

Background

The inception of the pornographic industry was seismic; Just a year after Margret Sanger opened Planned Parenthood, Hugh Hefner published and sold out 53,991 first-edition copies of the now-infamous Playboy magazine. Twenty years later, the industry would turn a publication of over 11 million copies from the top two magazines alone. The sexual revolution abetted cultural acceptance of this lewd content, and pornography found its way onto convenience store shelves next to previously established staples such as TIME and PEOPLE magazines. The proliferation of these pages only inoculated the American public to seeing nude or nearly nude graphics as a fact of everyday life.

Desensitized to sexual prevalence, the Overton window shattered upon the inception of the www digital system in 1990. Ten years later, over half of all Americans were personally connected to the internet, with 60% of all searches being pornographic in nature. In 2003, the internet was supersaturated with nudity, hosting over 420 million adult web pages. With free and immediate sexual gratification just a click away, research began to surface purporting detrimental health effects of pornographic consumption.

With suggestions to classify porn as addictive material and evidence to suggest it incites increased rates of violence, loneliness, and human trafficking, the industry grows all the more controversial. Moreover, such effects are only exacerbated in neuroplastic demographics, posing a significant threat to those under 25. Additionally, such content retains an unrelenting grip on groups that would not typically be thought of as customary customers, including the aforementioned under-25 group and those within the Christian church. Unless aggressively addressed and scrutinized within local and international cultures, this industry will remain a stronghold of sorrow and torment for all involved.

Penthouse and Playboy Magazines

- Made pornographic material significantly more accessible
- Inoculated popular culture to seeing such media on a regular basis

Digitization

- Removed almost all reasonable barriers to entry to access pornographic content
- Made the industry standard more graphic, aggressive, and manipulative

Pornographic Proliferation and Exploitation

- Neuroplastic change elicits more compulsory behavior
- Users fall more susceptible to deindividualization, addictive tendencies, comorbidities, and more aggressive corollary behavior

Introduction and Research Question

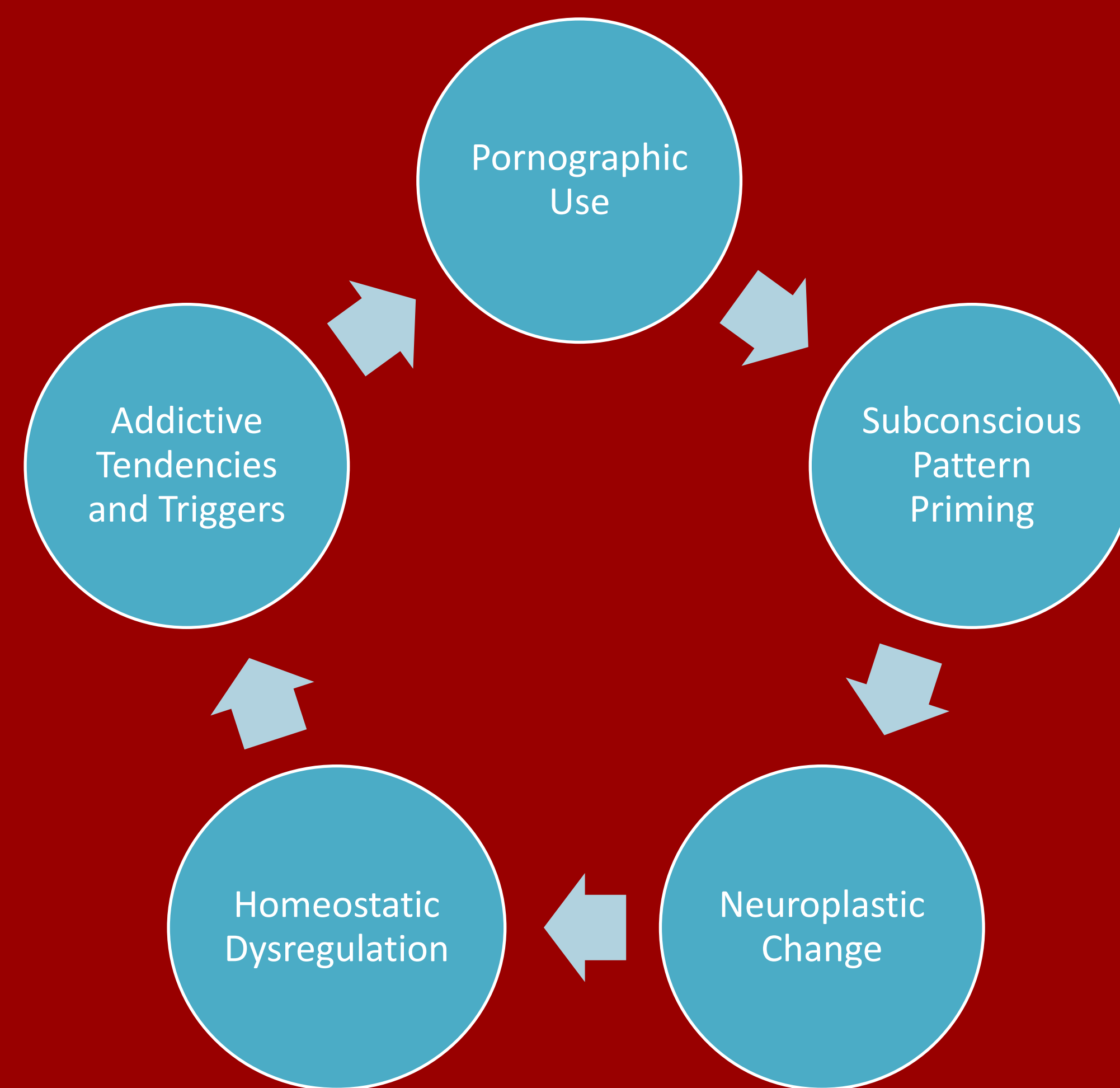
Introduction: Although a multitude of studies have aimed at trying to identify the exact effects of pornographic consumption, specificity has been limited to corollary speculation due to the ambiguity of external, unregulated factors. This study aims at flagging the most prevalent effects through the triangulation of data regarding underage use, marketing techniques, historical trends, and psychological alterations. Research defining pornography as an addictive product remains in discussion, however, it is in no doubt that such media has the ability to irreparably harm users, regardless of age, addiction history, gender, or status.

