

Study sheds light on what attracts audiences to pornography

DARWIN, NT - NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA, May 23, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New research conducted at Charles Darwin University (CDU) is among the first to consider the role of 'content creators' within the modern pornography landscape.

[The study](#) from CDU's Faculty of Health, recently published in Addictive Behaviours Reports, examined the relationship between people's experience of loneliness, emotion regulation difficulties, and problematic pornography use (PPU).

Like other behavioural addictions, PPU is defined as a tendency to use pornography excessively or compulsively and has been linked to a range of negative consequences including low self-esteem, reduced productivity, low mood, anxiety, and reduced satisfaction in relationships.

The study surveyed people aged between 18 to 79 years, with nearly two thirds reporting at least weekly pornography use.

The results show individuals who are lonely may turn to pornography because of difficulty in regulating emotions.

Co-author and CDU Senior Lecturer in Psychology [Dr Kim Caudwell](#) said an intriguing finding was interacting with online content creators seemed linked to less PPU.

"To our knowledge this is one of the first studies to incorporate interaction with content creators while looking at PPU," Dr Caudwell said.

"We found that people who were interacting reported lower PPU, but we didn't find a link to emotion regulation or loneliness. We are conducting more research in this space to better capture 'interaction' so we can better understand its relationship with loneliness and PPU."

Dr Caudwell said given the increasing popularity of content creation platforms, there was scope for further exploration of digital sex work's impacts on PPU.

He added users who kept relying on pornography because of experiencing difficulty regulating emotions could continue to experience the cycle of consequences relating to PPU, such as further isolation from the outside world - which would exacerbate loneliness.

“Interpersonal conflict is going to be a key issue in many relationship contexts, particularly where people may have religious or moral positions on pornography use - problematic use would cause ongoing tension within that dynamic,” Dr Caudwell said.

“We know from the literature that individuals are likely to experience a range of negative consequences or mental health concerns because of engaging in addictive behaviours.

“If people are drawn to PPU because of loneliness, helping them to increase social contact could reduce loneliness, which may help reduce PPU. Psychologists are well placed to help people manage their emotions a bit better and in more adaptive ways which might help them deal with loneliness – and reduce PPU.”

The study was led by CDU Master of Clinical Psychology graduate Maria Vescan, under the supervision of Dr Caudwell and CDU Senior Lecturer in Psychology Dr Malcolm Flack.

Dr Caudwell and Dr Flack are both members of Researchers in Behavioural Addictions, Alcohol and Drugs.

Loneliness and problematic pornography Use: What is the role of emotion regulation and interaction with content Creators? was published in the journal Addictive Behaviours Reports.

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