Sexual Medicine on behalf of International Society for Sexual Medicine.

causing erectile dysfunction (ED). The letter writer weaves an 
erotic films might resemble such a fish/idiom with respect to 
sensiveness, Not Erectile Dysfunction”, we speculate that viewing 
"Viewing Sexual Stimuli Associated with Greater Sexual Respon-

A red herring is not a delicacy that we have had the pleasure of 
trying, but it is fond of its use as an English idiom. In our 
“Viewing Sexual Stimuli Associated with Greater Sexual Respon-
siveness, Not Erectile Dysfunction”, we speculate that viewing 
erotic films might resemble such a fish/idiom with respect to 
causing erectile dysfunction (ED). The letter writer weaves a 
nefarious tale of “gays”, “missing data”, and “egregious” problems 
in our original study [1]. This sounds like a good read indeed, if 
any of the problems had actually occurred.

The authors clearly devoted much time and energy to their 
research project. It is unfortunate that they have not provided 
the reader with sufficient information about the population studied 
or the statistical analyses to justify their conclusion that pornography 
is unlikely to negatively impact erectile functioning. While there is 
some indication in the data that nonporn-addicted men watching 
brief pornography films may have increased sexual arousal and 
desire, this is hardly a novel finding.

RICHARD A. ISENBERG, MD
Uro-Gynecology, Scottsdale, AZ, USA

Red Herring: Hook, Line, and Stinker

DOI: 10.1002/sm2.70

A red herring is not a delicacy that we have had the pleasure of 
trying, but it is fond of its use as an English idiom. In our 
“Viewing Sexual Stimuli Associated with Greater Sexual Respon-
siveness, Not Erectile Dysfunction”, we speculate that viewing 
erotic films might resemble such a fish/idiom with respect to 
causing erectile dysfunction (ED). The letter writer weaves a 
nefarious tale of “gays”, “missing data”, and “egregious” problems 
in our original study [1]. This sounds like a good read indeed, if 
any of the problems had actually occurred.

No questions were raised about the strong finding that the 
more men viewed sex films at home the stronger sexual desire 
they reported for their partner. In fact, this result was described 
as “hardly novel”. Also, no questions were raised about the poor 
literature published in this area. We were pleased to find that our 
original report was replicated and extended by a recent indepen-
dent laboratory study that examined male sexual function even 
more broadly [2]. Hence, we seem to agree that viewing sex films 
at home does not inexorably impair the desire for one’s

© 2015 The Authors. Sexual Medicine published by Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Sex Med 2015;3:219–224
on behalf of International Society for Sexual Medicine.

References

1 Yoder VC, Virden TB, Amin K. Internet pornography and loneliness: An association? Sex Addict Compulsivity 2005;12:19–44.
2 Boies SC, Cooper AI, Osborne CS. Variations in internet-related problems and psychosocial functioning in online sexual activities: Implications for social and sexual development of young adults. Cyberpsychol Behav 2005;7:207–40.
3 Schneider J. The impact of compulsive cybersex behaviors on the family. Sex Relat Ther 2003;18:329–34.
4 Philaretoy AG, Mahfouz A, Allen K. Use of Internet pornography and men’s well-being. Int J Mens Health 2005;4:149–69.
5 Tivoli MP, Crosby JM, Cox JM. Viewing Internet pornography: For whom is it problematic, how and why? Sex Addict Compulsivity 2009;16:253–66.
6 Praise N, Moholy M, Staley C. Biases for affective vs. sexual content in multidimensional scaling analysis: An individual difference perspective. Arch Sex Behav 2013;43:463–72.
7 Praise N, Staley C, Roberts V. Frontal alpha asymmetry and sexually motivated states. Psychophysiology 2014;31:226–35.
8 Praise N, Staley C, Fong TW. No evidence of emotion dysregulation in “hypersexuals” reporting their emotions to a sexual film. Sex Addict Compulsivity 2013;20:106–26.
9 Moholy M, Praise N, Proudrit GH, Rahman A, Fong T. Sexual desire, not hypersexuality, predict self-regulation of sexual arousal. Cogn Emot 2015;6:1–12.
10 Julien E, Over R. Male sexual arousal across five modes of erotic stimulation. Arch Sex Behav 1988;17:131–43.
11 Kuhn S, Gallinat J. Brain structure and functional connectivity associated with pornography consumption: The brain on porn. JAMA Psychiatry 2014;71:827–34.
12 Seifried-Spellar KC, Rogers MK. Does deviant pornography use follow a Guttman-like progression. Comput Human Behav 2013;29:1997–2003.
Participants with IIEF scores‡ 127 92 0 0 35 0

