than tick mark (v) which can reveal their identity. As the data is collected in a ballot box specially designed for this study no one including the investigator will know who has filled it.

RESULTS

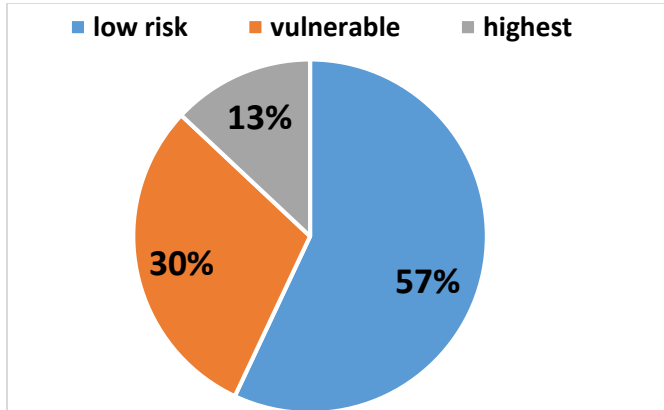


Fig 1: Overall risk towards cyber pornography addiction

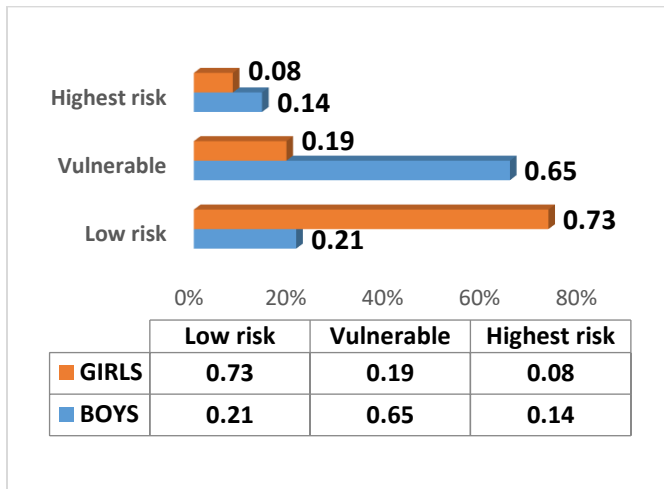


Fig 2: Addiction rate of boys and girls

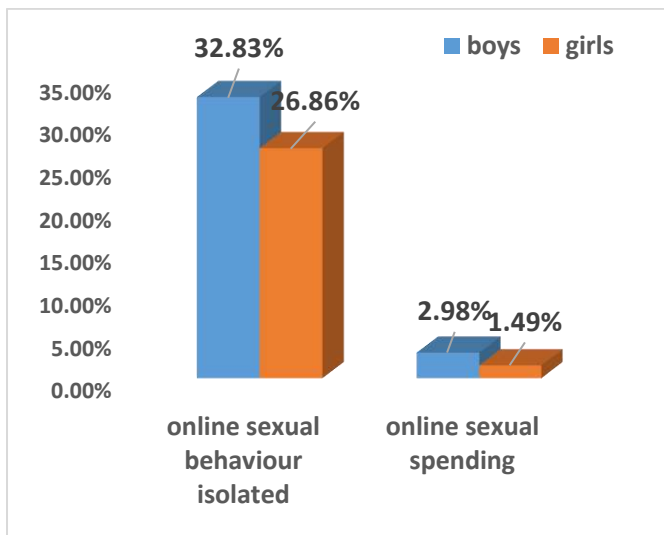