Research Question: How has the history of the pornographic industry made it so accessible to younger users, and what effect has it had on Generation Z?

Methods

We sought out historical documentation to analyze the development of the pornographic industry and drew from psychological medical journals to address the effect pornography has on a user. Further information was gained from sexual health journals and news reports to identify the effects of pornographic consumption. However, sources that themselves displayed pornographic material in accompaniment to pertinent data were rejected.

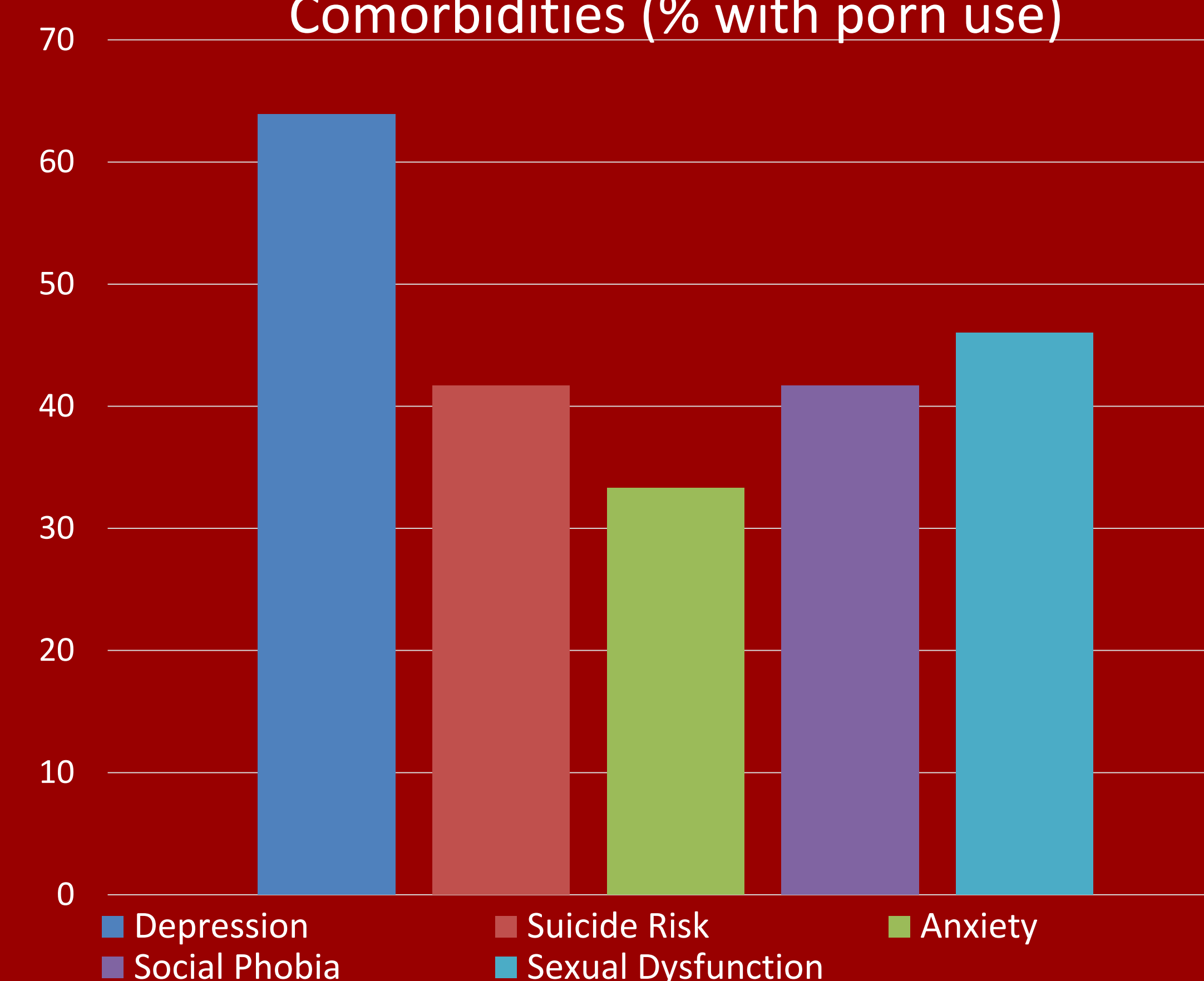
In total, these sources and pertinent information were collected together, and empirical data was correlated with historical events to identify possible trends in the understanding of the effect of pornography. This included correlating the marketing techniques of the industry with associated psychological effects. Further, the prevalence of physical vs digital pornography was also analyzed to consider trends of how Reward Deficiency Syndrome (RDS) and other psychological effects changed as pornea became more accessible and engaging.