Sexual Medicine

“four gay” men in any study. All participants were required to be
lapsed across studies for this analysis”, p. E4).

arousal reported did not differ by film length, so data were col-

controlled the stimuli as stated in our original article (“sexual
between studies and this was not ”

[5,6]).

The author of the letter also made a false statistical statement:
“Results from different Likert scales are not poolable [sic]”. Of

statistical power (as we reported in the article).

viewed weekly and the completed IIEF . This is important for
ward and pertain in an obvious way to the overall hypotheses being
questions, because the questions and their answers are straightfor-

would be redundant (and exceed word limits). Sometimes, authors

described thoroughly in the publications that introduce the ques-

studies that do not contrast sexual stimulation on the Internet
often differs from behaviors, fantasy/attraction, and/or relation-
ship desires in both men and women. Also, this thing called
“bisexual” exists. We recommend an excellent review of this
research and topic by Diamond [7] and more recently van Anders
[8]. Hence, all stimuli were appropriate for the female sex attrac-

We describe the hours-viewed parameter in two places in the
study, and included its distribution (“strongly positively skewed” p.
4) and bin counts (“0 (n = 25), up to 2 (n = 56), or more than 2
(n = 55) hours”). We now add the range of 0–25 hours per week.

Finally, the mean hours of viewing was 1.5 hours, which is in the
range of experience of 46.4% of men in one large study [9].

The author claims we did not adequately describe the sex film
viewing variable. We described that variable at least 13 places in
the article (“weekly average” in abstract; “reported the average
count of hours they consumed VSS per week” on p. 3; “amount of
VSS viewed weekly” and “Hours of VSS viewing per week” and
“hours of VSS in the average week” on p. 4; “amount of VSS
viewed during the week” and “hours of VSS consumed in the
average week” and “hours of VSS viewed in the typical week” and
“hours of VSS viewed in the average week” and “hours of VSS
being consumed in the average week” and “hours of VSS viewed
in the average week” on p. 5; “Hours viewing sexual stimuli per week
on average” in Figure 1; “hours of VSS viewed weekly” on p. 6).
The question was exactly as described, “How much time per week
did you spend using pornography during the past month?” with
the response box including the descriptor “hours” for which they
could indicate partial hour(s).

Assessing current average hours per week is consistent with
other studies of the level of sexual film use. For example, Hald and
Malamuth [10] used one item from four time-related measures
described as the “average time of use in minutes per week during
the past year” (p. 102). Kühn and Gallinat [11] included “hours on
average spent with pornographic material during the week” as
their only predictor in quantifying porn use in relation to brain
structure and function (p. 828). Rosser et al. [12] examined “fre-
quency and duration measures of SEM consumption of any kind in
the last 3 months . . .” which were combined “to create an index of
the hours per week dedicated to SEM consumption” (p. 1491).

