Researching the Affects That Online Pornography Has on U.K. Adolescents Aged 11 to 16

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## Topics

* Wellbeing
* Risks and harms
* Content-related issues

## Sample

Nearly 1,100 U.K. adolescents aged 11 to 16

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Creating a safe environment for children online

# Abstract

This article considers data from a large empirical study of nearly 1,100 U.K. adolescents aged 11 to 16 (in a mixed methods three-stage sample) and provides an overview of their experiences of online adult pornography. The article investigates how seeing online pornography influenced those who watched it, and to what degree, if any, the attitudes of those adolescents altered with repeat viewings. It concludes with an overview of the social policy challenges, both domestic and international, posed by the findings.

# Outcome

48% of children had seen online pornography, a third of them saw it at least once a week and nearly half had intentionally looked for it. Older teens and boys are are more likely to report that that that had intentionally searched for such content and that the online pornography they had seen gave them ideas about the types of sex they wanted to try out.

"The respondents were asked to evaluate most of the online
pornography they had seen, in terms of 14 different feelings/
categories, using a 5-point Likert-type scale. The overall
results were extremely varied. For example, the largest proportional
response is “unrealistic,” with 49% stating that
they agreed with this assessment; but other statements with
which sizable proportions of the young people agreed,
include that pornography is “arousing” (47%), “shocking,”
(46%) and “exciting” (40%).... 36% of viewers found the content
“silly” and 34% “amusing.” (Martellozzo et al., 2020: 5).
"As this research has shown, the exposure to explicit content
can harm children and young people’s perception of sex,
healthy relationships, and how they view their own bodies.
During the course of this study, some children and young
people asked explicitly for help and support, whether through
education and/or some form of blocking the access to undesired
materials. It is therefore undoubtful that some robust
regulations are needed to protect children and young people
from accessing online pornography." (Martellozzo et al., 2020: 8).