



## Psychiatry & Behavioral Science Section - 2016

### I15 Explorative Study on the Level of Online Sexual Activities and Sexual Paraphilias

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The goal of this presentation is to analyze the relationship between the level of Online Sexual Activities (OSA) and the presence of sexual paraphilias in a sample of 300 internet users (230 males, 63 females, and 7 transsexuals) between 18 and 58 years of age.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by making attendees aware that the publicity about online “predators” who prey on naive children using trickery and violence is largely inaccurate.

Internet sex crimes involving adults and juveniles more often fit a model of statutory rape. Adult offenders who meet, develop relationships with, and openly seduce underage teenagers usually fit a model of forcible sexual assault or pedophilic child molesting. This is a serious problem, but one that requires different approaches from current prevention messages emphasizing parental control and the dangers of divulging personal information. Developmentally appropriate prevention strategies that target youths directly and acknowledge normal adolescent interests in romance and sex are needed. These prevention strategies should provide younger adolescents with awareness and avoidance skills, while educating older youths about the pitfalls of sexual relationships with adults and their criminal nature. Particular attention should be paid to higher-risk youths, including those with histories of sexual abuse, sexual orientation concerns, and patterns of offline and online risk taking. Mental health practitioners need information about the dynamics of this crisis and the characteristics of victims and offenders because they are likely to encounter related issues in a variety of contexts.

**Purpose:** Participant recruitment and data gathering were managed online through a self-report electronic questionnaire including the Internet Sex Screening Test (ISST), to assess the level of OSA and to divide the users into recreative users and at-risk users, and an ad hoc questionnaire (QTSPoo) elaborated to survey the presence of online and offline sexual paraphilias.

This survey represents an attempt to systematically analyze the phenomenon of online sexual paraphilias in comparison with the level of online sexual activity, already underlined by other clinical cases and studies.<sup>1-5</sup>

Internet paraphilias are a growing phenomenon, with a remarkable social impact. This is a complex phenomenon that was influenced, on one hand by the possibilities offered on the internet to those people who have such sexual interests and, on the other hand, by the ability to attract people who did not previously have such interests.<sup>6-8</sup>

Future research should be focused on the development of diagnostic criteria able to correctly determine the sexual disorder characterized by an excessive use of the internet (cybersex addiction or online sexual compulsivity) and to individualize the risk factors involved in this disorder, such as internet sex crimes against children.

The planning of research and its tools regarding this subject collides with the continuous technological evolution, in which it is difficult to fully predict future changes in the expression of virtual sexuality, which is becoming more complex and variegated both in expression and in ways in obtaining sexual satisfaction.



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### Cybersex, Cybercrime, Sex Crimes Against Children