



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Computers in Human Behavior

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/comphumbeh

Full length article

Cybersex in the “Net generation”: Online sexual activities among Spanish adolescents

Rafael Ballester-Arnal ^{a,*}, Cristina Giménez-García ^a, María Dolores Gil-Llario ^b,
Jesús Castro-Calvo ^a^a Departamento de Psicología Básica, Clínica y Psicobiología. Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, Spain^b Departamento de Psicología Evolutiva, Universitat de València. Estudi General, Valencia, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 6 July 2015

Received in revised form

30 November 2015

Accepted 16 December 2015

Available online 28 December 2015

Keywords:

Cybersex
Adolescence
Spain
Sexuality
Internet

ABSTRACT

The internet offers several opportunities to explore sexuality among adolescents. However, some studies have also revealed problematic effects of cybersex in earlier stages. Despite this, few studies analyze the online sexual behavior among adolescents, even less in Spain where there is very little data. For this reason, our aim is to examine the use of internet for sexual purposes among Spanish adolescents, including gender differences. Three hundred and twenty-two adolescents completed an ad-hoc questionnaire and the Spanish version of the Internet Sex Screening Test. In general, boys report more cybersex than girls do, for example, in masturbating while the Internet (60.6% of boys and 7.3% of girls). In addition, internet sex interferes with lifestyles more frequently in boys (12.7% of them) than in girls (4.7% of them). Moreover, according to linear regression, variables such as general pornography use or oral sex seem to be connected to cybersex for both groups, while same-sex behaviors are more associated with cybersex for boys and masturbation for girls. Therefore, these findings support the existence of cybersex among Spanish adolescents (ranging from 3.1% to 60.6% in boys and 0%–11.5% in girls for some online sexual activities), including certain problematic behaviors (8.6% of boys show a risk profile), and the relevance of gender in its analysis. These results should be considered in prevention and support strategies.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The internet become an accessible manner to discover human sexuality without restrictive sexual standards (Griffiths, 2012). In this context cybersex, the use of the internet for sexual purposes such as viewing online pornography or engaging in online sexual activities (Delmonico, Griffin, & Moriarity, 2001), is a place where adolescents explore their sexuality (Bleakley, Hennessy, & Fishbein, 2011; Doornwaard & van den Eijndena, 2015).

In Europe many adolescents (ranging from 15 to 16 years old) use the internet (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011). According to Kuss, van Rooij, Shorter, Griffiths and van de Mheen (2013), they use it almost every day, at home and without

parental control. In general, adolescents use internet for different purposes such as keep in contact with friends or seeking information but they mainly use it for enjoyment (Sinkkonen, Puhakka, & Meriläinen, 2013). In particular, some of them (24% of boys and 17% of girls) have already done cybersex (Livingstone et al., 2011).

In Spain, where almost 100% of men and women adolescents have accessed to the internet, at least 10% practice online sexual activities (Ministerio del Interior-Gobierno de España, 2014). Most of the Spanish young people, who increase this percentage to 82%, report retrospectively that they had begun online sexual activities at eleven age (Labay, Labay, & Labay, 2011). In this population, the use of cybersex is mainly recreational although at least 18.7% of boys and 2.9 of girls reveal a risk or pathological use (Ballester-Arnal, Castro-Calvo, Gil-Llario, & Giménez-García, 2014).

Probably, particular characteristics of adolescents such as lack of control and sensation seeking would facilitate a risk use of cybersex (Steinberg, 2008) because adolescents would not have enough understanding and development to distinguish a healthy and an unhealthy use of it (Freeman-Longo, 2000). Consequently, online

* Corresponding author. Departamento de Psicología Básica, Clínica y Psicobiología. Universitat Jaume I. Avda. Vicent Sos Baynat s/n. 12071, Castellón, Spain.

E-mail addresses: rballest@uji.es (R. Ballester-Arnal), gimenezc@uji.es (C. Giménez-García), dolores.gil@uji.es (M.D. Gil-Llario), castroj@uji.es (J. Castro-Calvo).

sexual activities could become more complex in earlier stages (Cooper, Mansson, Daneback, Tikkanen, & Ross, 2003).

Therefore, cybersex could be healthy and beneficial for sexual development. For example, when adolescents seek sexual information or explore sexual activities and preferences easily (Shaughnessy, Byers, Clowater, & Kalinowski, 2014). But, at the same time, this sexual activity could be a potential hazard (McCarthy, 2010). The internet could propagate misinformation and reinforce stereotypes about sexuality (Longo, Brown, & Price, 2002). In addition, it could become a distressing experience for adolescents who receive online unwanted sexual contents and solicitations (Castro, Gómez, Gil, & Giménez, 2015). Even more the online sexual behaviors could facilitate psychological and social problems, such as addictive usage patterns, interfering with their daily life (Döring, 2009).

