

The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family, and Community

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pornography is a visual representation of sexuality which distorts an individual's concept of the nature of conjugal relations. This, in turn, alters both sexual attitudes and behavior. It is a major threat to marriage, to family, to children and to individual happiness. In undermining marriage it is one of the factors in undermining social stability.

Social scientists, clinical psychologists, and biologists have begun to clarify some of the social and psychological effects, and neurologists are beginning to delineate the biological mechanisms through which pornography produces its powerful negative effects.

KEY FINDINGS ON THE EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHY

The Family and Pornography

- Married men who are involved in pornography feel less satisfied with their conjugal relations and less emotionally attached to their wives. Wives notice and are upset by the difference.
- Pornography use is a pathway to infidelity and divorce, and is frequently a major factor in these family disasters.
- Among couples affected by one spouse's addiction, two-thirds experience a loss of interest in sexual intercourse.
- Both spouses perceive pornography viewing as tantamount to infidelity.
- Pornography viewing leads to a loss of interest in good family relations.

The Individual and Pornography

- Pornography is addictive, and neuroscientists are beginning to map the biological substrate of this addiction.

- Users tend to become desensitized to the type of pornography they use, become bored with it, and then seek more perverse forms of pornography.
- Men who view pornography regularly have a higher tolerance for abnormal sexuality, including rape, sexual aggression, and sexual promiscuity.
- Prolonged consumption of pornography by men produces stronger notions of women as commodities or as "sex objects."
- Pornography engenders greater sexual permissiveness, which in turn leads to a greater risk of out-of-wedlock births and STDs. These, in turn, lead to still more weaknesses and debilities.
- Child-sex offenders are more likely to view pornography regularly or to be involved in its distribution.

Other Effects of Pornography

- Many adolescents who view pornography initially feel shame, diminished self-confidence, and sexual uncertainty, but these feelings quickly shift to unadulterated enjoyment with regular viewing.
- The presence of sexually oriented businesses significantly harms the surrounding community, leading to increases in crime and decreases in property values.
- The main defenses against pornography are close family life, a good marriage and good relations between parents and children, coupled with deliberate parental monitoring of Internet use. Traditionally, government has kept a tight lid on sexual traffic and businesses, but in matters of pornography that has waned almost completely, except where child pornography is concerned. Given the massive, deleterious individual, marital, family, and social effects of pornography, it is time for citizens, communities, and government to reconsider their laissez-faire approach.