



# Evaluation of Comprehensive Sex Education Training and Pornography Consumption in University Students in Spain

Evaluación de la formación en educación sexual integral y consumo de pornografía en estudiantes de universidad de España

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## ABSTRACT

The consumption of pornography is becoming an increasing problem among teenagers and even children, often leading to addiction. Recent studies indicate that exposure to this content begins before puberty, which raises serious concerns about its impact on the development and well-being of youth, as well as on their socialization and conception of gender equality. This article will present the results of a study conducted with 647 students from the University of La Rioja (Spain), evaluating both their pornography consumption patterns and their perception and satisfaction with the sexual education received. The results show the practical absence of this training and the generalized total or partial dissatisfaction with it when it is carried out. Likewise, there is a high consumption of pornography, especially in the case of men, which in the absence of adequate sexual education becomes a source of distorted information.

## RESUMEN

El consumo de pornografía resulta un problema creciente entre adolescentes e incluso niños y niñas, al punto de convertirse, en muchos casos, en una adicción. Estudios recientes indican que la exposición a este contenido se inicia antes de la pubertad, lo que plantea serias preocupaciones sobre su impacto en el desarrollo y bienestar de la juventud, así como en su socialización y concepción respecto a la igualdad entre los sexos. En este artículo se presentarán los resultados de un estudio realizado con 647 estudiantes de la Universidad de La Rioja (España), en el que se evalúan tanto sus patrones de consumo de pornografía como su percepción y satisfacción con la educación sexual recibida. Se manifiesta la ausencia de esta formación, así como el descontento total o parcial generalizado respecto a ella cuando existe. Asimismo, se observa un consumo elevado de pornografía, sobre todo en el caso de los hombres, lo que en ausencia de una adecuada educación sexual se convierte en una fuente de información distorsionada.

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## Introduction

Sexuality is an inherent condition of being human. We are sexual beings, and exploring this aspect is part of our nature. Just as we educate children about the world to equip them for navigating it effectively, we must also educate them about sexuality and its physical, social, and cultural implications. Comprehensive sex education is understood as a set of content and teaching methods designed to convey scientific knowledge and appropriate values so that students, from an early age, become aware of their sexual bodies and the implications of human sexuality itself (Neagu, 2024). This includes attention to anatomy, biology, the sexual condition of our species, reproduction, and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies. However, what should be emphasized in the defense of comprehensive

sex education is that human sexuality encompasses much more than reproduction. It shapes us, gives us identity, and involves our emotions, physical sensations, and the way we interact with ourselves and others. It affects our conception of desire, the body, pleasure, our beliefs, and our affectivity. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that goes beyond a merely biological orientation is proposed, and this education should accompany students from childhood to youth. However, the implementation of comprehensive sex education (CSE) has been slow, limited, and inadequate, with only exceptional programs designed to address it in different educational stages and even fewer opportunities for its systematic and continued inclusion in the curriculum. Often, the few existing materials focus on a technical explanation of reproduction, without addressing the other functions and implications of human sexuality. And even when they do exist, they

are not included in the educational curriculum mandated by law (Lameiras et al., 2016; Garzón, 2016).

As a matter of fact, in Spain, the Organic Law on the General Educational System (LOGSE), approved in 1990, mentioned the need to educate on gender equality and health for all individuals, without making an explicit or direct mention of affective and/or sexual education. Later, the Organic Law on the Quality of Education (Gobierno de España, 2002) introduced some tools to work on it, and it wasn't until the Organic Law of Education (Gobierno de España, 2006) that affective-sexual education was fully integrated into the resources designed to develop students' personal autonomy and affective capacities. This law also linked affective-sexual education with values of equality, promoting respect for sexual diversity and preventing sexist beliefs and violence against women. Additionally, it emphasized the promotion of health education, considering equal education on affectivity and sexuality essential. The Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (Gobierno de España, 2013) eliminated the subject of Education for Citizenship and Human Rights included in the LOE and removed any direct reference to affective-sexual education, leaving only general statements on promoting gender equality.

Finally, the Organic Law 3/2020 of December 29 of 2020 calls for the promotion of respect for affective-sexual diversity and for sex education tailored to each educational stage and students' level of maturity. This legislation mandates that sex education be continuous and cross-curricular, highlighting its significance as a necessary component of health education for all school-age individuals. The aim of this sex education is to foster personal and social maturity, develop critical thinking, and equip students with tools to resolve conflicts and prevent situations of inequality and violence (Gobierno de España, 2020).

