

Expert testimony to inform NICE guideline development

Section A: Developer to complete

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Contact information:	
Guideline title:	Harmful Sexual Behaviour
Guideline Committee:	PHAC F
Subject of expert testimony:	Emerging findings from research on the impact of pornography on children and young people and the difficulties of doing research in this area. If it is too early to discuss emerging findings is it possible to discuss what is currently known in this area?
Evidence gaps or uncertainties:	[Research questions or evidence uncertainties that the testimony should address are summarised below]
<p>What are the emerging findings from current research on the impact of pornography on children and young people? Again if it is too early to discuss emerging findings is it possible to discuss what is currently known in relation to the below?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are different interventions needed for the 'curiosity' aspect of new media? - Do different forms of pornography and pornographic activity i.e. downloading different forms of pornography require different interventions? - What are the perceived issues and difficulties of doing research in this area? - Where are the major research gaps in relation to this area? 	

Section B: Expert to complete

Summary testimony: [Please use the space below to summarise your testimony in 250–1000 words. Continue over page if necessary]

There is a paucity of good, recent empirical research in this area. It is essential that recent research is considered given children's relatively recent ease of access to adult material online (particularly given advances in the use of mobile technology amongst children and young people, OFCOM, 2014). This testimony therefore draws upon two key sources which are considered to have employed robust methodologies. The first study was commissioned by the Office of the Children's Commissioner and is entitled 'Basically porn is everywhere' (Horvath et al, 2014). The second study is funded by the NSPCC and the OCC, is ongoing and builds upon the original research. Reported here are preliminary emergent findings from the qualitative element of this research, which will also include a national survey of children aged 12-18 (findings from this aspect of the research are not yet available). I am Co-Investigator on this study which is led by Dr Elena Martellozzo from Middlesex University (Martellozzo, Horvath, Davidson & Adler, 2015 ongoing). I have stated that recent research in this area is limited, an additional concern is that research has focused almost exclusively upon the general child population and there is consequently no reliable empirical information about impact upon the more vulnerable child population and minority groups. This represents a key gap in the research. The research conducted by Horvath et al (2014) was based upon a thorough review of the literature (41,000 UK and international publications were reviewed). Key findings from this research suggest that :

1. A significant proportion of children and young people are exposed to or access online pornography but there are differences in the literature regarding the regularity of exposure and access (or the rate of recurrence) which highlight the importance of considering frequency as well as prevalence in order to obtain a full picture;
2. Children and young people's exposure and access to pornography occur both online and offline. However, in recent years the most common methods of access have changed from magazines, videos, television and books, with the internet becoming more dominant;
3. Exposure and access to pornography appear to increase with age. there is greater risk of exposure with increasing age. Contradictory findings exist in relation to age of first exposure, with variations from 10 to 17 years old;
4. Accidental exposure is more prevalent than (ostensibly) deliberate access. However, there is considerable variation in the rates of unwanted exposure and some studies report significant numbers of children and young people accessing pornography;
5. There are gender differences in exposure and access to pornography. Young men and boys are more likely to be exposed to pornography than young women and girls. They are also more likely to access, seek or use pornography and are exposed to or access pornography more frequently.
6. Access and exposure to pornography affect children and young people's sexual beliefs.
7. Access and exposure to pornography are linked to children and young people's engagement in "risky behaviours" (e.g. engagement in sexual practices from a younger age, engaging in riskier sexual behaviours such as unprotected anal or

oral sex, and the involvement of drugs and alcohol in sex);

Emergent findings from the Martellozzo et al study broadly support Horvath's et al findings and also suggest that: First time exposure to online pornography is often accidental, children report feeling curious but appear desensitised and almost accepting, children complain about an absence of sex education and wonder why such issues are not addressed in school, children report seeking this education from pornography. The testimony also includes reference to recent concern regarding child self-generated pornographic online content, there is some emerging research which demonstrates that indecent self-images generated by young people and posted on social networking sites are being harvested by adult sites (IWF, 2015) and that some of these images are appearing in police seized sex offender child indecent image collections (Interpol, 2015).

References to other work or publications to support your testimony' (if applicable):

Key References

Horvath, M., Alys, L., Massey, K., Pina, A., Scally, M & Adler, J (2014) 'Basically Porn is everywhere' OCC Report

Martellozzo, E., Horvath, M., Davidson, J & Adler J (2015 forthcoming) 'Children's experience of and attitudes towards pornography in the UK' NSPCC & OCC.

Other References

Internet Watch Foundation (2015) 'Emerging Patterns and Trends Report #1 Online-Produced Sexual Content.'

Expert testimony papers are posted on the NICE website with other sources of evidence when the draft guideline is published. Any content that is academic in confidence should be highlighted and will be removed before publication if the status remains at this point in time.