

Introduction

- ❖ In recent years, the internet has enabled the population at large to easily access pornography and other forms of sexually explicit digital content (Goldstein, 2019).
- ❖ Young people use pornography as an educational resource (Laws, 2013). Yet, some have begun to doubt that this can be attributed to the disparity of sufficient sex education across diagnostic populations.
- ❖ The purpose of this pilot study is to determine whether or not comprehensive sex education is linked to rates of digital pornography use.

Methods

- ❖ **Participants:** 136 adults (52 with a self-reported diagnosis of autism, 84 without)
- ❖ **Measures:** These data are part of a larger study. Participants completed questions about demographics, sex education received, and consumption of pornography. Participants also filled out the Adult Autism Quotient-10 (AQ-10), which measures key characteristics associated with autism with a score from 1-10.
- ❖ **Analysis:** Self-report scores were compared by diagnosis and sex education received using a univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test. The Spearman's correlation was used to test for a correlation between AQ-10 score and frequency of pornography use.

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Table 1.
Participant Demographics

	ASD	NT
% of Participants	38%	62%
Sex (Female)	18%	35%
Sex (Male)	18%	15%
Sex (Not Reported)	11%	<1%
Age in Years (M)	27.75	26.10

Table 2.
Results

	M	SD
ASD, Sex Education	1.14	0.61
NT, Sex Education	1.10	0.64
ASD, No Sex Education	1.28	0.67
NT, No Sex Education	1.22	0.97

	Definitely Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Definitely Disagree
39) I often notice small sounds when others do not	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40) I usually concentrate more on the whole picture, rather than the small details	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41) I find it easy to do more than one thing at once	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42) If there is an interruption, I can switch back to what I was doing very quickly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 1. Example items and response scale from AQ-10

Purpose

Thorough and comprehensive sex education is a crucial part of healthy development and sexual well-being. The dearth of sex education is particularly present in populations with developmental disabilities. While it has been explicitly proven that individuals with autism (ASD) desire relationships at rates similar to their neurotypical (NT) peers, adequate educational information for these groups is often sparse.

Next Steps

Next steps include altering the questionnaire to use language that yields more specific results. The updated questions should offer a wider breadth of options when asking individuals about their viewing habits.

Results

Sex Education

- ❖ Sex educated group and non-sex educated group reported no significant difference in frequency of pornography use ($F(1) = 0.11, P = .74$),

Diagnostic Population

- ❖ ASD and NT population reported no significant difference in frequency of pornography use ($F(1) = 0.78, P = .38$)
Across Independent Variables $P=956$
- ❖ Indicates no significant relationship between sex education and porn consumption across diagnostic groups.

Exploratory correlations with Autism Quotient-10

- ❖ Autism Quotient-10 did not significantly correlate with frequency of pornography use ($r = .013, P = 0.883$).

Conclusions

- ❖ No significant relationship between comprehensive sex education and reduced use of pornography; this result is consistent across NT and ASD groups
- ❖ Both NT and ASD adults indicated similar frequency of pornography use
- ❖ Individuals possessing symptoms commonly associated with autism do not consume pornography at higher rates than individuals who do not possess these traits
- ❖ These results have important social implications, as sexuality and sexual engagements in ASD are often stigmatized. Pervasive stereotypes often frame individuals with ASD as engaging in sexual behaviors and habits that are deviant or harmful. However, this result suggests that patterns in behavior with regards to sexually explicit online content are similar across these diagnostic populations.

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