Fig 3: Questions answered according to sub-group

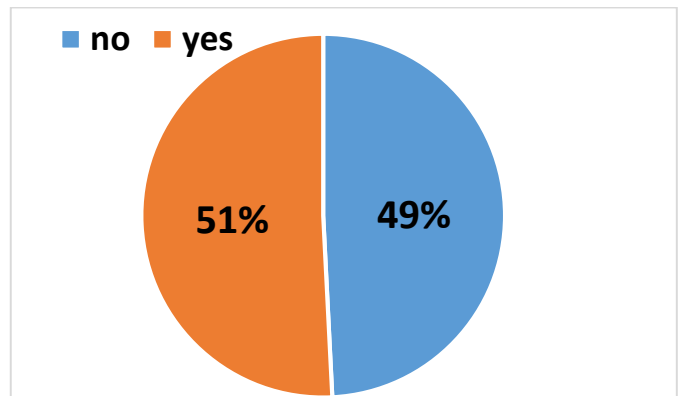


Fig 4: Searched for sexual material online

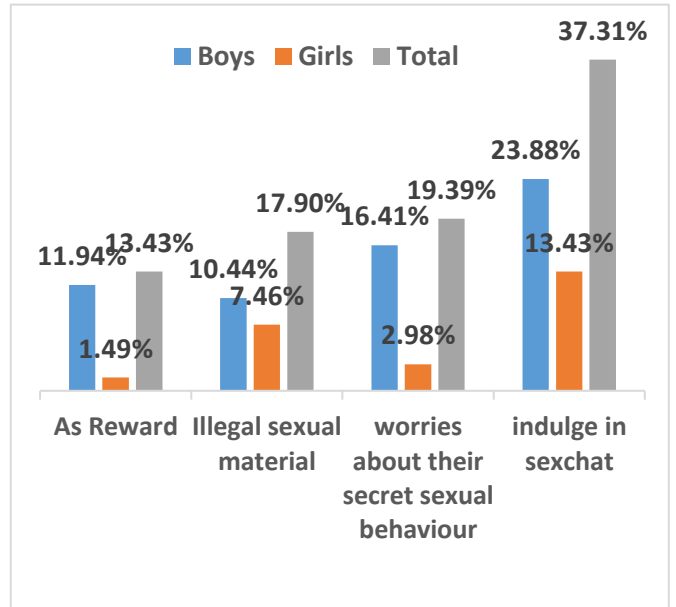


Fig 5: Use as reward, access illegal sexual material, worries about their behavior and indulge in sex-chat.

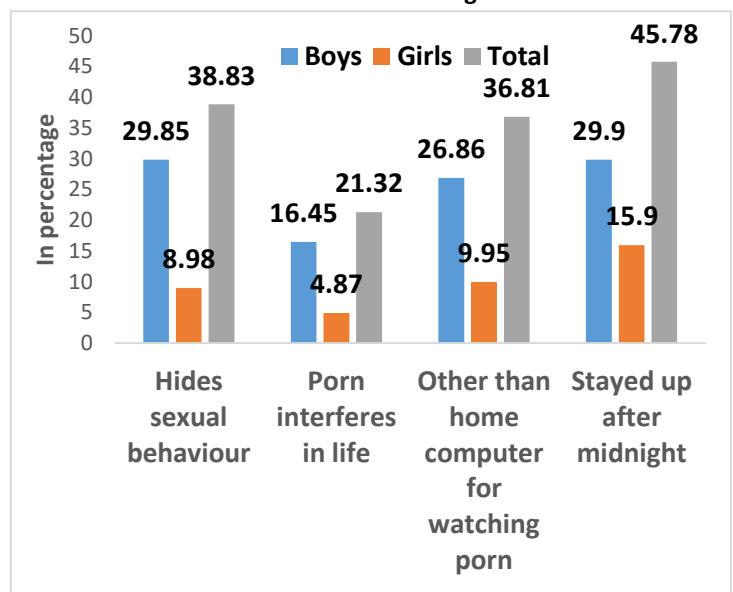


Fig 6: Hides behaviour, porn interferes in life, used other than home computer for accessing porn and stayed up late

