“It's not just sexy pics”: An investigation into sexting behaviour and behavioural problems in adolescents

# Keywords

* SextingSexual imagesBehavioural problemsAdolescenceLGBTQ

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## Sample

" 848 students completed the survey and their data was included for analysis (45.8% male, 52.7% female 1.5% other). The majority of the sample reported their nationality as Irish (n = 630, 74.3%)."

## Implications For Educators About

Other

# Abstract

"Sexting has been identified as an emerging online phenomenon among adolescents. However, research investigating its behavioural correlates and the sexting behaviours (i.e., sending and/or receiving) is still scarce. The present study investigated the association between different sexting behaviours and various behavioural problems among Irish adolescents. A sample of 848 students aged 15–18 participated in the study (Mage = 16.4 years). A self-report measure assessing the sharing of sexual images among teenagers was created and administered for the purpose of this study. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was adopted to detect emotional and behavioural problems. Findings showed that senders of sexts are more likely to be girls, whereas receivers are more likely to be boys. Two-way sexting (i.e., sending and receiving sexts) was more prominent among boys, LGBTQ adolescents, and positively associated with peer problems. Findings are discussed in terms of their theoretical and practical relevance.

# Outcome

"This study primarily investigated adolescent sexting and its prevalence and behavioural correlates in a relatively large sample of Irish students. Findings show that receiving sexts is more common (9.4%) than sending them (4.3%).This finding indicates that sexting could have the function of validating a romantic relationship and of sexual exploration (Lippman Campbell, 2014). However, a minority of adolescents either asked for, sent or received sexts from adults, strangers or other people. Although it is not possible to rule out that the stranger or the other people were teenagers, these findings are worrisome and call for further investigation of adolescents exchanging sexual contents with adults"
"Coherently with the hypothesis, findings show that more girls (29.3%) than boys (15.2%) were asked to send a sexually explicit image, while the prevalence for having sent sexual pictures was comparable between males and females (respectively 8.9% and 8%). More boys (15.9%) than females (6.2%) had received frequently a sexually explicit image after having asked for it"
"Two-way sexting was negatively associated with conduct problems, but positively associated with peer problems. Taken together, these findings suggest that being involved in two-way sexting is not a problematic behaviour in terms of conduct problems. However, the positive association with peer problems could indicate that adolescents manifesting peer problems might use the sexually explicit images (i.e., both sent and received) to tease their peers. Nevertheless, as outlined above, given the cross-sectional nature of this study, it is not possible to determine that peer problems are either an antecedent or a result of adolescent sexting."