In the Integral Sexual Freedom Guarantee Law (commonly known in Spain as the "Only Yes Means Yes" law) and the amendment made in March 2023 to Organic Law 2/2010, of March 3rd, on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy, it is mandated that sex education be incorporated into the curriculum throughout compulsory education, as well as in university degree programs related to teaching, healthcare, and the judicial field.

Considering the legislative trajectory in education, it is not surprising that Spain is one of the European countries where CSE has not yet been systematically implemented. In the review conducted by Ketting and Ivanova (2018) of 25 European countries examined, only 11 had mandatory programs, and of these, 10 had a comprehensive nature. Content in this area continues to prioritize a biologically focused risk-prevention model over the more desirable comprehensive approach (Ketting et al., 2021). Evidence of this is seen in Spain, where the number of developed programs and materials is minimal, and their implementation is scarce. Furthermore, most of these initiatives target the stage of Compulsory Secondary Education (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria or ESO), covering students aged 12 to 16. Some examples include the "Olimpia" program, "Ni Ogros Ni Princesas" (Neither Ogres nor Princesses), or the "Sexual Intervention Program" in Valencia.

The "Olimpia" program (2020) was developed by the Andalusian Regional Government in 2020. It is a guide for secondary school teachers to guide the teaching of sex education in their classes. It is accompanied by an app in which students can work on the intended content. This includes knowledge of the body, prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), love, and pleasure. Additionally, it includes a module on sexual violence and more specific topics such as menstruation (Junta de Andalucía, 2020).

The program "Ni Ogros ni Princesas" ("Neither Ogres Nor Princesses: A Guide for Affective-Sexual Education in the Compulsory Secondary Education" (2021) is a material designed by the Government of the Principality of Asturias. Its purpose is to provide adolescent students with comprehensive sex education based on the recognition of the importance of pleasure, sexual health, self-esteem, gender equality, respect for personal autonomy, and the recognition of diversity. It proposes its implementation in twelve sessions per academic year of ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education) and promotes gender equality and the questioning of gender stereotypes. It starts from the awareness that, although there is a lot of information about sexuality, many sources still perpetuate false data or stereotyped beliefs that must be challenged (Lena et al., 2007).

The "Sexual Education Intervention Program (PIES)" has been designed by the Valencian Community for second and third years of Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) students (equivalent to grades 8 and 9 in many international systems). The program's key content includes topics such as body awareness and sexual identity, risk evaluation in engaging in certain sexual behaviors, the importance of preventing STIs and unwanted pregnancies, and the promotion of sexual health. Its aim is to guide students through their psychosexual development and equip them for healthy sexual relationships in adulthood (Mitjans et al., 2017).

As mentioned earlier, the content and programs designed for sex education in early childhood are particularly scarce. A noteworthy example is the "Sex Education in Early Childhood: A Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Kindergarten Educators," developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport in 2003. It offers guidance on teaching young children to grow up free from sexist stereotypes, to understand their bodies as sexual beings, and to interact with others in a spirit of equality and respect (Hernández & Jaramillo, 2003).

An additional resource for this age group is the guide for early childhood teachers issued by the Andalusian Regional Government on Affective-Sexual Education in Early Childhood Education (2018). It aims to address the knowledge of one's own body, recognizing the boundary between the "self" and physical space, learning body parts, and recognizing the sexual differences between boys and girls. It also offers tools to address normal curiosities about reproduction, pregnancy, or birth that children often have in their early years (Junta de Andalucía, 1999).

Another initiative is the Bicararo project developed by the Government of the Canary Islands, (2024) implemented in early childhood education and vocational training stages. It is a compendium of resources and recommendations to contribute to the development of a school con-

text free of violence, promoting a coeducational perspective that respects diversity.

Finally, the Skolae program, implemented by the Government of Navarra during the 2017-2018 school year, and awarded the 2019 UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education, deserves mention. It is based on four main axes: 1. Criticism and responsibility regarding equality; 2. Personal autonomy and independence; 3. Leadership, empowerment, and social participation; and 4. Sexuality and good treatment. The program includes the design of various content on these axes adapted to each educational stage, from early childhood to secondary and vocational education. Above all, it is based on promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women. It is a solid project as it aims to provide sufficient tools and content to accompany minors throughout their childhood and adolescence, ensuring they receive broad and sufficient training on the cited axes (Gobierno de Navarra, 2019).

