

## Pornography, a neglected prevailing addiction

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Madam, by this letter we aim to highlight the neglected issue of excessive viewing of pornography and its impact on the person and the society as a whole. An authority on this topic devised a "triple-A engine" effect criteria: accessibility, affordability and anonymity, to explain the pervasiveness of Internet addiction including Pornography.<sup>1</sup> Pornography is a Compulsive Sexual Behaviour Disorder which has been classified under impulse control disorder in ICD-11.<sup>2</sup> Whereas, here, in Pakistan the prevailing erotica has not yet been perceived as a problematic condition even though several disturbing incidents have been reported. In 2015, the largest ever child abuse scandal in Hussain Khanwala Village of Pakistan was brought to light. Over 280 children were compelled to have sex while being videotaped and more than a thousand copies were trafficked.<sup>3</sup> This case of child pornography alerted the victims' families but the root cause was not determined nor were strict laws against the persecutors enforced. Hence, to form counter strategies for such incidences in future, this issue and its ramifications should be highlighted through researches. Gathering statistical evidences can help in making laws and deriving measures as to when and how they should be implemented.

Many surveys and researches have concluded that excessive pornography usage has led to negative impacts on relationships as sexual desires in the participants were found to be significantly diminished and the porn addicts showed heightened expectations from their partners. Poor performance at work and negligence was also observed in some users due to being preoccupied in their obscene thoughts and repetitive viewing.<sup>4</sup> Research has shown pornography can provoke men to seek pleasure by unlawful means like rape considering the fact that it displays aggressive sex. It can incorporate violence in men and inability to distinguish between agony and love. This leads to men thinking that violent sex or sex without the consent of

women is allowed and enjoyed by the women<sup>5</sup> which is a misperception that leads to crime.

Last year a rising trend was demonstrated amongst the viewers which has been attributed to the enforcement of lockdown due to COVID-19. Lack of work and outgoing activities caused people to spend more time on the screen which also increased porn viewing.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the negative effects of pornography and its increased usage in many countries, there have been minimum researches regarding the prevalence of this addiction in Pakistan. The factors encouraging the use of pornography are also common in Pakistan, however, due to scarcity of researches no relation of those factors to growing practice of watching porn has been established.

After a thorough search, we concluded that the data related to pornography, its governing factors and its after effects is insufficient in Pakistan. Hence, by this letter we intend to encourage researchers to look up on this situation so that it can be recognized as an unhealthy malpractice which should be eliminated from the society. Though pornography websites have been banned by the government of Pakistan, but people still have access to them via virtual private networks and proxies. Therefore, effective strategies without obvious loopholes should be sought out. Rather than allowing porn addiction related issues to nurture under the veil of 'taboo' and thereby shunning the prevalence of an indecent act, therapists should come up with solutions to help people realize the damage it might cause them and talk about it. Introducing new therapies and decent substitutes might help in coping with the issue.

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