A Selection of Research Citations from Dr. Paul Simpson Lecture on Assessing and Treating Sexual Compulsions

Internet sex addiction: A review of empirical research.
Griffiths, Mark D.
Abstract:
The advent of the Internet has added another medium in which people can engage in sexual behavior. This ranges from the passive consumption of online pornography to the interactive exchange of sexual content in cybersex chat rooms. It is believed that access, affordability, and anonymity are critical factors that make the Internet viable for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of online sexuality. For some, sexual behaviors online are used as a complement to their offline sexuality, whereas for others, they serve as a substitute, potentially resulting in Internet sex addiction, which can be conceptualized as the intersection between Internet addiction and sex addiction. The current literature suggests that there does not appear a clear dividing line between these psychopathologies. The aim of this review was therefore to provide a comprehensive overview of the empirical studies that have investigated Internet sex addiction in adults. Based on the five qualitative and nine quantitative studies conducted in Western countries that were identified, it was concluded that engaging in sexual behaviors on the Internet can go awry and result in Internet sex addiction, as it can lead to a wide variety of negative consequences for the individuals affected. Particular attention is drawn to the implications for future research in order to establish the pathological status of Internet sex addiction as a sub-form of Internet addiction, that shares characteristics of real life sex addiction, but that is not to be equated with it. Accordingly, the need for a clear diagnostic framework to clinically assess Internet sex addiction is emphasized as the first step toward understanding the potentially psychopathological qualities and repercussions of sexual behaviors on the Internet.

Four key dimensions for distinguishing internet infidelity from internet and sex addiction: Concepts and clinical application.
Jones, Kathryn E., Hertlein, Katherine M.
Abstract:
Along with the advances and positives the Internet can have for relationships, there are also significant challenges to couples and families, including the potential for Internet addiction, Internet infidelity, cybersex, and other issues. The ambiguity between these concepts in literature creates difficulty in diagnosis and treatment for couple therapists. We propose four dimensions that can assist therapists to appropriately distinguish between an Internet infidelity scenario, a sex addiction facilitated by the Internet, and an Internet addiction.

The process addictions and the new ASAM definition of addiction.
Smith, David E.
Abstract:
Addiction is a primary, chronic disease involving brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry; it can lead to relapse, progressive development, and the potential for fatality if not treated. While pathological use of alcohol and, more recently, psychoactive substances have been accepted as addictive diseases, developing brain science has set the stage for inclusion of the process addictions, including food, sex, shopping and gambling problems, in a broader definition of addiction as set forth by the American Society of Addiction Medicine in 2011.
Sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll: Hypothesizing common mesolimic activation as a function of reward gene polymorphisms.
Blum, Kenneth, Werner, Tonia, Carnes, Stefanie, Carnes, Patrick, Bowirrat, Abdalla, Giordano, John, Marlene-Oscar-Berman, Gold, Mark.
Abstract:
The nucleus accumbens, a site within the ventral striatum, plays a prominent role in mediating the reinforcing effects of drugs of abuse, food, sex, and other addictions. Indeed, it is generally believed that this structure mandates motivated behaviors such as eating, drinking, and sexual activity, which are elicited by natural rewards and other strong incentive stimuli. This article focuses on sex addiction, but we hypothesize that there is a common underlying mechanism of action for the powerful effects that all addictions have on human motivation. That is, biological drives may have common molecular genetic antecedents, which if impaired, lead to aberrant behaviors. Based on abundant scientific support, we further hypothesize that dopaminergic genes, and possibly other candidate neurotransmitter-related gene polymorphisms, affect both hedonic and anhedonic behavioral outcomes. Genotyping studies already have linked gene polymorphic associations with alcohol and drug addictions and obesity, and we anticipate that future genotyping studies of sex addicts will provide evidence for polymorphic associations with specific clustering of sexual typologies based on clinical instrument assessments. We recommend that scientists and clinicians embark on research coupling the use of neuroimaging tools with dopaminergic agonistic agents to target specific gene polymorphisms systematically for normalizing hyper- or hypo-sexual behaviors.

A biopsychosocial view of sex addiction.
Hall, Paula.
Abstract:
In this article I explore both the name and the meaning of ‘sex addiction’ and offer a biopsychosocial view through which we might understand the complexity of cases presented before clinicians. Through published research and clinical experience, this paper looks at the biological, psychological and social influences of sex addiction in a hope that a broader understanding will increase dialogue between professionals of differing viewpoints and help develop multi-disciplinary approaches to treatment. The therapeutic dilemmas presented by this controversial and often maligned condition are also considered.

