

R18 material: its potential impact on people under 18

An overview of the available literature

Research review conducted by
Ellen Helsper, LSE for Ofcom

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Foreword

Section 319 (1) of the Communications Act 2003 (“the Act”) requires Ofcom to set a Code which contains standards for the content of television and radio services. The Ofcom Broadcasting Code, published on 25 May 2005 takes effect on 25 July 2005¹. The Code applies to all broadcasters regulated by Ofcom, with certain exceptions in the case of the BBC (Sections Five, Six, Nine and Ten) and S4C (part of Section Six).

This independent research was commissioned by Ofcom from Ellen Helsper, London School of Economics to assist in the consideration of points raised by the public consultation on the Ofcom Broadcasting Code which began in July 2004.

Ofcom has a statutory duty under section 319 (2) (a) of the Act to set such standards as appear to Ofcom “best calculated to secure the standards objectives”. In this case the relevant standards objective is “that persons under the age of 18 are protected” (section 319(2) (a) of the Act). Also Ofcom must have regard to “the vulnerability of children and of others whose circumstances appear to Ofcom to put them in need of special protection” (section 3(4) (h)).

In its consultation, Ofcom asked whether material classified as “R18” (i.e. sexually explicit material featuring consenting adults) by the British Board of Film Certification (the BBFC) or material equivalent to that standard should be permitted for broadcast. A full description of the “R18” category can be found on the BBFC website.

In deciding whether to retain a ban on the broadcast of “R18” and “R18” equivalent material, or whether to lift it, Ofcom considered the minimum standards required under the Television Without Frontiers Directive (89/552/EEC), as amended by (97/36/EC). Firstly, whether the transmission of “R18” material was prohibited under Article 22(1). This states that:

“Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that television broadcasts by broadcasters under their jurisdiction do not include any programmes which might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, in particular programmes that involve pornography or gratuitous violence.”

Secondly, what was required under Article 22 (2). This provides that:

“The measures provided for in paragraph 1 shall also extend to other programmes which are likely to impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, except where it is ensured, by selecting the time of the broadcast or by any technical measure, that minors in the area of transmission will not normally hear or see such broadcasts.”

Thirdly, Ofcom considered what was required by the Act with regard to under-eighteens.

This research was commissioned as an academic overview of the literature available to examine the potential impact of “R18” (and equivalent material) upon people under the age of eighteen to assist Ofcom in reaching a decision upon what standard was best calculated to secure the objective that under-eighteens be protected.

¹ With the exception of rule 10.17 which takes effect on July 1st 2005 when the Investment Recommendation (Media) Regulations come into force.

Executive summary

- There seems to be no relationship between the *availability of pornography* and an increase in *sex crimes* in other countries; in comparison there is more evidence for the opposite effect.
- Research with adults indicates no relationship between the *commission of sex crimes* and use of pornography at an early age. Again in comparison there is evidence for the opposite effect.
- Research indicates that *V-chips and ratings* were found useful by parents, but that they might be enticing youngsters to access this material.
- Due to ethical restrictions, there is a *severe lack of research* regarding the effects of exposure of minors to R18 pornography which contributes to the evidence being inconclusive.
- There is some evidence that indicates that sexual material influences the *moral development* of young people under the age of 18. In other words, that through exposure to pornography young people become more cynical towards traditional relationships (marriage) and become sexually active at a younger age.
- There is no empirical research that proves beyond doubt that exposure to R18 material seriously impairs the *mental or physical development* of minors.

Might R18 material seriously impair the development of minors?

From the research reviewed in this report the answer would be no.

Is R18 material likely to impair the development of minors?

Since there is no conclusive evidence this is a hard question to answer. There might be an effect on the moral development of minors.

Section 1

Introduction

This overview was produced for Ofcom in response to a consultation regarding the desirability of making non-abusive explicit sex between consenting adults available on television (consultation on the proposed Ofcom Broadcasting Code, 14 July 2004). Many organisations and individuals gave their opinions on these matters, but a more extensive review of the research was absent.

This report gives an overview of the literature discussed in the consultation documents and complements this with studies that are considered important but not presented by any of the participants in the consultation.

Ofcom's consultation highlighted a series of broad arguments for and against the transmission of pornography.

Arguments for R18 material: Contributions to the consultation cited freedom of expression (Article 10 of the EC Convention on Human Rights) as an argument for making R18² material available on television. Others also argued that R18 material is already available in sex shops and can be downloaded from the internet. A third argument for making this material available was that its negative effects have not been proven.

Argument against R18 material: The main argument against R18 material is that it harms women and young people by its existence. Whether or not it has effects on behaviour or attitudes, the decision to show this type of material or not according to the contributors is essentially a moral one (Dworkin, 1992, 1997; Russell, 1993)³.

The specific goal of this report is to assess, through reviewing existing research, *whether the presentation of explicit sexual intercourse between consenting adults on British television might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral health of minors and should thus be banned from transmission on television*. If no evidence is found that R18 material might *seriously impair*, then there needs to be consideration of whether it is *likely to impair* this development.

Definitions

It is notoriously difficult to define what pornography actually is (Hunter, 2000). Often different words are used to distinguish between types of pornography. Some scholars make a distinction between *erotica* (material that shows sexual expression between two people in equal power positions) and *pornography* (depicting objectification of and dominance over women) (Russell, 1993; Steinmen, 1979)⁴. However, in most empirical work pornography is understood to be material that brings sexual arousal to ordinary people (Hunter, 2000).

² R18 refers to the type of material as defined by the British Board of Film Classification that can be shown in licensed cinemas or supplied in licensed sex shops to persons over 18 years old

³ Dworkin (1997, 1992). Research method: Review and informed opinion.

⁴ Russell (1993). Research method: Interviews. Sample: interviewed porn stars about their experience working in the (violent) pornography industry. Steinmen (1979) Quoted by (Hunter, 2000). Research method: Discussion of the definition of 'bad' vs 'good' pornography.

This report does not address studies on *abusive pornography* in depth. Abusive pornography refers to sexual interaction between adults that includes violence or bestiality, sexual intercourse between adults and children⁵, or sexual intercourse between adults that is not consensual. This material is excluded because it would not be considered suitable for transmission on television under any circumstances.

This report does address *R18 material*. By this is meant material that shows sexual intercourse between consenting adults. If classified by the British Board of Film Classification it would be classified as R18. In the UK, under current law, this sort of material is available in licensed sex shops. Although R18 is a British Standard we have used R18 when discussing material that fits the R18 parameters that is the subject of overseas research or broadcast.

General comments about research on pornography

Pornography research seems to be an area of research where there are just as many reviews of research as actual research. Of the 113 studies reviewed for this report 62 contained original empirical data (e.g. crime statistics, clinical cases, experimental or survey data) while the other 51 reviewed the data provided by these studies. However, only around 13 of these studies included empirical information on minors.

