



# Brief on Motion M-47

*The public health effects of the ease of access and viewing of online violent and degrading sexually explicit material on children, women and men*

for

The Standing Committee on Health

Submitted by

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**HOPEFOR<sup>THE</sup>SOLD**

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# Introduction

In October of 2016, Hope for the Sold released a feature length documentary film about pornography called *Over 18* (over18doc.com). We interviewed pornstars, ex-industry individuals, porn addicts, sociologists, neurologists, parents, and a 13 year-old boy from Manitoba who is trying to overcome an online pornography addiction that he fell into at the tender age of nine.

While touring the documentary to 70 communities across Canada, we realized that no neighbourhood, school, or church is immune from the effects of online pornography. At every event, we had parents, teachers, counsellors, and youth struggling with addiction come to us with their personal experiences. These personal encounters, as well as the interviews and research we did for our film, serve as the foundation for this brief.

Our goal is to define what sexually explicit online content is, demonstrate the ease of accessibility, outline three ways that pornography affects the health and wellbeing of kids and youth, and to urge the federal government to implement meaningful age verification on all adult websites.

## What Has Pornography Become?

These are some of the video categories on mainstream adult websites, all found within three clicks:

- Gangbang
- Daddy's whore
- Destruction
- Deepthroat
- Whipped
- Webyoung
- Step-sister
- Torture
- Begging

This is what a teenager's sex education looks like. Martin Daubney, the former editor of *Loaded Magazine* in the UK, explained to us that once high speed internet arrived, the magazine couldn't keep up with people's demands. It's the same reason why *Playboy Magazine*, the global leader in explicit content, no longer has nudity. Breasts in a magazine can't compete with high definition videos, and these videos are becoming increasingly violent. This is what one pre-teen said about what she'd seen online:

*"I didn't like it because it came on by accident and I don't want my parents to find out and the man looked like he was hurting her, he was holding her down"*

*and she was screaming and swearing. I know about sex but it didn't look nice. It makes me feel sick if I think about my parents doing it like that.”<sup>1</sup>*

## How Easy is It for Kids to Access Pornography?

In the previous generation, people had to show I.D. before purchasing an adult magazine, but our laws have not caught up to the internet. As one ex-porn star, Brittni De La Mora, told us:

*“I had a website, and on my website it says, ‘You must be 18 years old or older to enter.’ But anybody could click enter. A 10 year old could click enter, so if there’s anything being done, it’s certainly not enough.”*

Children are one search term away from discovering violent, explicit content. While on tour with our film, here’s what parents told us about their child’s first exposure:

- A chicken farmer’s child (under ten years old) found it by Googling the word “chicks”
- An eight year-old searched for pictures of kissing, and the next thing he knew, his whole screen was full of porn
- One boy encountered a pop-up ad while on a math website that had been assigned by his teacher

These statistics shed light on the reality of access:

- 9 in 10 boys and 6 in 10 girls are exposed to pornography before the age of 18<sup>2</sup>
- Of the youth that have seen pornography online, 94% had seen it by age 14<sup>3</sup>

## Health Repercussions of Easy Access to Violent, Explicit Material

### 1. Mental Health

A Cambridge University study found that the brains of sex addicts are triggered by pornography in the same way as drug addicts are by drug stimulus.<sup>4</sup> Children in particular are susceptible to developing an addiction to pornography.

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<sup>1</sup> [NSPCC and Middlesex University London Report, 2016](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Nature and Dynamics of Internet Pornography Exposure for Youth, 2008](#)

<sup>3</sup> [NSPCC and Middlesex University London Report, 2016](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Neural Correlates of Sexual Cue Reactivity in Individuals with and without Compulsive Sexual Behaviours, 2014](#)

Using pornography creates a spike in dopamine to the nucleus accumbens, the brain's reward centre.<sup>5</sup> But the prefrontal cortex - the part of the brain that acts as a "brake" on compulsive, risky behaviour - doesn't fully develop until a person is in their early to mid-twenties.<sup>6</sup> This means that if a child begins watching pornography at age ten, they can be addicted for a full decade without any way to protect themselves.

Not only can children and youth develop addictions to pornography, but there is growing pressure for girls to send naked pictures of themselves to boys in their class. This has led to many suicides when their photos are spread around for the world to see.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Physical Health

For some young men, pornography use is causing Porn Induced Erectile Dysfunction (PIED).<sup>8</sup> Gabe Deem, founder of Reboot Nation, a web community dedicated to combatting the negative effects of pornography, told us:

*"When I was 23, I reached a point where I could only become aroused using pixels on a screen. I felt nothing when I was with a real life partner. I literally became dependent on porn to function. I didn't notice this at first. While I was searching for answers to my problem, I found forums with thousands of guys with similar stories."*

## 3. Relational Health

Online pornography is changing expectations in relationships.

- 53% of boys and 39% of girls who have seen porn believe it's a realistic depiction of sex<sup>9</sup>
- 44% of boys and 29% of girls who have seen online pornography say it's given them ideas about the types of sex they want to try out<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Gail Dines, author of *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked our Sexuality*, told us in an interview:

*"I often ask in my lectures, to the young women, I'll say, 'What are the three things that guys want from you?' ... The first thing they want - they want to cum on her face, they want threesomes, and they want anal sex."*

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<sup>5</sup> Hope for the Sold interview with Donald Hilton, 2015

<sup>6</sup> [Brain activity in sex addiction mirrors that of drug addiction, University of Cambridge, 2014](#)

<sup>7</sup> [The Daily Beast, Nude Snapchat Leak Drove Teen Girl to Suicide, 2016](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Psychology Today, 2012](#)

<sup>9</sup> [NSPCC and Middlesex University London Report, 2016](#)

<sup>10</sup> [NSPCC and Middlesex University London Report, 2016](#)

In a recent UK study about anal sex, boys said they wanted to copy what they saw in pornography and wanted their friends to know when they'd had anal sex.<sup>11</sup> Coercing the girl was often an assumption, even if they knew it would cause her pain.

## Recommendations

We believe that our pornography laws are outdated and have not caught up to the internet. Because both content and access have changed, the law must also be changed to reflect this.

Article 17 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* requires Canada to develop appropriate guidelines for the protection of children from information and material that is “injurious to his or her well-being,” and online pornography certainly qualifies.<sup>12</sup>

- Based on the fact that online pornography is harming the mental, physical, and relational health of children and youth, we call on the federal government to pass legislation requiring meaningful age verification (similar to requirements for online gambling) on sexually explicit web content.
- Based on our discussions with teachers and parents, we call on the federal government to coordinate with counsellors and child advocacy organizations to increase availability of educational resources for parents and educators.



Thank you so much for your consideration. Together we can make Canada a better place for kids and youth.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Brock  
Co-founder, Hope for the Sold

*Hope for the Sold is a Canadian charitable organization that fights exploitation one word at a time through writing, speaking, and film.*

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<sup>11</sup> [Anal heterosex among young people and implications for health promotion: a qualitative study in the UK, 2014](#)

<sup>12</sup> [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989](#)