A “sex addict” by any other name hurts the same.
Herring, Bill
Abstract:
One characteristic of truly addictive sexual behavior is its capability to operate without regard for ethical, legal, logical, or moral constraints. Addiction erases such limits and boundaries, which is why a sexually addicted individual can engage in thoughts, words, or actions that can be profoundly disturbing to other. But sex addiction isn’t the only reason a person repeatedly has affairs, keeps blowing the mortgage on prostitutes, or chronically masturbates to porn for hours on end. All of these behaviors can certainly cause shatteringly negative consequences, but they do not necessarily mean that compulsion is the core problem. Sex addicts are not the only ones with the capacity to engage in sexual behaviors that are misguided, immoral, destructive, callous, and deceptive. Many people seem content, capable, and even dedicated to operating with a selfish disregard for anything other than personal pleasure. To cite only a few examples, it is crucial to continually develop greatly enhanced appreciation of cultural variations of normative sexuality; public health and harm reduction intervention models must be taken into greater account, and innovative research protocols must continually be designed and implemented.
Translated Title: 
**Research on the forming mechanism and psychotherapy in adolescents’ cyber-sex addiction.**

Authors:  
He, Jin-Bo, Li, Bing-Bing, Guo, Yong-yu, Jiang, Guang-rong  

Abstract:  
Cyber-sex addiction is a new kind of addictive behavior that the addicts indulge in cyber pornography frequently, long and out of self-control, and his health and social function are badly affected as a result of the addiction. Since the 1990s, researchers from western countries have been concerned with cyber-sex addiction and have done lots of studies about it. They have put forward the basic concept, measurement and diagnostic method of cyber-sex addiction and explained how cyber-porn addiction is formed through the external conditions and the internal psychological mechanism. As to the treatment of cyber-sex addiction, they have proposed behavior therapy, acceptance commitment therapy, motivational interviewing therapy etc. This paper reviews the related studies and claims on this issue of researches from western countries, with a wish to enlighten the research on this issue in our country.

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**Comparison of childhood sexual histories in subjects with pedophilia or opiate addiction and healthy controls: Is childhood sexual abuse a risk factor for addictions?**

Cohen, Lisa J., Forman, Howard, Steinfeld, Matthew, Fradkin, Yuli, Frenna, Steven, Galynker, Igor  

Abstract:  
Objective: Given the recent interest in the concept of sexual addictions, it is instructive to study subjects with pedophilia alongside chemically addicted individuals and non-addicted controls in order to help identify which factors may determine the objects of people's respective addictions, as well as any factors that may predispose people to developing an addictive disorder. Method: In this study, we considered whether childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a specific risk factor for pedophilia as opposed to other types of addictive disorders by comparing the childhood sexual histories of 48 pedophilic sex offenders, 25 subjects with opiate addiction in remission, and 61 healthy controls. CSA was assessed with The Sexual History Questionnaire and the Child Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ). Results: Compared with both opiate addicted subjects and healthy controls, subjects with pedophilia were more likely to report experiencing adult sexual advances when they were children and a first sexual contact by age 13 with a partner at least 5 years older. Although both subjects with pedophilia and those with opiate addiction first had sex at a younger age than healthy controls, opiate addicted subjects, compared with healthy controls, reported neither increased reception of sexual advances as children nor increased rates of first sexual contact before age 13 with a partner at least 5 years older. Further, subjects with pedophilia but not those with opiate addiction scored significantly higher than healthy controls on the CTQ. Conclusion: Sexual abuse in childhood may be a specific risk factor for sexual addictions such as pedophilia but may not be a specific risk factor for chemical addictions.

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**Uncovering and treating sex addiction in couples therapy.**

Turner, Marth  

Abstract:  
Sex addiction is elusive and often undetected in couples’ therapy. Although not as obvious as other addictions, its effects can be just as damaging. The meaning of sex addiction and its implications for couples therapy are explored. Specifically, the etiology is broken down into several different aspects: intergenerational factors, cultural distortions, and sex addiction and the couple. Assessment of sex addiction is disclosed along with the signs of sex addiction. Eleven general categories are listed as well as the treatment options and different stages of addiction. Case histories are given to illustrate the impact of sex addiction on the couple subsystem. Research and future develops are also discussed along with its limitations.
Ethical issues in sex and love addiction treatment.
Griffin-Shelley, Eric
Abstract:
Sex and love addiction treatment can involve many complex ethical issues. Awareness of these potential problems can assist clinicians in improving efficacy and, at the same time, reducing risk. Ethical difficulties flow from the fundamental principle that counseling is a fiduciary relationship. Sex and love addicts present with multiple addictions, strong psychological defenses, and trauma histories, which often result in lengthy treatments. Over the course of such treatment many challenging ethical areas surface including transference/counter-transference problems, evocative and provocative behaviors in clients, questions of therapist self-disclosure, confidentiality concerns, trauma reenactment possibilities, boundary issues, dual relationship questions, competence issues, diagnostic dilemmas, and fees problems. Examples and positive solutions for these and other ethical areas are given to foster the best result for both client and clinician.