There are a few authors who account for most empirical research done in this field: Brown, Check, Donnerstein, Kutchinsky, Linz, Malamuth, and Zillmann. All these authors come from the US or Canada, except Kutchinsky who is based in Denmark.

There are two types of common *quantitative* research in relation to the effects of pornography:

Experimental research

Participants are usually presented with a video depicting abusive pornography, R18 material, violent images or neutral material. Afterwards they are asked to give their opinions on women. Behavioural reactions are also measured using any of the following methods:

- testing general aggression by having the person administer (fictional) electric shocks to another person (female or male);
- testing (sexual and aggressive) behaviour towards women by having a research assistant interact with the person; and
- testing physical reactions (penile and general excitement) to (images of) women by using medical equipment.

Studies vary in the number of images/videos the participants are exposed to, the number of times they are exposed to these images and the intensity of the images they are exposed to. These studies are not representative of everyday circumstances under which people watch television or behave, but allow for causal inferences.

Correlational research

This type of research uses surveys or national crime statistics and looks at the co-occurrence of exposure to different types of pornography and attitudes or behaviours. No causal inferences can be drawn from this type of research.

Qualitative inquiries often comprise interviewing young offenders or adult sex offenders about their use of pornography. There are a few studies which interview victims of (domestic) sex crimes in relation to the use of pornography by the offender.

⁵ The actual age of the actor is irrelevant in such portrayals.

In some instances these answers are compared with the answers of offenders who committed non-sexual crimes or with a control group of non-offenders.

Section 2

The review process

Methodology used for the report

Collection of documents

All documents provided by OFCOM were reviewed and judged on their relevance for this report. Comments or papers that were solely based on 'gut feelings' or opinions were excluded from further investigation.

All references in the documents provided by OFCOM and in the papers found separately were sought out and judged, based on abstracts or summaries, on their relevance for this report. This search process was stopped once the number of new references started approaching zero.

To make sure no recent research was excluded, a general search using Psycinfo and Swetswise was carried out and the relevant research that was not included before was added to the reference list.

In total, 113 articles/research reports were reviewed in more depth. Appendix A provides a bibliography of these. Appendix B is an overview of all the references cited by authors in this field not all of which were reviewed for this report.

Decisions on inclusion in the report

Studies related to abusive porn were only included when they made a comparison between R18 (non-violent/abusive) pornography and abusive pornography. Studies were also included when the type of pornography used was unclear from the abstract or summary.

A number of studies regarding European countries and the influence of their (more lenient) R18 policies were reviewed in order to provide some context.

The studies that related to the effects of R18 material on minors were all studied in detail. These studies were categorised according to *type* (reviews or empirical studies) and *pornography effect* (type of negative, positive or no effect). If they constituted empirical research they were further judged on the *methods* and the *main findings* as they were presented in the paper or report.

The abstracts and summaries of studies related to the effects of R18 material on adults were read and incorporated in the report in so far as they were readily available.

Studies on the influence of pornography on the internet were left aside, but are briefly mentioned in section 4 and 5.

Section 3

International policies and effects

The influence of R18 related policies

Introduction

The UK is one of three countries within the European Union (the others are Ireland and Poland) that does not allow R18 material to be shown on television.

Many countries have *more lenient policies* towards explicit sexual material on television, and were as such considered relevant for this review.

After a discussion of the policy situation in these other countries, this section briefly refers to research regarding the effectiveness of policies in relation to v-chips⁶ and programme ratings.

Denmark

After the abolition of all restrictions on showing pornography in 1969 the sex crime rates dropped in Denmark (Kutchinsky, 1991; 1973; 1991a)⁷.

A counter-argument to the assumption that lower sex crime rates could be contributed solely to the legalisation of pornography was that these were actually caused by a change in police policy (some crimes were depenalized). A second counter-argument was that this was true only for less violent sex crimes, but not in relation to for example rape (Cline, 1995; Whitehouse, 1977)⁸.

However, according to Kutchinsky (Kutchinsky, 1973; 1991a) the increase in rape in Denmark was only minor and probably caused by increased reporting of these crimes due to higher awareness. Controlling for other factors he concluded that the reduction in sex crimes was attributable to the availability of pornography.

Japan

Pornography is widely held to be exceptionally violent in Japan. However, it has the lowest crime rate in the world. Since pornography became widely available and almost unrestricted in Japan during the 1980s sex crime rates have dropped considerably. This was especially marked because before the liberalisation there had been a consistent increase (Diamond & Uchiyama, 1999; Kutchinsky, 1991a)⁹. Diamond and Uchiyama and Kutchinsky report similar findings for (former) *West Germany and Sweden*.

⁶ The "V-Chip" is a technological device installed in a television set that reads information encoded in a rated program and blocks programs from the set based upon the rating selected by the parent (Definition by the Federal Communications Commission, US).

⁷ Kutchinsky (1973, 1991a, 1991b). Research method: Correlational research. Sample: National crime rates of reported rape, non sexual violent assault and non-violent sex crimes for Denmark, Sweden, West Germany and the US. For Denmark also: reported child molestation and public attitudes towards crimes.

⁸ Cline (1995). Research method: review and clinical case studies. Sample: 300 patients with sexual illnesses (addiction, exhibitionism, voyeurism, paedophilia etc). Whitehouse (1977). Research method: review.

⁹ Diamond & Uchiyama (1999). Research method: Correlational research. Sample: National crime rates (Japanese National Police Agency) of reported sex crimes, murder, assault and public indecency. Socio-demographic data of perpetrators and victims were also collected.

Not only did sex crime rates drop in Japan between 1972 and 1995, there was also a general decrease in crime nationwide (murders dropped by 40% and non-sexual physical assault by 60%).

A detailed study of different types of sex crimes shows that the percentage of rapes and sexual abuse within families or on dates dropped significantly. Because sex crimes by people known to the victim and by adolescents decreased more steeply than those committed by others, a bigger proportion of sex crimes was committed by strangers and adults in 1995 than in 1972.

Since in Japan all types of pornography (including abusive) are readily available, it is difficult to judge how much of these findings can be contributed to R18 type material. On an individual level more negative effects have been found for non-R18 material (see sections 4 and 5). Therefore, one can cautiously hypothesize that the positive effects of the availability of pornography would remain if just R18 material was permitted.

USA

The US is the biggest consumer of pornography in the world and the biggest exporter to Canada (Einseidel, 1988). A government report in 1985 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1986) concluded that pornography could have severe mental and physical consequences on adults and children¹⁰. This report was highly criticized by many because it was said to draw conclusions contrary to the evidence presented. It was also criticised in terms of decision making processes (supposed bias of the board members) and in terms of the interpretation by others (Langevin & Curnoe, 2004; Langevin et al., 1988; Linz, Penrod, & Donnerstein, 1987; Nutter & Kearns, 1993; Paletz, 1988)¹¹.

