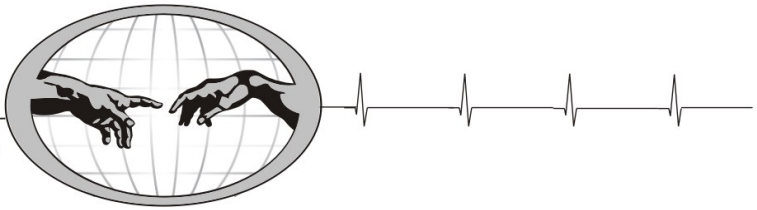


Doctors For Life

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



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At the recent symposium in Cape Town entitled ‘Combating exposure of children to pornography: A focus on new media’, Doctors for Life presented relatively new, but now, well established and peer reviewed science about the effects of pornography on the brain.

The science has developed over the past 5-10 years through the technological advances of new brain scanning technology e.g. MRI, PET, sPECT & DAT scanning. With these scanning techniques it is now possible to measure a person's LEVEL of depression, suspicion, anxiety, irritation, joy, fear, hate and pleasure. Secondly, these new advances are based on developments in neurochemistry that initially started with the work of Dr Eric Nestler, published in 2005 in the journal ‘Nature Neuroscience’.

Through this new research, science has been able to clearly demonstrate that when watching porn, the body releases a "cocktail" of "erototoxins" that sufficiently overpower the frontal cortex/thinking brain to suppress clear logic. These neurotransmitters include dopamine; serotonin and encephaline etc that are molecularly similar to cocaine, LSD and morphine. When looking at pornography the body usually produces unnaturally high amounts of its own endogenic “cocaine”, “LSD” and “morphine”. These powerful messages come from the primitive brain (limbic system) and lead to a combination of feelings of fear, surprise, anger, disgust, hostility and lust which overpower the brain's ability to think soberly.

Statistics show that in 2006 the average age of minors for first exposure to pornography was 11 years. This usually happened while doing homework. Nowadays, with cell phones that can access the internet, the age of the first exposure is much earlier - may even be at the level of grade 1 children!

In children the limbic system matures long before the thinking brain. Children can consequently instantly "grasp", "experience", and "feel" sexual images and sexual touching by an adult, long before they can express themselves. These highly emotional memories become embedded in their minds and may haunt the victim even when there is no rational awareness of these experiences. They may come to the surface later in life and lead to deviant behavior which may be destructive to future marriage. Such deviant behavior may present in the form of sexual attraction to children or an appetite for violent sex or an inability to perform sexually normal in a stable, long term relationship.

Porn addiction is the concept of "natural addiction" by now is well established in scientific circles. A porn addict is someone who has trained the limbic system to overpower the thinking brain. That is why non violent porn may lead to violent behavior e.g. temper tantrums. The youth are exceptional vulnerable with the result that porn is becoming an endemic addiction amongst our youth.

With children, the fear component is just much more intense because the child does not possess the cognitive skills and emotional tools to deal with the images/touches. On the other hand, due to the underdevelopment of the frontal lobe there is less of/no ability to reject images that may be bizarre or self destructive. The child is thus more "open" to become addicted.

Children younger than 8 years old cannot discriminate between fantasy and reality. They are uniquely vulnerable to learning and adopting as reality the circumstances, attitudes and behaviors portrayed by the entertainment media e.g. recent court case in England of two boys relating to the 'SAW' movies.

Pornography's impact on marriage is monstrous: The combination of porn plus sexual gratification through masturbation leads to the formation of a "virtual mistress". This leads to a marked dissociation of sex from normal emotions which would have helped to build marital relationships e.g. friendship, affection, caring etc. Thus, the sexual side of men who watch pornography becomes "dehumanised". In time, the "high" from porn plus masturbation becomes more important than real life relationships. The man may find his partner boring in bed. He may become impotent; his partner experiences him as "distant" in bed. (This often also leads to impotence).

The Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy found that women often experience the viewing of porn as a form of infidelity. In describing a partner's involvement with

porn they use words such as "betrayal", "cheating", "affair". The result is marital disharmony, divorce and the breaking up of intimate relationships.

The higher purpose of free speech is to establish a level playing field for intelligent debate, in order to create social cohesion and a humane civilization. However, because of pornography's ability to overpower sober thinking (cognition), reason and logic, the brain becomes unable to monitor and correct unhealthy conduct. DFL is of the opinion that it thus nullifies the meaning and spirit of "informed consent" and can therefore not demand the same legal protection afforded to printed information.

Doctors For Life International is an association of more than 1800 specialists and medical doctors. DFL endeavors to promote public health by upholding sound science in the medical profession, as well as the constitutional right to freedom of conscience for all healthcare professionals.

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