

## The Internet, pornography, and youth

by  
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\* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses can be found in: Ybarra, M., & Mitchell, K. (2005). Exposure to internet pornography among children and adolescents: a national survey. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior, 8(5)*, 473-486. or by contacting ISK for further information.

## Problem statement and Study question

Beyond perception and belief, no information is available about linkages between purposeful **exposure to pornography** and **psychosocial challenge**.

As the Internet is used by more and more young people, this information is evermore important.

*Study question: What are the personal characteristics of youth who seek out pornography?*

## Youth Internet Safety Study Methodology

### Study design:

- National probability design
- Cross-sectional
- Telephone survey
- Fall 1999 and Spring 2000
- 1,501 youth and caregiver pairs
- 82% participation among contacted and eligible households

## Youth Internet Safety Study Methodology (Cont)

### Inclusion criteria:

- 10-17 years old
- Use Internet at least once a month for the past 6 months
- English speaking
- Live in household for at least 2 weeks in previous year
- Caregiver and youth consent

## Defining intentional exposure

**Traditional exposures:** a positive response to at least one of the three following actions:

- 1) Seeking x-rated books or materials;
- 2) Watching x-rated movies; or
- 3) Calling a 900 number.

**Online exposure:** Visiting an x-rated website on purpose.

All exposures are within the previous year. Respondents who reported both online and offline exposures were coded as 'online seekers'

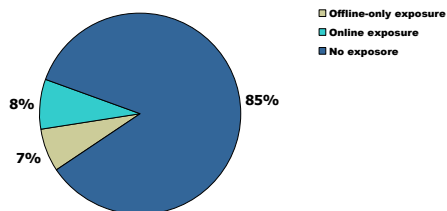
## Analytic methodology

Using multinomial logistical regression, the conditional odds of reporting either pornography seeking behavior versus non-seeking behavior is estimated given the report of:

- Parental controls,
- Caregiver-child relationships, and
- Psychosocial characteristics of the child

Results are adjusted for demographic characteristics.

## Self-reported intentional exposure to pornography



## Study sample characteristics

Demographic characteristics	No purposeful exposure (85%, n = 1256)	Offline-only exposure (7%, n = 106)	Online exposure (8%, n = 122)	Statistical Comparison
<b>Older Age (14-17 yrs)</b>	60.0% (753)	73.6% (78)	86.9% (106)	$\chi^2 (2) = 40.0^{***}$
<b>Male</b>	47.3% (594)	79.3% (84)	86.9% (106)	$\chi^2 (2) = 101.9^{***}$
<b>Race</b>				$\chi^2 (4) = 1.9$
White (Reference group)	77.3% (971)	73.6% (78)	76.2% (93)	
Black	10.8% (135)	76.2% (93)	9.0% (11)	
Other	11.9% (150)	11.3% (12)	14.8% (18)	
<b>Hispanic ethnicity</b>	7.3% (91)	4.7% (5)	8.2% (10)	$\chi^2 (2) = 1.2$
<b>Income (&gt;\$75,000)</b>	23.0% (289)	21.7% (23)	27.9% (34)	$\chi^2 (2) = 1.6$

\*p-value<.05; \*\*p-value<.01; \*\*\*p-value<.001

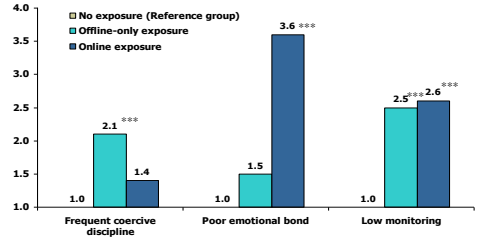
## Findings: Parental controls

Caregivers were asked whether they:

- ◆ Had rules about Internet use
- ◆ Ever checked the history function
- ◆ Had blocking software on the home computer

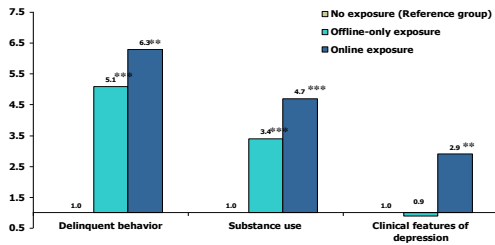
None were related to the report of pornography seeking behavior

## Findings: Parent-child relationship



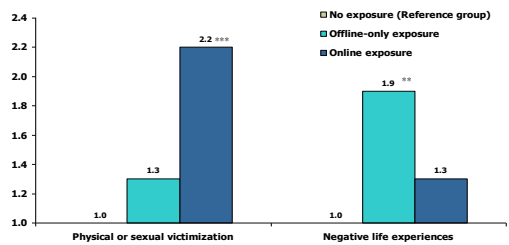
\*p-value<.05; \*\*p-value<.01; \*\*\*p-value<.001

## Findings: Psychosocial characteristics



\*p-value<.05; \*\*p-value<.01; \*\*\*p-value<.001

## Findings: Psychosocial characteristics (cont)



\*p-value<.05; \*\*p-value<.01; \*\*\*p-value<.001

## Study Limitations

Three measures of offline seeking versus one indicator of online seeking behavior

Cross sectional data

Exposure indicator does not reflect intensity of exposure

Data collected in 1999 – 2000; possible trends have changed

## Implications

The vast majority of minors who use the Internet to look for sexual images are likely 14 years of age and older.

## Implications

Some youth who report intentionally seeking pornography may be facing multiple challenges:

- Poor caregiver-child relationships,
- Delinquent behavior, and
- Substance use.

Intentional exposure may be one behavior among many for some young people struggling in their adolescence.

## Implications

Providers should talk with young people who report pornography seeking behavior to assess whether it is a marker for greater challenge.

Parents should focus on a healthy caregiver-child relationship, as this is most strongly related to pornography seeking behavior.



**Questions**



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