There is some evidence that in regions of the US where most pornography is available, attitudes towards women are more positive and sex crime rates are lower (Baron, 1990; Baron & Straus, 1984; Kutchinsky, 1991a; Linz, Land, Williams, Paul, & Ezell, 2004)¹².

¹⁰ Koop (1987). Research method: Review.

Linz et al (1987a, 1987b). Research method: Review.

¹¹ Langevin et al(1988). Research method: Interviews. Sample: 277 male sex offender and 50 control subjects in Canada.

Langevin et al(2004). Research method: 561 sex offenders (181 against children, 144 against adults, 223 incest, 8 exhibitionists, 5 miscellaneous cases).

Nutter et al (1993). Research methods: interviews. Sample: 25 non incarcerated sex offenders and 25 controls. Paletz (1988). Research method: Review.

¹² Linz et al (2004). Research method: Correlational study. Method: 20 adult sex businesses and 20 control sites with similar characteristics were related to crime rates in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Baron et al (1983, 1990). Research method: Correlational research. Sample: Circulation of soft-core pornographic magazines, official rape rates and gender equality measured by G(ender) E(quality) (inde)X. GEX has 24 indicators of equality (in political, economical and legal right). First study showed positive relation, but the latter (1990) controlled for other factors and found negative relationship.

Australia

Based on a review of studies, in 1988 the joint select committee on video material suggested replacing an existing X-rating with a non-violent erotica category. The discussion around the desirability of introducing the NVE rating continues, bills have been passed accepting it and were followed by others rejecting it (Jackson, 2001)¹³. While the government is deciding on the best way forward all pornography is banned from public television (Graham, 2000; Kutchinsky, 1991b; Wilson & Nugent, 1987)¹⁴.

Canada

The Fraser Committee in 1985 took a human rights approach to pornography which meant that they did not look for evidence of harm but assumed that pornography is inherently degrading to women.

This resulted in a 3-way classification system: criminal sanctions for child porn and sexually violent porn and no public showing of non-abusive porn (Einseidel, 1988). A definitional distinction was made between erotica (nudity), which was allowed, and pornography (sexual acts), which would not be freely available.

V-chips, credit cards and pin numbers

During Ofcom's consultation there was some support for pin numbers for R18 material in order to restrict access. As far as could be determined no research is available testing the effect of pin numbers on the availability of pornography to minors. Comparable research has been done with the V-chip.

V-chip and rating systems

In empirical research on the effects and effectiveness of the V-chip, Kunkel et al (2002)¹⁵ found that in the US one in four television programmes contained sexual behaviour and that the S(ex) label¹⁶ was used the least frequently of all labels. The S-label was not employed in all cases where it should be applicable, according to Kunkel et al, and therefore children of parents relying solely on these ratings would have been exposed to programmes that parents did not want them to see. Kunkel et al argued that blocking programmes based on this system still left 50% of the programmes with objectionable content free to view.

US parents found the programme rating systems very useful, but their *understanding* of what these actually meant was poor (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2001)¹⁷. A content

¹³ Jackson (2001) Research method: review.

¹⁴ Graham (2000), Kutchinsky (1991) & Wilson (1987) Research method: review of policy in Australia.

¹⁵ Kunkel et al (2002). Research method: Content analysis. Sample: US, composite week of television programming for 10 different channels and over sampling of 3 full weeks of prime time broadcasting programming on 4 major networks. Total of 1147 programmes (prime time 245 shows). These shows were coded for portrayal of violence, sex, adult language at scene level. Reliability: CIAM 89% for violence, 86% for sex and 91% for language (all more than 75% which indicates high intercoder reliability). CIAM refers to the agreement between coders on the content of the scenes.

¹⁶ This label refers to sexual language and behaviour but not R18 pornography which is not admitted on television in the US.

¹⁷ Kaiser Family Foundation (2001) Research method: telephone survey. Sample: 800 parents of children aged 2-17.

rating system seemed to be preferred by parents (Bushman & Cantor, 2003; Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999)¹⁸.

Bushman and Cantor (2003) concluded that age and content ratings work for children under the age of 8. For those over the age of 11 and especially for boys, a rating actually *increased* the motivation of children to watch the programme. Even though the effects of ratings varied by age and gender, their final conclusion was that '*media ratings do more to attract than to repel viewers*' (p.138). Bushman and Cantor explained these results by hypothesizing that ratings served for some as a convenient way to find programmes with a certain type of content. They also argued that in this case there was no difference between content and ratings.

Conclusions

There appears to be *no link* between the *availability* of pornography and *sexual violence* towards women in countries where pornography policies are less restrictive (Baron, 1990; Baron & Straus, 1984; Diamond & Uchiyama, 1999; Kutchinsky, 1973; 1991a; Langevin, 1991).

As Becker and Stein (1991)¹⁹ note, none of these studies has looked at *actual use* of pornography, nor have they taken into consideration differences between reporting of rape and *victimisation* or looked at *cultural* differences. However, Baron, Diamond and Uchiyama and Abramson et al did indicate that differences could be linked to differences in general political climate (more liberal attitudes towards sexuality) or a different cultural background (a historical custom of use of pornography) (Abramson & Hayashi, 1984; Diamond & Uchiyama, 1999)²⁰.

Kutchinsky's (Kutchinsky, 1991a) and Diamond & Uchiyama's (Diamond & Uchiyama, 1999) more recent studies were methodologically very rigorous, and these checked for *other explanatory factors*. Their conclusion was that that these cannot explain the decrease in reporting completely, and that the availability of pornography was important in the decrease in sex crimes in the countries they studied.

In some cases content and age ratings on which the v-chip system is based did not function as desired and served to attract young viewers to inappropriate content (Bushman & Cantor, 2003; Kunkel et al., 2002).

¹⁸ Bushman (2003). Research method: Review and Meta-analysis. Sample: 18 research reports related to rating systems containing 70 independent samples of a total of 5,519 participants. Strasburger et al (1999). Research method: Review.

¹⁹ Becker et al (1991) Research method: Interviews and review. Sample: 160 adolescent sex offenders (boys).

²⁰ Abramson et al (1984). Research method: Correlational research and content analysis. Sample: Rape rate statistics in Japan and US (reported rape). Content analysis of Japanese and US pornography in terms of the level of violence.

Section 4

The effects of R18 material on minors

The effects of sexually explicit material on persons under the age of 18

What does the literature say about the effects of porn on young people?

