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## Intentional Exposure to Pornography Online: Is everybody doing it?

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\* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses may be available by contacting CiPHR for further information.

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## Background

- An estimated 97% of youth use the Internet (Lenhart, Madden & Hitlin, 2005; USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future, 2005).
- The majority of adolescent Internet-health research has focused on victimization (e.g., Finkelhor, Mitchell, Wolak, 2000; Wolak, Mitchell, Finkelhor, 2006; Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006) and health seeking behavior (e.g., Grey, Klein, Noyce et al., 2005; Ybarra & Suman, 2006).

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## Background: The positive side of the Internet

- About one in four adolescents have used the Internet to look for health information in the last year (Lenhart et al., 2001; Rideout et al., 2001; Ybarra & Suman, 2006).
- 41% of adolescents indicate having changed their behavior because of information they found online (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2002), and 14% have sought healthcare services as a result (Rideout, 2001).

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## Background: The negative side of the Internet

- Internet harassment has increased from 6% to 9%, while unwanted sexual solicitation decreased from 19% to 13% from 1999 to 2005 (Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006).
- Just over one-third of youth targeted by Internet victimization report feeling very/extremely upset or afraid because of the incident (Wolak, Mitchell, Finkelhor, 2006; Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006).

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## Problem Statement



Despite recent research which has highlighted the impact negative interpersonal experiences some young people are having online (e.g., unwanted sexual solicitation, harassment), **little has been reported about the ways in which youth are using the Internet to act out.**

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## Panel Presentations



- Describe the Growing up with Media (GuwM) study
- Use GuwM data to examine:
  - Instigation of unwanted sexual solicitation;
  - Intentional exposure to pornography online – especially violent content; and
  - Intentional access to violent web sites.

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## GuwM Methodology



- Conducted between August 24 to September 14, 2006
- Participants recruited from Harris Poll On Line
- 1,591 households (one caregiver, one child) were surveyed online

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## Harris Poll On Line



- HPOL is a double opt-in panel of millions of respondents.
- HPOL data are consistently comparable to data that has been obtained from random telephone samples of general populations when sampling and weighting is applied.

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## GuwM Eligibility

- **ADULT**
  - Be a US resident member of the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel
  - Be the most (or equally) knowledgeable of the youth's media use in the home
  - English speaking
- **YOUTH**
  - Aged 10-15 years
  - Use the Internet at least once in the last 6 months
  - English speaking

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## GuwM Data Methods

- Sample selection was stratified based on youth age and sex.
- Sample was also stratified between “novice” and “experienced” survey participants.

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## GuwM Data Methods

- To control the sample and the increase response rate, the following steps were taken:
  - Password-protected access to the online survey
  - 1 reminder invitation to non-responders
  - Cash incentives (\$10 for adults, \$15 for youth)
- On average, the adult survey took 5 minutes and the youth survey took 21 minutes

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## Growing up with Media Data Analyses

- Response rate was 26% (rates can range from 5-50%)
- Propensity scoring was applied to adjust for the adult's (i.e., recruitment target) propensity to be online
- Data were weighted to match the US population of adults with children between the ages of 10 and 15 years

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## Growing up with Media Data Analyses



- For analyses, cases were required to have valid data for 85% of variables examined.
- Regression estimates are adjusted for 'dishonesty' (6%) and the report of someone in the room near enough to see the computer screen (22%).

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## Youth Demographic Characteristics



- 48% Female
- Mean age: 12.6 years (SE: 0.05)
- 71% White, 13% Black, 9% Mixed, 7% Other
- 19% Hispanic
- Median household income: \$50,000-\$74,999
- Median time spent online on a typical day: 31 minutes – 1 hour

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## Background



- Sexual aggression in adolescence
  - 5-10% males; 1% females
- Pornography exposure may be linked with sexual aggression in adults
  - Unclear how / if these data can be applied to youth
  - Little data exist
    - Ethical / legal considerations of purposeful exposure

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## The Internet and X-Rated Material



- Estimates indicate that 95% of adolescents are online
- Concern that the Internet will become primary method for viewing x-rated material
  - 7-years ago → movies/magazines primary source of intentional exposure
  - Unclear if this has changed

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## Research Questions

In a sample of adolescents (ages 10-15):

- What is the 1-year prevalence of intentional exposure to x-rated material?
  - Overall exposure and violent exposure
  - Across a variety of media
- How does exposure to x-rated material (nonviolent & violent) affect sexual aggression?