Internet sex addiction risk factors, stages of development, and treatment.
Young, Kimberly S.
Abstract:
Internet sex addiction typically involves viewing, downloading, and trading online pornography or engagement in adult fantasy role-play rooms. Adult Web sites comprise the largest segment of electronic commerce catering to a wide variety of sexual interests. Given the widespread availability of sexually explicit material online, Internet sex addiction is the most common form of problem online behavior among users. Using research and illustrative case studies, this chapter explores how sexually explicit material enters our homes, schools, and business, and examines the risk factors that lead to addiction. As new users are more at risk to become hooked on online porn or adult sex chat rooms, this chapter presents a model that shows the progressive stages of development underlying Internet sex addiction and how the Internet enables sexually explicit behavior to develop. Finally, this chapter reviews current treatment practices associated with the disorder and the implications of new mobile technologies.

Criminal sexuality and psychopathology: Pornography as a contributory risk factor in the psycho-social development of violent sex offenders.
Tiefenwerth, Thomas J.
The researcher conducted interviews with 25 adult, male sex offenders convicted of felony offenses and incarcerated in a 500-man detention facility located in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Those interviewed were selected by the institution's senior administrators on the basis of a criminal-offense profile prepared and submitted by the researcher, and all parties interviewed participated voluntarily. The crimes of the subjects interviewed included not only those for which they were currently incarcerated but also those for which they had been convicted earlier in their lives, and the crimes of the subjects interviewed included a wide range of sex offenses with varying degrees of concurrent violence. The comprehensive psycho-social histories and mental status evaluations of those interviewed were consulted by the researcher, and interviews also considered professionally-recognized phenomena associated with individual sex-related psychopathology: psychopathy, violence, sexual fantasy, paraphilias (sexual fetishes and perversions), alcohol abuse and other types of substance abuse/dependency, behavioral addictions, childhood sexual abuse/trauma, and negative gender-based attitudes. The purpose of the study was to measure the extent to which exposure to pornography generally, and to Internet or cyber-pornography more particularly, was a contributory risk factor in the psychopathologies of those interviewed, and the degree, if any, said exposure had contributed to the psycho-social development of those interviewed. Research findings
disclosed that among those interviewed (a) the link between pornography, criminal sexuality, and psychopathology differed; (b) early developmental exposure to violent pornography exacerbated other forms of psychopathology; (c) regular use of pornography as an adult did not precipitate a behavioral sex addiction; (d) the use of alcohol and/or other drugs increased the violence demonstrated by sex offenders; and (e) the utilization of psychological defense mechanisms was more pronounced among older offenders.

The comorbid psychiatric symptoms of internet addiction: Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, social phobia, and hostility.
Yen, Ju-Yu, Ko, Chih-Hung, Yen, Cheng-Fang, Wu, Hsiu-Yueh, Yang, Ming-Jen
Abstract:
Purpose: To: (1) determine the association between Internet addiction and depression, self-reported symptoms of attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), social phobia, and hostility for adolescents; and (2) evaluate the sex differences of association between Internet addiction and the above-mentioned psychiatric symptoms among adolescents. Methods: A total of 2114 students (1204 male and 910 female) were recruited for the study. Internet addiction, symptoms of ADHD, depression, social phobia, and hostility were evaluated by the self-report questionnaire. Results: The results demonstrated that adolescents with Internet addiction had higher ADHD symptoms, depression, social phobia, and hostility. Higher ADHD symptoms, depression, and hostility are associated with Internet addiction in male adolescents, and only higher ADHD symptoms and depression are associated with Internet addiction in female students. Conclusion: These results suggest that Internet addiction is associated with symptoms of ADHD and depressive disorders. However, hostility was associated with Internet addiction only in males. Effective evaluation of, and treatment for ADHD and depressive disorders are required for adolescents with Internet addiction. More attention should be paid to male adolescents with high hostility in intervention of Internet addiction.

Boredom Proneness, Social Connectedness, and Sexual Addiction Among Men Who Have Sex With Male Internet Users.
Chaney, Michael P., Blalock, Andrew C.
Abstract:
The authors collected surveys from 517 men who have sex with men (MSM) recruited from Internet chat rooms to examine the relationships among boredom, social connectedness, and sexual addiction. The results provide addictions professionals psychosocial factors to assess when working with sexually addicted MSM.

Ethical Dilemmas Related to Disclosure Issues: Sex Addiction Therapists in the Trenches.
Schneider, Jennifer P., Levinson, Barbara
Abstract:
Therapists who treat sex addicts are often faced with ethical dilemmas. Almost every therapist has encountered some unexpected dilemma that has put us in a quandary and by its very nature calls for decisions that could challenge our code of conduct. In this article the authors describe several types of ethical dilemmas related to disclosure. The focus is on revelations made by the patient, the therapist or a third party. Disclosure was chosen as a focus of this paper because of its potential consequences and the possible risks when handled inappropriately. The authors illustrate their findings with insightful examples and give a broad range of possible solutions while describing the potential positive or negative outcomes. They give their opinions and their collective wisdom based on their own research and clinical practice. Several therapists also contributed to this article by generously stating their experiences.