- The first and most important point to make is that there is very little research that addresses the effects of pornography on young people (Donnerstein, Wilson, & Linz, 1992; Heins, 2001; Linz, Malamuth, & Beckett, 1992; VanEvra, 2004)²¹. According to Strasburger and Donnerstein in 1999 there were only 5 studies linking use of sexual material and teenagers' behaviour (vs. more than 1000 studies for violence).
- Ethical considerations make it next to impossible to do empirical research with this group (Donnerstein et al., 1992; Heins, 2001). Most studies are therefore correlational and cannot indicate the direction of causality (Kubey, 1996)²². This is understandable in light of ethical considerations, but nonetheless quite surprising given the bulk of research conducted on children and violence in the media.
- Most research that has been carried out is post hoc. It looks for example at sex offenders and their exposure to pornography at an early age. Those few studies that do discuss minors focus on adolescents or in reality base their conclusions on research done with college students (Becker & Stein, 1991; Linz, Wilson, & Donnerstein, 1992)²³.
- Those few studies that research the negative effects of pornography on children tend to focus on moral impairment of children (their attitudes towards women and relationships) or young offenders and are all done in the US or Canada.
- While it would be important to distinguish between different age groups and young people with different backgrounds (Brown & Witherspoon, 2002)²⁴ the research is not sufficient to actually do this.

What follows is a more detailed discussion of studies that argue any of the three positions towards effects of R18 material (positive effects, no effects, or negative effects). This is followed by a description of information from studies that are not directly related to effects of R18 material, but to the wider issue of sexual content onscreen. In the comments and conclusion section inferences are drawn as to whether the effects found imply serious impairment or likely impairment of the development of minors.

Effects of pornography on young people

In 1986 the Meese Commission in the US stated that no conclusive evidence could be found for pornography causing serious harm to children. Notwithstanding this lack

²¹ Heins (2001), Linz et al (1992), Van Evra (2004) & Donnerstein et al (1992). Research method: review.

²² Kubey (1996). Research method: review.

²³ Linz et al (1992). Research method: review.

²⁴ Brown et al (2002). Research method: review of literature and studies related to adolescents aggressive, sexual, physical and nutritional behaviour.

of conclusive evidence, it decided to restrict access to pornography arguing that: *'the most important harms must be seen in moral terms....[F]or children to be taught by these materials that sex is public, that sex is commercial and that sex can be divorced from any degree of affection, love, commitment, or marriage is for us the wrong message at the wrong time.'* (quoted in (Heins, 2001), p.10 and in (Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1987) p.952).

The following section looks at some of the studies that the Meese Commission based its conclusion on and also reviews more recent studies. This section is divided into three parts: the first part consists of a discussion of studies that argue that pornography has positive effects. It is followed by a section discussing no effects research, and it ends with a review of studies which indicate the negative effects of exposure.

Positive effects. There are studies that conclude that pornography:

- Causes less sexually deviant behaviour in adulthood; In studies done in the 60s and 70s sex offenders were reported to have been exposed to pornography at a later stage in childhood than non-offenders and they tended to come from more restrictive families (Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, & Christenson, 1965; Goldstein & Kant, 1973; Nutter & Kearns, 1993; Propper, 1972; Walker, 1970; Wilson, 1978)²⁵.
- Causes less sexually deviant behaviour in childhood; In Japan the percentage of sex offenders under 19 years old dropped significantly from 33.3% to 9.6% between 1972 and 1995 (Diamond & Uchiyama, 1999). This could indicate that the increased availability of pornography worked not only to decrease the likelihood of sex crimes at a later age, but that the effect was immediate at the actual age of exposure.
- Causes better reporting of sex crimes; Diamond and Uchiyama (1999) argued that the availability of sexual material made talking about sexual relationships easier for young people. They hypothesized that because of this greater openness, young women are more likely to report sex offences. Kutchinsky (1991a) argued that the same can be observed in other, European, countries.
- Educates; Greenberg, Brown and Buerkel-Rothfuss ²⁶ argued that while high-school students did learn sexual terminology by being exposed to sexual material, there seemed to be no effect on attitudes towards marriage, prostitution or premarital sex. Other studies concluded that sexual messages (in this case not pornography) were used by girls as guidance for how to look in general and how to act in sexual encounters (Brown, White, & Nikopoulou, 1993; Gruber & Grube, 2000)²⁷.

²⁵ Gebhard et al (1965). Research method: Interview. Sample: 710 sex offenders.

Wilson (1978). Research method: Survey. Sample: no information available.

Propper (1972) Research method: no information available.

Walker (1970) Research methods: no information available.

Goldstein et al (1973). Research method: interviews. Sample: 20 rapist, 40 sex offenders (20 against boys, 20 against girls), 37 androphiles, 13 transsexuals, 78 porn users, and 53 control volunteers.

²⁶ Greenberg et al (1991). Research method: experiment. Sample: High-school students were randomly assigned to 4 viewing conditions (prostitution, married intercourse, unmarried intercourse and homosexuality). Afterwards they answered a questionnaire that measured understanding of sexual terms, and approval of prostitution, homosexuality and unmarried sex

²⁷ Brown et al (1991). Research methods: no information available

While in the US teenagers did not seem to learn about STDs through media, in Western Europe they seemed to get a more realistic idea about risk and sex through the media (Brown & Witherspoon, 2002; Keller & Brown, 2002). Some studies see sexual material on television as educational, as long as it is balanced, shows risks as well as pleasures and is co-viewed by parents (Keller & Brown, 2002; Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999)²⁸.

No effects. Others say R18 material has no effects because of:

- Other factors; The media are only one factor in a web of influences on a child's sexuality, attitudes and behaviour. Media alone will not make young people ignore what parents, educators and peers have to say (Gruber & Grube, 2000; Huston, Wartella, & Donnerstein, 1998; Malamuth, 1986)²⁹. It is likely that those youngsters who are more accepting of sex role stereotypes consume more content that confirms these beliefs and that general family patterns and education are important factors in contributing to the existence of these gender stereotypes (Gruber & Grube, 2000). A longitudinal study by Peterson, Moore and Furstenburg (1984)³⁰ concluded that there was no relationship between self-reported exposure to pornography at age 10-11 and sexual activity at age 16. Other factors were assumed to explain sexual behaviour.
- Lack of understanding; Research indicates that children under the age of 12 are often confused by sexual messages³¹, because they do not understand what it is all about (Cantor, Mares, & Hyde, 2003; Donnerstein et al., 1992; Gruber & Grube, 2000; Silverman-Watkins & Sprafkin, 1983)³². At the age of 14 children started to understand the messages better, especially if these were directed at discouraging certain sexual practices, however references to actual intercourse were less well understood. Besides causing annoyance (in older children) and confusion (in younger children), encounters with sexual material did not seem to cause traumatic experiences that affected the children later in life (Heins, 2001; Rice Hughes, 1998).
- Literacy; Most of the evidence for mental impairment by exposure to pornography is based on case studies which make it hard to generalise the findings (for an example see Cline, 1995). Many researchers stress that information, education and parental guidance are more important for young people (and adults) in a healthy approach to sexuality than an outright ban of R18 material (Brown & Witherspoon, 2002; Gruber & Grube, 2000; Heins,

²⁸ Keller et al (2002). Research method: review.

