

Hi

I am sending a summary of my presentation including the results and conclusion and not the whole presentation as it is (with the graphs) because I found out that if this is published somewhere like this, then I will not be able to publish it in a scientific Peer Reviewed Journal. In the Newsletter it should say that this is the summary of a presentation given at a specified conference. This is permitted.

### **Pornography and Adolescents in Israel<sup>1</sup>**

This presentation is based on a study carried out in 2002 among Israeli adolescents in 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades in the general (secular) educational system. The PIs of the study were Dr. Ronny Shtarkshall and Dr. Sara Carmel. 3460 male and female adolescents answered an anonymous questionnaire dealing with issues of sexuality, attitudes and behavior, sexual risks and their prevention, reasons for initiation of coitus, sex-education and pornography.

The following are the main findings concerning pornography:

1. More than 90% of the male respondents and about 66% of the female respondents viewed pornographic films prior to the administration of the questionnaire.
2. When asked how many times they viewed pornography, the smallest category was once. Among males the largest category was 6 times or more while among the females it was 2-5 times. More than 50% of the females had viewed pornography two times or more (including more than 6 times). The pattern of viewing seemed very similar.
3. When asked about the context in which they viewed pornography, again the pattern of males and females was similar. A large proportion viewed pornography by themselves (solitary viewing). This was interpreted as seeking information about male and female genitals and the mechanics of

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a summary of a presentation delivered by Dr. Ronny Shtarkshall, The Hebrew University and Hadassah Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine, At the conference: Tel-Aviv, dates.

coitus and also as excluding the possibility of pressure to view pornography. The smallest category for both males and females was viewing with and intimate partner. Most of males and females viewed pornography in company of their peers.

4. In looking at the emotions evoked by pornography it was found that both males and females identified both, "positive" or "pornography attracting" emotions, and "negative" or "pornography averse" emotions. Examples of the former are: excitement, pleasure, interest; examples of the latter are: disgust, boredom, confusion, fear, and anger.
5. Among both males and females reported that pornography evoked in them both positive and negative emotions like excitement and disgust.
6. The researchers reached several conclusions that have service implications:
  - Interventions should be based on fact not fiction. Among the studied population pornography is far from being "male thing" or a dominance issue. Both males and females engage in it, many of them of their own volition.
  - There is a real need for educational and counseling processing of issues like: the erroneous information received from pornography, women and men as sex objects, sexual violence, and mixed emotions/confusion.
  - One must be careful to avoid too broad generalizations, polarization, stigmatization and blaming in educational interventions.
  - Interventions should also be based on needs perceived by adolescents. Listening to them very carefully could be very difficult if one comes to them with rigid ideological or moralistic stands.