According to Edwards, Delmonico and Griffin (2011) there is a continuum between healthy internet use for sexual purposes and pathological use. On the first level, there are “recreational users” who access to online sexual material for entertainment and curiosity. As a consequence, there are not social or psychological disruption. In any case, they divide this first level into two groups: (1) “appropriate recreational users” when people use the internet without problematic symptoms (opened behavior, minimal time spent –two hours per week–, no feeling embarrassed) and (2) “inappropriate recreational users” when people shame others sharing online sexual contents. On the second level, there are problematic cybersex users who are divided into three groups. People in “discovery group” have no problems because of their online sexual activities, but they spend many hours in cybersex. People in “predisposed group” spend less hours than others, but their online sexual behavior could be more problematic. Probably, these people had managed their sexual urges in other contexts but they have difficulties to do it on the internet. Finally, people in “lifelong sexually compulsive group” had experimented problematic sexual activities in other contexts and the internet is a new opportunity for doing it again. Accordingly to these authors, almost 15% of cybersex users would be risk users.

CyberHex model (Delmonico et al., 2001) describes some reasons for attractiveness of the internet and its facility to captivate users. The Internet is accessible and offers any kind of sexual experience twenty-four hours. Moreover, this is a low cost way to experiment sexuality, because the internet prices are affordable. In addition, this is an isolated manner to experiment sexual activities without distractions of “real world”. In this sense, there is a supposed anonymity which facilitates developing fantasies. Furthermore, the internet lets us interact and intimate with people avoiding face to face relation. Additionally, the speed and simplicity to access sexual content, facilitate an immediate reinforce in the addictive behaviors (Edwards et al., 2011; Laier, Pawlikowski, Pekal, Schulte, & Brand, 2013).

Several sociodemographic aspects influence on these online sexual activities (Edwards et al., 2011). In particular, as in other aspects related to sexuality, some studies have revealed gender differences among adolescents in cybersex (Doornwaard & van den Eijndena, 2015) but, more frequently, among young people who have received more attention (Ballester-Arnal et al., 2014; Shaughnessy et al., 2014). Generally, boys use more frequently the internet for sexual pursuits (Ballester, Gil, Cassá, & Gómez, 2010; Bleakley et al., 2011) and they use more online pornography than girls (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2005). Additionally, more boys prefer online sexual excitation than having intimacy with their physical partners (Ballester, Ruiz, Gil, Giménez, & Castro, 2012) and report more arousal online sexual activities than girls (Shaughnessy, Byers, & Walsh, 2011). Furthermore, boys inform more factors to become risk users in terms of online sexual compulsivity and online

sexual spending (Ballester-Arnal et al., 2014).

Therefore, online sexual activities take place in sexual development of adolescents in a natural way although the more detailed studies have focused on other populations (young and adult people), as well as they restrict their broad possibilities. These limitations are greater in regions like Spain in which conservative values prevails in sexuality. In light of this gap of knowledge about cybersex in Hispanic adolescents, this study analyzes the use of internet for sexual purposes among Spanish adolescents, including gender differences.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Three hundred and twenty-two adolescents at three state schools of Castellon (Spain) participated in this study. Regarding gender, 46.9% were boys and 53.1% were girls. The range of age was between 13 and 17 years old and the average was 14.76 years old (SD = 0.97). There were no differences based on gender (see Table 1). All of them were Spanish, lived in the urban area and belonged to the middle class. Most of them had computer at home. There were no differences in hours being online in the last week between boys and girls.

2.2. Instruments

For this study two questionnaires were used: an ad-hoc questionnaire and the Spanish version of the Internet Sex Screening Test by Delmonico (1997) (Ballester, Gil, Gómez, & Gil, 2010). The first one evaluates socio-demographic variables (gender, age and studies), internet use (accessing computer and hours being online in the last week) and sexual behavior (type of activities, sexual frequency, sexual orientation and having partner).

The second one, evaluates if the Internet sexual behavior has become clinically problematic. It includes five factors: (1) Online sexual compulsivity that measures sexual online behaviors which could be related to sexual problems and feeling out of control with their online sexual interest (2) Online sexual behavior-isolation non compulsive. which explores isolating forms of cybersex and using materials for sexual purposes (3) Online sexual behavior-social that evaluates social interaction associated with online sex, such as sexual chats or humor use or innuendo with others while online (4) Online sexual spending which explores economical investment during online sex behavior and (5) Seriousness perceived of online sexual behavior that measures self-perception of behavior as a problem, related to dysphoria, dissatisfaction and motivation to stop their dysfunctional consumption of cybersex.

This Spanish version by Ballester, Gil, Cassá, et al. (2010) and Ballester, Gil, Gómez, et al. (2010) was validated among 1.239 adolescents and young people who self-administered the questionnaire offline and revealed an internal consistency of 0.88 and a test-retest reliability of 0.84. In this study, the Spanish version of the questionnaire showed a reliability of 0.84.

2.3. Procedure

For this study, participants completed the questionnaires during school hours voluntarily, confidentially and anonymously. After obtaining authorization by the Ethical Committee of Research and the involved secondary schools, the adolescents received the information about the study. When their parents gave the informed consent for their participation, they were involved in the study.

In order to obtain reliable data and solve any doubts arising from the questionnaire, two trained psychologists assisted the data

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/350235>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/350235>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)