²⁹ Huston et al (1998). Research method: review.

Malamuth (1986). Research method: Correlational. Sample: 155 males. Relation of sexual arousal in response to aggression, dominance as a motive for sexual acts, hostility toward women, attitudes accepting of violence against women, psychoticism, and sexual experience (pornography exposure) to self-reported sexual aggression.

³⁰ Peterson et al (1984) Research method: interviews and survey. Sample: children aged 10 to 11 and again when they were 16 years old.

³¹ These studies do not deal directly with R18 material but with sexual images and language in other types of programming.

³² Silverman et al (1983). Research method: Experiment. Sample: 18 boys and 18 girls (12,14, and 16 years old) interpreted 24 TV excerpts, each of which contained either a sexual innuendo or a nonsexual filler joke. Innuendos were varied by topic (intercourse, physical/sexual attributes, socially discouraged practices, and nonsexual) and explicitness (high vs. low).

Cantor et al (2003). Research method: Content analysis. Sample: 196 descriptions of undergraduates experience with sexual media. Inter coder reliability not available.

2001; Intons Peterson, Roskos Ewoldsen, Thomas, & Shirley, 1989; Kubey, 1996; Linz et al., 1992)³³.

They argued that media-literate children are probably more likely to correctly interpret the messages they receive from television and avoid risky behaviour (see also Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999; VanEvra, 2004). This is deemed especially true in the area of sex education since there are fewer sources available on this topic than for other issues. The media might be the only source of information for a young person about sex. Other sources of course cannot be ignored; North American teens indicated that they would prefer sex education from their parents than from media or school (Brown & Witherspoon, 2002).

- No relationship between pornography and crime; In studies where the link was made between sex crimes and the use of pornography, the use of pornography in early childhood was often not related to criminal behaviour at a later age (Condron & Nutter, 1988; Diamond & Uchiyama, 1999; U.S. Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, 1970; Walker, 1970)³⁴. Based on interviews with 160 young sex offenders (average age 15 years old), Becker and Stein (1991) concluded that while the use of pornography and drugs did not influence the severity or type of sexual crime committed, the use of alcohol and history of sexual abuse did. These same offenders said that pornographic material played no role in the commission of their crime (only two said it did) even though one might have expected them to lay the blame elsewhere. In a series of studies Langevin et al concluded that there was no difference between sex offenders and others in their use of pornography in adolescence (Langevin, 1991; Langevin et al, 2004; 1985; 1988)³⁵.

Mixed effects. Some studies report mixed findings:

- A recent study for the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) (Cragg Ross Dawson, 2000) examined the views of a selection of 38 expert professionals (psychiatrists, social workers, teachers, etc.) in order to find out what consensus there was about whether pornography was harmful to young people.
- There was consensus among these professionals that pornography is "not helpful" to child development and that children should be protected. However, on the issue of whether harm actually occurs to children, there was much more debate. It was concluded that while a majority said that harm occurs, they cited very little evidence to back this claim, either from their own case loads or those of colleagues.

³³ Intons-Peterson (1989). Research method: experiment. Sample; 90 males (21-38 yrs) were shown 1 of 2 brief films about the importance of concern for one's sexual partner and about the impact of rape on its victims or a no informational film. Then they were shown another film that depicted sexual violence, nonviolent sexuality, or nonviolent and nonsexual material. Thereafter they were asked about their belief in the rape myth.

³⁴ US Attorney General (1970). Research method: review.

Condron et al (1988) Research method: interviews. Sample: 13 paraphilic patients, 16 non incarcerated sex offenders, 15 men treated for sexual illnesses and 18 members of service clubs.

³⁵ Langevin (1985) Research methods: case studies. Sample: Clinical information on pedophilic patients.

- There was more agreement over who was at risk. If harm occurs, then there was agreement that this was more likely to occur to at-risk children rather than those brought up in a secure environment.
- There was certainly a broad unease about the role of pornography in society and the report noted this might colour views on its effects on children.
- Interviewees often raised areas of pornography that aren't in the R18 rubric. And for some, the R18 factors of penetration and ejaculation were less concerning than depictions of oral, group or homosexual sex.

Negative effects. Finally, R18 material is argued to have negative effects because it:

- Causes sexually deviant/criminal behaviour in later life; Research into this area is particularly difficult since sexually deviant behaviour cannot be directly observed in experiments or other empirical research (Becker & Stein, 1991). Studies rely on police statistics (for criminal cases) and retrospective reporting by offenders or patients. Cline (1994; 1995)³⁶ and Kubey (1996) argue that early exposure to pornography leads to addiction to heavier forms of pornography and deviant behaviour in later life (Rice Hughes, 1998). They back these arguments up by referring to their own patients and their history of pornography (ab)use. Marshall (1988)³⁷ in a much-cited study found that sex offenders had been exposed to more hard-core sexual material during their adolescent years.
- Causes sexually deviant/criminal behaviour in adolescence; Undergraduate students were more likely to consider having sex with a women by force if they were sure they would not be caught after seeing violent pornography (Malamuth, Haber, & Feshbach, 1980)³⁸.
- Causes acceptance of sexually deviant behaviour; Zillmann (2000) in a review of research on young adults and adolescents concluded that prolonged or frequent exposure to R18 pornography makes them think that sexual behaviour in all its forms is more prevalent than it actually is.
- Causes negative attitudes; As with adults, for minors it is assumed that frequent viewing of sexual material is related to a greater acceptance of stereotypical sex roles, and accepting what is portrayed on television as realistic. Studies with young people that test this hypothesis often do not use pornography as such, but already available images of sexuality in music videos, soaps and other television depictions (Dixon & Linz, 1997; Pally, 1996)³⁹.

³⁶ Cline (1994). Research method: Case study. Sample: 300 patients with sexual illnesses.

³⁷ Marshall (1988). Research method: interview. Sample: 89 sex offenders. (23 rapist, 51 child molesters and 15 incest offenders) and 24 volunteers (non sex offenders)

³⁸ Malamuth et al (1980) Research method: experiment. Sample: 53 males and 38 female volunteers. They were first exposed to sadomasochistic or non violent passage of event then to actual rape text. They were then measured on sexual arousal, attitudes towards the victim, attitudes towards the perpetrator and whether they would commit rape if not found out (males) and how fearful they were of being raped and if they would enjoy it (females).

³⁹ Pally, M (1996) Research method: review.

Dixon et al (1997). Research method: experiment. Sample: Participants were exposed to either sexually explicit rap music or non rap music which varied in sexual explicitness (high, medium, low).

It needs to be stressed that this was all correlational research and therefore does not say anything about causality (Huston et al., 1998; Linz & Donnerstein, 1988; VanEvra, 2004)⁴⁰.