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## Defining Exposure to X-Rated Material

- “In the last 12 months have you watched an X-rated movie at a friend’s house, your house, or in the theatre where the main topic was sex?”
- “In the last 12 months, have you looked at an X-rated magazine, like Playboy, on purpose where you knew that the main topic was sex?”
- “In the last 12 months, have you gone to or seen an X-rated or “adult” website where the main topic is sex?”

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## Defining Exposure to Violent X-Rated Material

- In the last 12 months have you seen a movie that showed...
- In the last 12 months have you ever looked at a magazine that showed...
- When you have gone to or seen an X-rated or adult website, have you ever seen...
  - ...a person being physically hurt by another person while they were doing something sexual?

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## Defining Sexual Aggression

- In the last 12 months, how many times have you ever kissed, touched, or done anything sexual with another person when that person did not want to?
  - Dichotomized (ever / never) because of low endorsement

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## Statistical Methods

- Thirteen households were dropped because they didn't meet the criteria of having valid data for 85% of the variables.
- Stata was used to compute statistical analyses
  - Differences in the distribution of characteristics by report of seriously violent behavior were tested using F-statistics.
  - Associations were quantified using logistic regression.

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## Frequency of Intentional Exposure to X-Rated Material

Medium of x-rated exposure	Violent exposure (%)	Any exposure (%)
Magazines	2.4	13.1
Movies	3.1	10.5
Internet	1.5	10.3

(n=1,578)

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## Characteristics of Youth Who Viewed X-Rated Material

- Male
- Generally older
- ↑ Witnessing caregiver spousal abuse
- ↑ Alcohol/Drug use
- ↑ Relational / physical bullying
- ↑ Starting fights
- ↓ Blocking software at home
- ↑ Know how to get around blocking software

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## Overlap in mediums (n=1578)

Number of mediums	% of youth reporting
0	80%
1	11%
2	5%
3	4%

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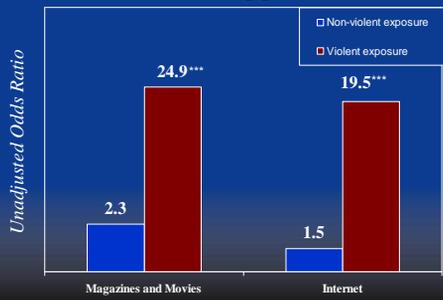
## Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Aggression Perpetration

- 2.3% of sample reported perpetration
- Perpetrators (compared to non perpetrators):
  - Older
  - ↑ Relational / physical bullying & starting fights
  - ↓ Caregiver emotional bond
  - ↓ Blocking software at home
  - ↑ Witnessing caregiver spousal abuse
  - ↑ Know how to get around blocking software
  - ↑ Alcohol/Drug use
  - ↑ use of internet in general
  - ↑ Anxiety

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## X-Rated Exposure and Sexual Aggression

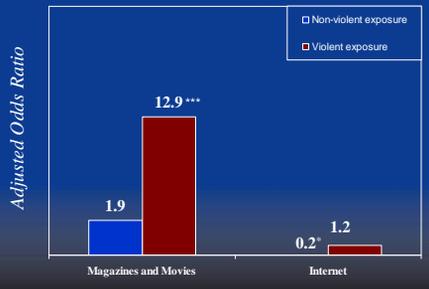


Medium	Non-violent exposure	Violent exposure
Magazines and Movies	2.3	24.9***
Internet	1.5	19.5***

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## X-Rated Exposure and Sexual Aggression



Medium	Non-violent exposure	Violent exposure
Magazines and Movies	1.9	12.9***
Internet	0.2	1.2

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## Summary

- Intentional exposure to **violent** x-rated material appears to be strongly related to concurrent reports of sexually aggressive behavior, irrespective of medium.
- The associations between non-violent x-rated material and sexually aggressive behavior are less clear.

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## Summary

- Concerns about rampant use of Internet to view x-rated material unsupported by data
  - 20% of youth report intentional exposure to x-rated material
  - 4.5% reported intentional exposure to violent x-rated material
- Intentional exposure to x-rated material may represent age-appropriate curiosity

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## Summary

- Majority of youth who report intentional exposure to x-rated material do not engage in SA
- Intentional exposure to **Violent** x-rated material via traditional media is a risk factor for SA perpetration
- Intentional exposure to **Non-violent** x-rated material via the Internet appears to be protective against SA perpetration

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## Implications

- These data provide a foundation to build upon our understanding of youth exposures to violence on the Internet, including x-rated violence.
- The findings provide justification for continued research to better understand who may be more vulnerable to the impact of Internet violence.

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