

PROPONENT: SB 77 , "child with problem sexual behavior" means a child under 18 years of age who has allegedly committed sexual abuse against another child under 18 years old."

As a pediatric sexual assault nurse, I have performed and/or reviewed over 1,000 sexual assault forensic exams of children in the last 2 years. The hospital I work at is in the top 5% of the nation in the volume of sexual assault victims we see. A disturbing trend has been evident in the last several years, with almost half (44%) of our perpetrators being minors. Of those 44%, those most likely to commit the assaults are 11-15 year-old-males.

What is causing children, not even old enough to drive, to rape, assault, and hurt their peers? While it's a multifaceted issue, there is a clear connection to repeated exposure to pornography and child-on-child sexual assault. Not only do we hear the connection from victims, parents and disclosures from perpetrators, but there is also research to prove this connection.

- There are over 100 research studies that show pornography use is correlated with and is the cause of violence (1).
- Between 2008 and 2011, exposure to porn among boys under the age of 13 jumped from 14% to 49% and boys' daily use more than doubled (2).
- Furthermore, children are particularly susceptible to what they see in pornography. The more they view it, the more they perform the violent acts they see in porn (3).

The epidemic of child-on-child sexual assault is growing, with the Department of Defense acknowledging it's a widespread problem on military bases, public schools acknowledging the affect on their students, and Child Protection Centers noting the same disturbing trends.

While we know that pornography addictions, problematic sexual behaviors and pornography induced erectile dysfunction are on the rise for the adolescents in our country, there are little to no recovery solutions in place. The children who commit sexual assaults against other children are victims themselves.

Some of these children are victims of sexual assault, many come from homes riddled with neglect, dysfunction and very little healthy attachments, and they are also victims of a society that is okay with explicit, violent, and degrading sexual scenes being accessible to any child with a screen in front of them. We owe it to our youth to provide the desperately needed services to treat children with problematic sexual behaviors.

This issue is not only affecting males, but treatment for females is almost non-existent in the United States. Not only would these programs address past trauma, but they also would teach children healthy sexual behaviors and give them the ability to succeed as adults. This is not a problem that we can turn a blind eye to anymore. This is happening to our children and as their protectors, their advocates and their role models it's our responsibility to equip these children with tangible resources for healing and healthy coping mechanisms.

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- 1) Malamuth, N. M., Addison, T. & Koss, M. P. (2000). Pornography and sexual aggression: Are there reliable effects and can we understand them? *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 11, 26-91.
- 2) Sun, C., Bridges, A., Johnson, J., & Ezzell, M. (2014). Pornography and the male sexual script: An analysis of consumption and sexual relations. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 1-12.
- 3) Wright, P. J. (2014). Pornography and the sexual socialization of children: Current knowledge and a theoretical future. *Journal of Children and Media*, 8(3), 305-312.