

CASE REPORT

Voyeuristic Disorder and Internet Pornography Addiction: A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

With the availability of the Internet, pornographic materials are readily accessible. Pornographic materials may have a link to addiction and other deviant sexual behaviour. In this case report, we highlighted a link between voyeuristic disorder and internet sex addiction. Mr. SK is a 22-year-old single gentleman who was referred for psychiatric assessment due to voyeuristic acts. He had been watching pornographic materials since 16 years old and became addicted to it.

Keywords: Mental Health, Hypersexuality, Voyeuristic disorder, Internet Sex Addiction

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INTRODUCTION

Voyeuristic disorder is a recognised subtype of paraphilic disorder in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM 5). It is characterised by recurrent and intense sexual arousal from observing an unsuspecting person who is naked, in the process of disrobing, or engaging in sexual activity, as manifested by fantasies, urges and behaviour, over a period of at least 6 months. The individual has acted on these sexual urges with a non consenting person, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or any other important areas of functioning (1). Pornography addiction, however, is not included in Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM 5) and the reason being there was not enough peer-reviewed evidence to establish a diagnostic criterion (1). 'Pornography' was proposed to be a specifier under 'hypersexual disorder' for Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM 5) by Kafka 2010. Hypersexual disorder is conceptualised as a primarily non-paraphilic sexual desire disorder with an impulsivity component (2). The increased in accessibility, affordability and anonymity to internet pornography has led to more people

being addicted to it. (3) 44% of problematic internet experiences are due to problems with pornography (2). Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM 5) suggested that hypersexuality was a possible comorbidity with Voyeuristic Disorder. However, literature linking internet sex addiction with voyeuristic disorder is limited (1). In this paper, we included a case report of a young man with both voyeuristic disorder and internet sex addiction.

CASE REPORT

Mr. SK, a 22 year old single gentleman was referred for psychiatric assessment after he was caught videotaping a female student in a toilet. Prior to the indexed event, he experienced intense sexual urge to view an unsuspecting female's exposed buttock. The sexual urge struck him after he had a difficult day in class. He initially tried to distract himself by imagining sexual activities which were pleasurable to him. He felt extremely aroused by the thought of peeping at an unsuspecting female uncovering her buttock. The sexual thought escalated very quickly, and it became so intense that it drove him to act upon it. He then decided to hide in a female toilet nearby. He was eventually caught in the act and subsequently suspended and referred for assessment and treatment.

Since December 2015, he had four incidences of secretly recording unsuspecting females undressing in the public toilet. This had been going on for about nine months before he was eventually caught in September 2016.

Few months prior to his first voyeuristic act, his girlfriend had broken up with him due multiple disagreements between them. He was unhappy over the separation. During this period, the frequency of masturbation and watching voyeuristic pornographic video escalated. Watching pornographic video and fantasising alone could no longer quench his sexual urge. The urge of watching a real female undressing became increasingly intense. The first victim was a female student. He was passing by the area when the view of that girl's callipygous buttock aroused him. He hid in a nearby female toilet and he managed to secretly record the girl undressing using his mobile phone. He was intensely aroused by experience.

Subsequently, he masturbated with the video that he recorded after he returned to his room. All his subsequent four voyeuristic acts happened in the same female toilet. His targets were any female who randomly entered the toilet where he was hiding. His sexual urge of peeping in the toilet would usually become more intense when he was under stress.

Mr. SK started watching pornographic videos since a young age, he enjoyed watching videos that contains voyeuristic elements. This behaviour escalated as he would watch the videos daily in increasing frequency until it became difficult for him to stop, and developed intense urge to watch again. By this time, he fulfilled the core components of internet sex addiction. He preferred watching amateur couples performing penovaginal intercourse in which the male partner enters the female partner from behind. He became sexually stimulated watching unsuspecting women being filmed exposing their buttock in the video. He usually get aroused when he randomly sees woman with attractive big buttocks. Whenever he felt stressed, he would cope by observing a woman with an attractive buttock, which would subsequently bring intense sexual arousal to him. He would then masturbate in a private area while fantasising about the woman undressing her pants or skirt and expose her buttock. At times, apart from fantasising, he would watch voyeuristic pornography while masturbating.

At the age of 16 years old, he saw his mother walked passed him with the lower half of her body semi-exposed which caused him to be sexually aroused for the first time. After that incident, he would wait for opportunities to view his mother exposing her lower half of her body.

Mr. SK's described himself as a person who is shy with a low self-esteem. He is very sensitive to how others react to him. He took critics and comments from others very hardly. He grew up in a strict family and he described his parents as demanding and critical towards him.

DISCUSSION

Internet sex addiction is a sub-form of both 'internet addiction' and 'sexual addiction'. 'Internet pornography addiction' essentially is a subtype of internet sex addiction. Griffiths suggested that internet sex addiction can be defined similarly with any other behavioral addiction, which consist of 6 criteria such as salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, conflict and relapse (4).

Researches on the exact biological etiologies linking these disorders are still scant. However, some studies are focusing on monoamines (serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine) as evidenced by the impairment of normal sexual functioning in serotonin and dopamine dysregulation (5).

In a psychodynamic point of view, sexual addiction can be rooted in issues such as confusing and abusive life trauma (3) In this case report, Mr SK's childhood experience of growing up in a demanding and critical family might contribute to his condition. His pornographic consumption might be exacerbated by his external stressors of a relationship break up.

With the increase of internet sex addiction, sexually-related internet crime seems to be increased as well, for example cyberstalking, pedophilic grooming and online sexual harassment (4). Other than that, the sexual behaviour that is observed online might be translated in real life as well. This might be part of the 'tolerance' manifestation of the internet sex addiction. For example in the case of Mr S.K., just watching the pornographic material was not enough to quench his sexual addiction, which led him to fulfill his desire by watching women undressing in real life.

Currently, literature is still limited on the effect of internet sex addiction to voyeuristic disorder. This indicates the need for further research on the link between internet sex addictions with paraphilic disorders such as voyeuristic disorder.

CONCLUSION

The present case report highlights the possible association between internet sex addiction and voyeuristic disorder. In managing a patient with voyeuristic disorder, a thorough psychosexual history and internet addiction history should be taken. To date, evidence in linking voyeuristic disorder and internet sex addiction is still lacking. Further research might be beneficial in formulating a specific treatment plan for individuals with internet sex addiction to prevent further progression into conditions such as voyeuristic disorder.

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