Further, the hours per week of online sexual activities was the only
variable that differentiated problem and nonproblem users in
an early study [13] and the amount of use continues to be included
in recent conceptualizations of “problem” use (“Hypersexual Dis-
order is associated with increased time engaging in sexual fantasies
and behaviors” [14], p. 385). Other scientists have used less
detailed measures of engagement (“e.g., “Approximately how
many times in the past 30 days have you viewed pornography?”
p.72 [15]; partner viewing frequency as “6 (always), 5 (usually), 4
(often), 3 (sometimes), 2 (rarely), and 1 (never).” [16]). Thus, our
approach, which exceeds the measures of many investigations, is

Table 1 Participant counts

| Source                              | Pfaus and Prause | Moholy et al. | Prause, Staley, and Fong | Prause, Staley, and Roberts | Prause, Moholy, and Staley | Moholy and Prause (under review) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Male participants*                  | 280              | 104           | 53                       | 20                          | 51                          | 52                               |
| Participants with partners†         | 59               | 48            | 0                        | 0                           | 11                          | 0                                |
| Participants with IIEF scores‡      | 127              | 92            | 0                        | 0                           | 35                          | 0                                |

*Participants across studies actually total 290, but 10 had no measures relevant for this analysis and were excluded. All participants correct as originally reported.
†All participants correct as originally reported.
‡Of the 133 men who started the IIEF, six failed to answer one or more of the items. Rather than impute, these missing values were excluded from analysis. Hence, all participants are correct as originally reported.
Letters to the Editor

commonly used and has been demonstrated to differentiate proposed clinical groups. Although we appreciate a good drama, “the porn use data is [sic] uninterpretable,” is a bit emotional for measures that represent the current state of the science. Also, one should remember that the data “are”.

The author cites two studies as evidence that we should have assessed “total pornography usage, age of onset, presence of escalation, and extent of sexual activity with partner.” The first study actually demonstrates the opposite. Specifically, “Even when controlling for Internet addiction, we found a negative association between PHs and the right caudate GM volume (r = −0.336, P < .01); similarly, the association was still significant when controlling for sex addiction” (p. E4). This means that more in-depth assessment than the hours of weekly consumption added nothing to the prediction. Further, those authors actually did not analyze any of the variables independently (age of onset, presence of escalation, sexual activity with a partner). The second study cited is quite puzzling, as those scientists assessed only onset (“Only 15 items from the Online Pornography Survey, which focused on the respondent’s age of onset for online pornography use, were included in this study”, p. 1998) [17]. Finally, a new study has expanded our initial results to show that neither the frequency of viewing over a year nor changes in the frequency of use were related to erectile problems [2]. Hence, the complaint was not actually supported and was not warranted.

We followed the example of Kuhn and Gallinat [11] and chose to examine men not reporting problems in their use of erotica. We state this at least twice in the article (“Nontreatment-seeking men” in the abstract; “The current study investigated erectile difficulties in a non-patient sample”, p. E3), then spend the better part of a paragraph (beginning “Finally, it is worth reiterating that these data did not include hypersexual patients”) discussing this decision. Our use of nontreatment-seeking men was clearly described and is consistent with previous studies. Also, it is an appropriate test of the notion that sex film use leads inexorably to erectile problems. Had we tested men who reported erectile problems, and especially men who may well have had their porn use identified by a therapist as the “cause” of their ED raising anxiety around sex further point out that the author did not dispute the finding that more viewing of sex films is associated with increased desire for sex with a partner. We note that this finding is inconsistent with the concept of “porn addiction” and especially claims that use of sex films desensitizes erectile function, which in turn generalizes to a decreased arousal and desire for partnered sex. Watching sex films does not impair, and may enhance, the desire to be sexual with a partner. Fishing in a different pond thus appears appropriate.