14-18-Year-Olds who have viewed Pornography



Comorbidities (% with porn use)



Results and Conclusion

Results

As the sexual revolution raged in the 1970s, the general population grew to be inoculated to seeing Hugh Hefner's Playboy and Guiccone's Penthouse magazines on shelves next to PEOPLE or TIME. This desensitization permitted the industry to proliferate across shelves and, eventually, onto the internet, wherein people had unrestricted access to erotica. The effect of pornography extends to detrimental Reward Deficiency Syndrome (RDS), a form of addiction, exacerbated loneliness, heightened aggressiveness, and more. Further, the prevalence of porn in the church and Generation Z has emasculated boys and men, damaged self-esteem, and malformed neuroplastic change in those who use it.

Conclusions

Although the American Psychological Association still has yet to recognize pornography as an addictive media, the research herein affirms that its psychological effects are akin to other forms of addictive substances and may have a more widespread impact due to its prolific marketing and easy accessibility. Moreover, the significant percentage of Generation Z that has viewed such media is a multifaceted result of a lack of digital regulation, compulsive marketing and social pressures, and abounding shifts in the cultural Overton Window over the last 50+ years. Such issues are only now being addressed and rectified, and the correlations found herein of how the pornographic industry was permitted to proliferate so profusely only present the pressing need to publicize the pain inflicted by this pervasive evil.

Future Work

1. Determine the pervasiveness of pornographic material to those under 18 years old and by what medium it is being accessed.
2. Identify how pornography and social media work in tandem to alter neuroplastic change in young adults.
3. Determine how marketing regulations affect the consumption of pornea.
4. Determine how educational literacy on the harms of pornography change user willingness to consume such media.

References and Acknowledgments

Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, Final Report | Office of Justice Programs. (2023). Ojp.gov. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/attorney-generals-commission-pornography-final-report>

Corporate Finance Institute. (2020, July 2). Pull Marketing Strategy. Corporate Finance Institute; Corporate Finance Institute. <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/management/pull-marketing-strategy/>

Volkow, N. D., Koob, G. F., & McLellan, A. T. (2016). Neurobiologic Advances from the Brain Disease Model of Addiction. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 374(4), 363-371. <https://doi.org/10.1056/nejmra1511480>

Weir, K. (2014). *Is pornography addictive?* <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/04/pornography>

Wéry, A., Vogelaere, K., Challet-Bouju, G., Poudat, F.-X., Caillon, J., Lever, D., Billieux, J., & Grall-Bronnec, M. (2016). Characteristics of self-identified sexual addicts in a behavioral addiction outpatient clinic. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 5(4), 623-630. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.5.2016.071>