Research on adolescents indicates that frequent and long term exposure leads to negative attitudes in men about women's sexuality (Zillmann, 2000). This is argued by social learning theorists to be especially powerful when pornography is the first sexual experience of a young boy (Kubey, 1996).

- Causes mental trauma in young children; There is some clinical evidence that younger children are more likely to be confused by pornography because they do not really understand it and older children tend to become angered or disgusted (Cline, 1994; Rice Hughes, 1998).
- Causes promiscuity in young people; Most influential in this area is Brown who has conducted research into general television viewing and adolescents' sexual behaviour (not related to R18 material but to sexual depictions and language in mainstream television programming) (Brown, 2002; Brown, Childers, & Waszak, 1990; Brown & Newcomer, 1991; Brown & Witherspoon, 2002)⁴¹. She has found that more sexually active adolescents watch more television and more television with sexual content (See also Corne, Briere, & Esses, 1992; Davis & Braucht, 1970; Rice Hughes, 1998)⁴². While young girls thought it 'gross', older girls actively sought information and sexual material (Australian Government, 2000; Brown & Newcomer, 1991; Brown et al., 1993; See also Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999)⁴³. In relation to this it is also believed that frequent or prolonged exposure to R18 pornography makes attitudes towards relationships more cynical and marriage is seen as less fulfilling (Zillmann, 2000)⁴⁴.
- Although not directly related to R18 material there has been research in relation to *internet pornography* and how images are used to bully other children by spreading them around school. A qualitative study by the Australian government was one of the few which directly asked young people about their experience with pornography and the media (Australian Government, 2000). It concluded that this bullying, while mentioned, was not specifically complained about by younger children. Recent studies found that 57% of those under 19 years old have come across pornography online (Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2004)⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ Linz et al (1988). Research methods: review.

⁴¹ Brown et al (1990). Research method: Review of content analyses.

Brown et al (1991) Research method: correlational. Sample: a survey of 391 adolescents asking about sexual television show exposure, beliefs about sexuality and sexual behaviour.

Brown et al (2002). Research method: review.

⁴² Rice Hughes (1998). Research method: review.

Davis (1970). Research method: review.

Corne et al (1992). Research method: correlational. Sample: Survey of 187 female college students asking about childhood exposure to pornography, current sexual fantasies, and endorsement of rape-supportive attitudes.

⁴³ These correlational relationships do not allow for conclusion on causality (Becker & Stein, 1991; Brown, 2002).

Australian Government (2000). Research method: review and interviews. Sample: no information available

⁴⁴ Zillmann (2000). Research method: review.

⁴⁵ Livingstone et al (2004). Research method: Survey. Sample: 1,511 9-19 year-olds UK-wide.

Facts and figures: putting the debate into context

Content: Recent content studies of US television indicate that there has been an increase in talk about sex and in explicit sex shown on non-pornographic television programmes (Brown & Witherspoon, 2002; Kunkel et al., 2003; Kunkel, et al, 2001; VanEvra, 2004)⁴⁶. Kunkel et al (2003) found that 14% of the shows depicted or strongly implied sexual intercourse, with comedies and soap operas leading in sexual content. The consequences of sex, if discussed or shown at all, were most often positive and risks were not made apparent (Kunkel et al., 2002). Brown and Keller (2000)⁴⁷ stress that for media to be good sex educators, they should be regulated to portray a healthier and more realistic version of sex.

Exposure: In the late '70s Whitehouse (1977) argued that young people in the UK are more likely to be exposed to pornography than adults. She presented data demonstrating that the highest exposure to pornography for women is between the ages of 15 and 20 and for men between the ages of 15 and 29.

In 1995 one-third of all US programming viewed by children at watershed (family) hours contained sexual references (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999).

Age: Cantor et al studied the differences between age groups in the effects of sexual media (see conclusions in paragraph on lack of understanding p. 14). If the research on violence on television has anything to bring to this discussion it might be that the age group the person belongs to is very important in the effect that media can have (Anderson et al., 2003; Wilson et al., 2002)⁴⁸.

Gender: Counter to the general assumption in relation to pornography, adolescent girls seem to choose sexual content in media more often than boys and are more often accompanied by their parents (Gruber & Grube, 2000)⁴⁹. However, older adolescent boys watch more hardcore pornography. Ward, Gorvine and Cytron (Ward, Gorvine, & Cytron, 2002)⁵⁰ concluded that girls are more likely to think that sex scenes on television are realistic and are less approving of messages/images that can be seen as threats to relationships, while boys were less approving of messages that promote relationships.

⁴⁶ Kunkel et al (2003, 2002). Research method: Content analysis. Sample: Composite week sample of 112 hours per channel in the Los Angeles market, US. Includes the 4 major US broadcast channels (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC), an independent station (KCET), 3 basic cable channels and 1 premium cable channel (HBO). Over sampling of prime time programmes and teenage programmes. The first sample yielded 937 programs, 172 additional prime time shows, and 14 teenage shows coming to a total of 1,123 programmes. Scene and programme level analysis measuring level of sexual behaviour and language content (not pornography or R18 related). CIAM across programs 91%, at scene-level 90% and at program level 89%.

⁴⁷ Brown et al (2000). Research methods: review.

⁴⁸ Anderson et al (2003). Research methods: review on literature on media violence and youth. Wilson et al (2002). Research method: Content analyses. Sample: Composite week sample of 2,757 programmes from 23 channels in the US assessed in relation to level of violence. 83% median agreement over all programs and 100% over all scenes.

⁴⁹ Gruber et al (2000). Research method: review.

⁵⁰ Ward et al (2002). Research methods: experiment. Sample: 269 college students were shown sit-coms and dramas with varying levels of sex (role) stereotyping and were asked about their television viewing, about the depictions of relationships between men and women and about their ideas regarding relationships and their peers sexual behaviour.

Ethnicity: Young people from African Caribbean groups in the US appeared to be more likely to be exposed to programmes with higher sexual content (Greenberg, 1993; Gruber & Grube, 2000; Walsh-Childers & Brown, 1993)⁵¹.

Conclusions

Almost *no research* has been done with the under 18 age group and R18 material (Corne et al., 1992; Donnerstein et al., 1992; Haynes, 1987; Linz et al., 1992; VanEvra, 2004)⁵². The result is that there is *no conclusive empirical evidence* for a causal relationship between exposure to R18 material and impairment of the mental, physical or moral development of minors.

Whether or not R18 material will be made available on UK television, it is probable that young people will be *increasingly exposed* to violence towards women, sexual messages and depictions of sexual intercourse in the media (Harris, 1994; Kunkel et al., 2003; Kunkel et al., 2001; Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999; VanEvra, 2004)⁵³.

A bigger exposure to this kind of material is related to children being *sexually active* at a younger age (Brown et al., 1990; Brown & Newcomer, 1991; Brown & Witherspoon, 2002). This is a correlation and not a causal link however.