Nicolette Prause, PhD* and James Prause, PhD†
*Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA, USA; †Psychology, Concordia University, Montreal, QC, Canada

References

1 Praise N, Pfau J. Viewing sexual stimuli associated with greater sexual responsiveness, not erectile dysfunction. Sex Med 2015. doi:10.1002/sm2.58. [Epub ahead of print].
2 Landripet I, Stulthofer A. Is pornography use associated with sexual difficulties and dysfunctions among younger heterosexual men? J Sex Med 2015;12:1136–9.
3 Buzzell T. Demographic characteristics of persons using pornography in three technological contexts. Sex Cult. 2005;9:26–48.
4 Praise N. Viewing sexual stimuli in the United States using data from the General Social Survey. 2015. Available at: https://liberos.shinyapps.io/VSS-GSS/ (accessed May 10, 2015).
5 Likert R. A technique for the measurement of attitudes. Arch Psychol. 1932;22:55.
6 Nunnally JC, Bernstein IH. Psychometric Theory. 3rd edition. New York: McGraw Hill.; 1994.
7 Diamond LM. What does sexual orientation orient? A bio-behavioral model distinguishing romantic love and sexual desire. Psychol Rev 2003;110:171–92.
8 van Anders S. Beyond sexual orientation: Integrating gender/sex and diverse sexualities via sexual configurations theory. Arch Sex Behav 2015;1–37. doi:10.1007/s10508-015-0490-8.
9 Cooper A, Wheeler CR, Boes SC, Gordon BL. Sexuality on the Internet: From sexual exploration to pathological expression. Prof Psychol Res Pract. 1999;30:154–64.
10 Hald G, Malamuth N. Experimental effects of exposure to pornography: The moderating effect of personality and mediating effect of sexual arousal. Arch Sex Behav 2015;44:99–109.
11 Kühn S, Gallinat J. Brain structure and functional connectivity associated with pornography consumption: The brain on porn. JAMA Psychiatry 2014;71:827–34.
12 Rosser BRS, Smolenski D, Erickson D, Iantaffi A, Brady SS, Grey JA, Hald GM, Horvath KJ, Kilian G, Treen B, Wilkerson JM. The Effects of gay sexually explicit media on the HIV risk behavior of men who have sex with men. AIDS Behav 2013;17:1488–98.
13 Cooper A, Griffin-Shelley E, Delmonico DL, Mathy RM. Online sexual problems: Assessment and predictive variables. Sex Addict Compulsivity 2001;8:267–85.

© 2015 The Authors. Sexual Medicine published by Wiley Periodicals, Inc. on behalf of International Society for Sexual Medicine.
14 Kafka M. Hypersexual disorder: A proposed diagnosis for DSM-V. Arch Sex Behav 2010;39:377–400.
15 Braithwaite S, Aaron S, Dowdle K, Spjut K, Fincham F. Does pornography consumption increase participation in friends with benefits relationships? Sex Cult. 2015;1–20. doi:10.1007/s12119-015-9275-4.
16 Tylka TL, Van Diest AMK. You looking at her “Hot” body may not be “Cool” for me: Integrating male partners’ pornography use into objectification theory for women. Psychol Women Q 2015;39:67–84.
17 Seigfried-Spellar KC, Rogers MK. Does deviant pornography use follow a Guttman-like progression? Comput Human Behav 2013;29:1997–2003.
18 Carvalho J, Štulhofer A, Vieira AL, Jurin T. Hypersexuality and high sexual desire: Exploring the structure of problematic sexuality. J Sex Med 2015. doi:10.1111/jsm.12865. [Epub ahead of print].
19 Grubbs J, Exline J, Pargament K, Hook J, Carlisle R. Transgression as addiction: Religiosity and moral disapproval as predictors of perceived addiction to pornography. Arch Sex Behav 2015;44:125–36.
20 Cohen J. The earth is round (P < .05). Am Psychol 1994;49:997–1003.
21 Rosen RC, Riley A, Wagner G, Osterloh IH, Kirkpatrick J, Mishra A. The international index of erectile function (IIEF): A multidimensional scale for assessment of erectile dysfunction. Urology 1997;49:822–30.
22 Bik HM, Goldstein MC. An introduction to social media for scientists. PLoS Biol 2013;11:e1001535.