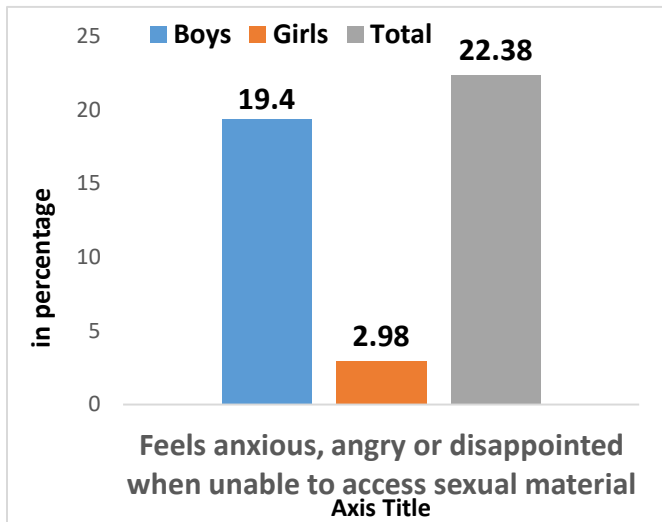


Fig 7: Feels anxious, angry or disappointed on failing to access sexual material

DISCUSSION

In our study, 300 healthy volunteers were selected after fulfilling the eligibility criteria and were made to fill the ISST questionnaire with full confidentiality. Out of the total volunteers, 57% are at a low risk whereas 30% are vulnerable to it, and 13% are at the highest risk towards the addiction of cyber pornography (fig.1). Out of the total boys' volunteers, 65% are vulnerable whereas 21% at a low risk and the remaining 14% are at the highest risk for cyber pornography addiction. As for the girls, 73% are at a low risk, 19% are vulnerable and 8% are at the highest risk for cyber pornography addiction. The study reveals that, the questions coming under the sub – group of online sexual behaviour isolated have been answered the maximum number of times, by both the sexes. And that too the question “I have tried to hide what is on my computer or monitor so that others cannot see it” have been positively answered the most (fig.3). Whereas, the questions coming under the sub – group of online sexual spending has been answered the least by both the sexes in that too the question regarding “I have purchased sexual product online” has been negatively answered (fig.3). 50.8% of the volunteers have said that they have searched for sexual material through an internet search engine (fig.4). Out of the total number of volunteers, 49.2% said that they have masturbated while on the internet. 23% of the individuals have said that they use sexual humour while online. 13.43% use cyber pornography as a reward for accomplishing their work (fig.5). 17.90% of the population has accessed illegal sexual material while online and 19.39% worries about others finding out about their secret sexual behaviour (fig.5). 37.31% of the volunteers have indulged in sex chats online and out of these, 9.8% have sexualized names too (fig.5). 38.83% hide some of their sexual behaviour (fig.6). Internet pornography has interfered in certain aspects of life of 21.32% of the

volunteers (fig.6). 36.81% use computers other than their home ones for watching porn and the same amount of individuals hide the content on their computers from others (fig.6). According to the study, 45.78% have stayed up after midnight to access sexual material online (fig.6). 18% of the individuals feel anxious, angry or disappointed when they are unable to access sexual material online (fig.7).

The instruments administered relied on self-report by the subjects, which is probably the largest limitation of this study. It is impossible to know whether the individual was honest while answering. Even with the aforementioned limitation, the data provided by this study represents the first empirically driven assessment of cyber pornography amongst the medical students. Cyber pornography is turning into cyber pornography addiction because of the following reasons: - Easy availability and accessibility, Relative anonymity & Lack of legal deterrents [11-12].

According to Dr. Victor Cline^[11] a four step progression towards sexual addiction was found among many who consume pornography.

Addiction: Pornography provides a powerful sexual stimulant or aphrodisiac effect, followed by sexual release, most often through masturbation. It is addictive because it creates a dependency on porn. **Escalation:** Over time, addicts require more explicit and deviant material to meet their sexual “needs”. **Paralyzing effect:** Sometimes referred to as desensitization. What was first perceived as gross, shocking and disturbing, in time, becomes common and acceptable. **Aggression:** Porn leads to acting out sexually. There is an increasing tendency to act out behaviours viewed in pornography. People turn into imitators of what they see. No emotions are involved in the act which leads to aggression. The individuals with highest risk towards cyberpornography addiction should be provided help in the form of rehabilitation centers in order to prevent the harmful side effects of addiction. The vulnerable group of population should be provided help in the form of counselling in order to prevent the exponential increase in this criteria. And increasing the awareness of the population about effects of cyberpornography addiction over the mind, family and society will prevent an increase in the number of low-risk group individuals.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that the majority of boys come under the vulnerable category whereas the girls belong to the low risk group. The addiction rate is higher in males as compared to female counterpart. This addiction towards cyber pornography is affecting their daily life by disconnecting them from the reality.

SUGGESTIONS: The fact that there is a lack of research data should be overcome by more debates and discussions over this topic so that it can be considered as a medical condition

in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). Rehabilitation centres should be setup for the individuals suffering from cyber pornography addiction. Sex education can help in clearing the misconception regarding cyber pornography and its effect on the individual. Legal IT acts should be modified in order to decrease the access to such explicit material by children. Explicit advertisements practice should be banned over websites. Completely banning cyber pornography is not the solution for this problem and instead of banning we should keep a check over the pornography industry.

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