Young children (under the age of 12) *do not* seem to have developed enough emotionally to *understand* what sexual material is about and older children appear more angered by it than traumatised (Donnerstein et al., 1992; Silverman-Watkins & Sprafkin, 1983; U.S. Department of Justice, 1986).

Most researchers stress that good *sex education* and an open relationship with *parents* in issues of sexuality are more important for the child to develop normally than a ban on R18 material (Linz et al., 1992; Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999; VanEvra, 2004; Zillmann, 2000).

Zillmann (2000) argues that results from research carried out with college students should be transferable to adolescents. He refers specifically to research on long term or frequent exposure to pornography and its relation to *attitudinal changes* (eg. less appreciation of traditional (sexual) relationships) (See also Allen, D'Alessio, & Brezgel, 1995; Allen, Emmers, & Gebhart, 1995; Bushman & Cantor, 2003)⁵⁴.

There is some evidence for a *positive effect of R18 material* and young people; exposure to pornography at a younger age and a less restrictive parental environment seem to be related to a lower likelihood of committing sex crimes (Becker & Stein, 1991; Gebhard et al., 1965; Heins, 2001; Kelley, 1989)⁵⁵.

⁵¹ Greenberg (1991). Research methods: Experiment. Sample: not known.

Walsh-Childers (1991). Research method: Experiment. Sample: not known.

⁵² Haynes (1987). Research method: review.

⁵³ Harris (1994) Research method: review

⁵⁴ Allen et al (1995a, 1995b) Research method: Meta-analysis. Sample: aggregated data from 33 studies where independent variable was exposure to sexual content and dependent variable aggression.

⁵⁵ Kelley (1989). Research method: Review.

Section 5

Effects of pornography on adults

What does the literature say about the effects of porn on adults?

Since research in relation to the effect of pornography on adults is not the focus of this report what follows is only a short summary of the research in this area. In contrast to the scarcity in research on pornography and young people, research about adults and pornography is relatively abundant.

Effects of pornography on adults

In this section on adults, first research is presented that argues there are positive effects of pornography, followed by the research that concludes the effects are negative. In both sections studies that contradict these findings are discussed when appropriate.

Positive effects. A number of studies conclude that pornography:

- Lowers drive for sex crimes: these studies state that the effect of pornography is one of catharsis for those who would otherwise commit sex crimes (Carter, 1987; Kutchinsky, 1973)⁵⁶. This is supported by the research presented in Section 3 which indicates that in countries where pornography is liberalised, crime rates decrease (Diamond & Uchiyama, 1999; Kutchinsky, 1973; 1991a; 1991b). However, other research indicates that there is no difference in pornography use between sex offenders, other criminals and ordinary people (Howitt, 1995; Kutchinsky, 1991a; Langevin & Lang, 1985; 1988; Malamuth, 2003; Nutter & Kearns, 1993)⁵⁷.
- Lowers aggression towards others: Some laboratory studies show that while attitudes towards women become more negative the actual aggressiveness towards others becomes less (Donnerstein, Donnerstein, & Evans, 1975; Linz, Donnerstein et al., 1987; Zillmann & Bryant, 1984, 1988a, 1988b)⁵⁸.
- Improves attitudes towards women: Seeing R18 pornography calms people's nerves and makes them look at women in a more positive light. It makes them

⁵⁶ Carter (1987). Research method: Survey. Sample: 38 rapist and 26 paedophilic offenders.

⁵⁷ Howitt (1995). Research method: interviews. Sample: 11 paedophiles.

Malamuth (2003). Research method: Review and model testing. Sample: Hypothesized model incorporating personality and behavioural characteristics is tested by reviewing existing studies.

⁵⁸ Zillmann et al (1988a, 1988b). Research method: experiment. Sample: College students were exposed to pornographic videos over a 6 week period, a control group is not exposed. Afterwards questions asked in relation to acceptance of promiscuity, faithfulness, and family values.

Donnerstein et al (1975). Research method: experiment. Sample: Subjects were either insulted or not insulted prior or subsequent to observing erotic stimuli of varying levels of arousal inducements. Aggression was measured by the administration of a shock to a (fictional assistant)

Zillmann et al (1984). Research method: experiment. Sample: College students were exposed to erotica (R18 material) for 6 weeks and physiological arousal was measured as well as subjective enjoyment and attitudes towards women and sexual equality.

more helpful towards women when they are in distress (Check & Malamuth, 1984; Garcia, 1986; Mulac, Jansma, & Linz, 2002)⁵⁹.

Negative effects. Other studies say pornography:

- Causes addiction (and deviant behaviour): Cline (1994; 1995) argues that watching pornography can have addictive effects. He distinguishes four factors or stages in addiction to pornography: addiction, escalation, desensitization and acting out. However, he backs this up through anecdotes of patients, with no other empirical research background. Reed (1994)⁶⁰ gives specific criteria for pornography addiction and argues that many adults with compulsive sexual disorders use pornography. For both authors positive conditioning (the immediate gratification by masturbation whenever porn is watched) makes addiction almost inevitable (Cline, 1994; Reed, 1994). Kubey (1996) says that this will be especially the case for those who have no other outlet for sexual gratification.
- Causes sexually deviant behaviour (rape, paedophilia): Some argue that the use of hard core pornography is important for sex offenders, especially child sex offenders in committing their crime (Marshall, 1988) but in general there seems to be no difference between sex offenders and others in their use of pornography (Howitt, 1995; Kutchinsky, 1991a; Langevin et al, 2004; 1985; 1988). Two studies argued that child molesters use other images (adverts and other television programmes) to create their own sexually arousing material (Howitt, 1995; Langevin & Curnoe, 2004).
- Causes aggression: According to the excitation state or excitation transfer theory media images and messages that cause excitement in a person, whether this is through violence or through sexual arousal, can be transferred into violence towards others if the circumstances allow for or incite violence (Donnerstein et al, 1978; Zillmann, 1983, 1991)⁶¹. Another study found that when men were angered before seeing sexually explicit material, after exposure the non-violent pornography caused more aggressive reactions than extremely violent or neutral stimuli (Zillmann (1971)

⁵⁹ Check et al (1984). Research method: experiment. Sample: 64 male and 94 female students (average age 20). Experiment in two phases; stranger rape depiction with rape debriefing, acquaintance rape with debriefing, consenting intercourse with debriefing and consenting intercourse with non-rape related debriefing. Then asked to respond to newspaper article about real rape and asked to give opinion on causes of rape.

Garcia (1986). Research method: experiment. Sample: 115 undergraduate students. Showed both R18 material and abusive pornography to students then asked them about attitudes towards women.

Mulac et al (2002): Research method: experiment. Sample: 71 men. Participants viewed sexually explicit and degrading, sexually explicit not degrading or non sexually explicit film. Afterwards they were recorded on video in a problem solving situation interacting with a woman.

