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Differences in pornography use and associated factors between religious and non-religious adolescents: A network analysis

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Background: Nearly half of children and adolescents aged 9–16 years have access to and may be viewing pornography. An estimated 37.7% of boys and 19.3% of girls may be at risk for developing Problematic Pornography Use (PPU). Religiosity may influence PPU. Regardless of religiosity, PPU in adolescents has been associated with loneliness, sexual risk behaviors, victimization, and gender stereotypes. The main objective of this study was to explore a network structure of pornography-use-related features in religious and non-religious adolescents. *Method:* In network analyses, two separate networks were defined and tested for self-reported non-religious and religious participants. The set of nodes analyzed included variables measuring reasons for the pornography use, risky sexual behaviors, perceived familial relationships, PPU, sexual double standards, loneliness, and online sexual victimization. *Results:* Statistically significant sociodemographic differences were observed between religious and non-religious groups of adolescents. The activation of the node “frequency of pornography use” impacted many variables modeled in the network (this node was also impacted by the activation of multiple other nodes). The node with the lowest relevance and linkage capacity in both groups was familial relationships. *Conclusions:* This study used network analysis to identify differences between religious and non-religious adolescents. The findings suggest possible consequences of adolescent pornography use that should be examined in longitudinal studies.

Keywords: pornography, adolescents, religion