Associations Between Pornography Use Motivations and Sexual Satisfaction in Gender Diverse and Cisgender Individuals in the 43-Country International Sex Survey

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Abstract : Pornography use is prevalent among adults worldwide. Prior studies have assessed the associations between pornography use frequency and sexual satisfaction, in cisgender and heterosexual individuals, with mixed results. However, measuring pornography use solely by pornography use frequency is problematic, as it can lead to disregarding important contextual factors that may be related to pornography use's potential effects. Pornography use motivations (PUMs) represent key predictors of sexual behaviors. Yet, their associations with different indicators of sexual wellbeing have yet to be extensively studied. This cross-cultural study examined the links between the eight PUMs most often reported in the general population (i.e. sexual pleasure, sexual curiosity, emotional distraction or suppression, fantasy, stress reduction, boredom avoidance, lack of sexual satisfaction, and self-exploration) and sexual satisfaction in gender diverse and cisgender individuals. Given the lack of scientific data on associations between individuals' PUMs and sexual satisfaction, these links were examined in an exploratory manner. A total of 43 countries from five continents were included in the International Sex Survey (ISS). A secure online platform was used to collect self-report, anonymous data from 82,243 participants (39.6% men, 57% women, 3.4% gender diverse individuals; M = 32.4 years, SD = 12.5). Gender-based differences in levels of sexual pleasure, sexual curiosity, emotional distraction, fantasy, stress reduction, boredom avoidance, lack of sexual satisfaction, and self-exploration PUMs were examined using one-way ANOVAs. Then, for each gender group, the associations between each PUM and sexual satisfaction were examined using multiple linear regression, controlling for frequency of masturbation. One-way ANOVAs indicated significant differences between men, women, and gender diverse individuals on all PUMs. For sexual pleasure, sexual curiosity, fantasy, boredom avoidance, lack of sexual satisfaction, emotional distraction, and stress reduction PUMs, men showed the highest scores, followed by gender-diverse individuals, and women. However, for self-exploration, gender-diverse individuals had higher average scores than men. For all PUMs, women's average scores were the lowest. After controlling for frequency of masturbation, for all genders, sexual pleasure, sexual curiosity and boredom avoidance were significant positive predictors of sexual satisfaction, while lack of sexual satisfaction PUM was a significant negative predictor. Fantasy, stress reduction and self-exploration PUMs were positive significant predictors of sexual satisfaction, and fantasy was a negative significant predictor, but only for women. Findings highlight important gender differences in regards to the main motivations underlying pornography use and their relations to sexual satisfaction. While men and gender diverse individuals show similar motivation profiles, woman report a particularly unique experience, with fantasy, stress reduction and self-exploration being associated to their sexual satisfaction. This work outlines the importance of considering the role of pornography use motivations when studying the links between pornography viewing and sexual well-being, and may provide basis for gender-based considerations when working with individuals seeking help for their pornography use or sexual satisfaction.

Keywords : pornography, sexual satifsaction, cross-cultural, gender diversity