⁶⁰ Reed (1994): Review.

⁶¹ Zillmann (1991, 1983). Research methods: review.

Donnerstein et al (1978). Research methods: Experiment. Sample: Male subjects were angered by a male or female confederate and exposed to an erotic film, an aggressive film, or a non-film condition. Subjects were given two opportunities to aggress against the confederate by electro shock.

cited in Becker & Stein, 1991). This finding was contradicted in a study by Baron, who found that men angered before exposure to pornography were less aggressive when they had seen non-violent sexual material than when they had seen abusive pornography (Becker & Stein, 1991).

- Causes negative attitudes towards women and relationships: A series of studies by Zillmann and Bryant indicated that exposure to non violent pornography could lead to greater acceptance of promiscuity, the belief that rare sexual practices (bestiality, sadomasochism) are more common and a lower appreciation of having a family (Malamuth & Check, 1981; Zillmann & Bryant, 1982, 1984, 1988a)⁶².

In other studies (1984; 1988a; 1988b) they conclude that long term or frequent exposure to R18 porn lowers the satisfaction with one's sex life and one's partner (See also Kubey, 1996).

Men were found to be more likely to say that they would commit rape if there was no possibility of being found out after watching abusive pornography (Check, 1984 referenced in Linz, Donnerstein et al., 1987; Malamuth, 1981)⁶³.

Printed pornography seems to have the opposite effect (Dermer & Pyszynski, 1978)⁶⁴.

Other research adds that men with traditional views on women view women more as sexual objects after seeing pornographic videos than when exposed to other material, for men with more liberal views this effect was not found (McKenzie-Mohr & Zanna, 1990)⁶⁵. Malamuth concludes that sexually aggressive men perceive women in abusive pornography to be less hostile and more seductive (Malamuth & Brown, 1994)⁶⁶.

However, Donnerstein and a number of his colleagues have not been able to confirm that there is an effect of exposure to sexual or R18 pornographic

⁶² Zillmann et al (1982). Research method: experiment. Sample: 80 female and 80 male participants divided over 4 conditions: massive exposure (36 erotic films over 6 weeks), intermediate (18 erotic and 18 non erotic) and no exposure (36 non erotic movies), and a control group (no films). Afterwards they were asked to recommend prison sentence in fictional rape case and what their support was for female liberation movement.

Malamuth et al (1981). Research method: experiment. Sample: 271 university students were shown 2 violent-sexual or control feature length films on separate evenings and there was a control no film group. Afterwards they were all assessed on sexual attitudes scale.

⁶³ Malamuth (1981). Research method: experiment. Sample: 29 males students selected on basis of questionnaire as being sexually force or non-force-oriented were exposed to rape or consenting sex video condition. Afterwards exposed to audio tape of women describing rape. Then asked to describe sexual fantasies. Penile tumescence and self-reported arousal were also measured throughout the experiment.

⁶⁴ Dermer (1978). Research method: experiment. Sample: College students read erotic texts or neutral texts and were scored on the 1970 love scale and the Rubin liking scale.

⁶⁵ McKenzie-Mohr (1990). Research method: experiment. Sample: 60 male undergraduates, half gender schematic and half gender aschematic, watched either a pornographic or a control video and where then interviewed by a female research assistant. The research assistant, blind to the condition of the experiment subsequently judged the participants on their sexual motivation. After the interview the respondents were asked what they remembered of the assistant.

⁶⁶ Malamuth et al (1994). Research method: Experiment. Sample: 2 years of 161 male participants. Before and after being presented with a video (man with 4 levels of aggressiveness and demale with positive or negative reaction to approach of male) they were asked about their attitudes supporting aggression, sexual arousal, sexual experience and about their sexually aggressive behaviour.

content on attitudes (Donnerstein et al., 1992; Linz, 1989; Linz et al., 1987; 1988; U.S. Department of Justice, 1986)⁶⁷.

In another study done by Zillmann, when real rape and suffering were shown instead of fictional sexual violence, there was no such difference found and evaluations were similar between those who had seen non-sexual images and realistic rape scenes in their attitudes and behaviour towards women (Zillmann, 2000).

- Internet and pornography: Although not the specific focus of this report, there were many studies related to the effects of pornography over the internet in which addiction plays an important role. These focus mainly on child pornography and paedophiles having access to abusive pornography which does not fall under the R18 standard of material that this report is focused on (Heins, 2001; Langevin & Curnoe, 2004).

Conclusions

The general conclusion of most reviewed research on adults is that it is *explicitly violent sexual pornography* (abusive porn) that causes serious impairment in adults. This is thought to take the form of an increased disposition towards aggressive behaviour and negative attitudes towards women (Harris, 1994; Lyons, Anderson, & Larson, 1993)⁶⁸.

There might be a negative effect of *long term or frequent exposure* to abusive pornography that desensitizes people to the impact of rape (Harris, 1994; Lyons et al., 1993; Zillmann & Bryant, 1988a, 1988b). This type of exposure might make rape or sexual violence towards women seem less severe and more acceptable (blame the victim or rape myth).

However, *attitudes* in these cases have not been proven to lead to behaviour and laboratory studies cannot be assumed to be representative of natural viewing conditions (Zillmann, 2000).

The studies that refer to R18 porn often find no effects or sometimes even positive effects. The conclusion that is drawn by many researchers is that it is the violence and not the sexual content that causes aggressive behaviour (Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981; Linz et al, 1989; 1984; 1987; 1987; Malamuth & Briere, 1986; Malamuth & Check, 1983; Zillmann & Bryant, 1982; Zillmann, Bryant, Comisky, & Medoff, 1981)⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ Linz et al (1988). Research method: experiment. Sample: males exposed to 8 hours of feature length slasher movies, nonviolent comedies, sexually explicit non violent movies and one no exposure group. Participants measures on anxiety and depression. Linz et al (1989). Research method: review.

⁶⁸ Lyons (1993). Research method: review.

⁶⁹ Zillmann (1981). Research method: experiment. Sample: no information available Malamuth et al (1983). Research method: experiment. Sample: 145 males students listened to a tape which varied in consent, pain and outcome of an interaction between a female and a male. Later they listened to a tape of consenting or non consenting sex. Sexual arousal was measured throughout experiment and afterwards they were asked to fill out a questionnaire about personality, sexual motivations and experience and likelihood of raping. Donnerstein et al (1981). Research method: experiment. Sample: 4 experimental conditions aggressive with positive outcome-aggressive with negative outcome, non aggressive pornography and neutral stimuli. Participants were angered by female before or treated neutral. Afterwards tested for aggression by allowing them to give electro shock. In a second

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Reference list

All the references that were collected during the process of the literature review on the effects of pornography are listed in this appendix. Only the references mentioned in appendix A were used in the report.

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