Although there are some CSE proposals for all educational stages, the curricula do not allocate time or resources for their implementation, as no Spanish education law has established a specific subject with its own teaching space. As noted, the various laws allude to the need for CSE, but these declarations have not been effectively translated into sufficient time, resources, training, and planning for thorough implementation. This deficit must be corrected if we are to move towards a free and equal society where sexual violence is eradicated. One of the main concerns is that, without quality sexual education to guide children and adolescents as they grow and address their questions and curiosities, they will turn to inappropriate and potentially harmful sources to satisfy their curiosity—namely, pornography. In fact, some studies show that children begin accessing pornography as early as age 8, with nearly universal access by ages 13 or 14 (Ballester et al., 2020).

The concern about the lack of CSE becomes fully justified when analyzing the previously mentioned incidence of pornography in society as a whole, particularly its increasingly frequent access by children and adolescents. A neutral definition of pornography could be sexually explicit content created with the purpose of provoking sexual arousal in the viewer (Arranz, 2020). However, this is not a complete description. While it is true that pornography consists of filming various sexual practices for subsequent viewing, and that the vast majority of consumers use it, among other reasons, to achieve arousal, it is not accurate to say that sex or human sexual activity is its main content or message. As Mónica Alario (2021) warns, the main theme is violence. She asserts this not only because all the sexual acts filmed contain it but because, in many videos, any sexual act or practice is completely omitted to simply show the purest and most explicit exercise of violence and torture. Thus, a better definition of pornography would be the recording of real, explicit physical, psychological, and sexual violence and torture against women with the aim of eroticizing gender inequality and the subordinate status of women for both men and women. In this way, sexuality is turned into an instrument of patriarchal dominance, distancing it from its true purpose, which is free, desired, reciprocal, and non-violent pleasure.

The different waves of feminism, particularly the one that began in the last third of the 20th century, opened up an unprecedented horizon of freedom for women and placed the defense of sexual and reproductive rights, as well as the eradication of sexual domination practices, prominently on its agenda, with prostitution and pornography being at the forefront (Valcárcel, 2008).

In this context, what is known in feminist theory as "the sex wars" developed. This term refers to the conflict between feminists and pornography advocates that took place in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and 1980s, coinciding with what is known as the golden age of pornography, due to its rapid production and expansion during those decades.

The WAP (Women Against Pornography) was one of the most recognized organizations in the United States, and two of its leading activists, Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, both law professors, presented an ordinance to prohibit the distribution and reproduction of pornography, citing its violent content and sexist consequences. Alongside them, and with the same intentions, organizations such as WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women) or WAVPM (Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media) were formed.

The unprecedented organization of the feminist movement against pornography and its goals faced opposition from FACT (Feminist Against Censorship Task), which brought together self-proclaimed pro-sex feminist activists. These activists argued that pornography was not harmful to women, nor necessarily patriarchal, but expressed the richness and variety inherent in human sexuality. Activists such as Echols and Vance, aligned with these positions, argued that the prohibition of pornography sought by feminists and the cited organizations was a clear act of censorship; an attack on sexual freedom, freedom of expression, and creation, and, even worse, an attempt to curtail human sexuality and reduce it to what they considered narrow feminist margins imposed from a moralistic stance.

Since those wars, society has changed, and so has pornography, both in its content and the way it is accessed. In fact, if there is currently particular concern about children's and adolescents' consumption of pornography, it is because, with the proliferation of tablets, smartphones, and the improvement of internet quality and speed, access to these contents is very easy and very fast, without any control, something that did not happen in previous decades. It is increasingly common for children to become familiar with the use of these devices and even, at a very young age, to have their own phone or tablet with internet access. Parental control programs rarely prevent this access, as minors, digital natives unlike their parents, often learn to disable these restrictions. On other occasions, pornographic pages advertise themselves through pop-ups on websites whose content has nothing to do with pornography, sometimes even on children's pages, aiming to attract consumers from a very young age.

In addition to this easy access, it should be noted that the content of pornography has evolved in recent decades, showing a greater incidence of explicit violence against women.

However, it should not be ignored that Dworkin already defined pornography as “the orchestrated destruction of women’s bodies and souls; rape, battery, incest, and prostitution animate it; dehumanization and sadism characterize it; it is war on women, serial assaults on dignity, identity, and human worth; it is tyranny. Each woman who has survived knows from the experience of her own life that pornography is captivity—the woman trapped in the picture used on the woman trapped wherever he’s got her.” (Dworkin, 1989).

Nonetheless, as pointed out, the situation has worsened. With the increase in its demand, there is a need for greater and more varied production, resulting in a significant increase in the scale of violence depicted. This violence always has women as its victims and reproduces the patriarchal logic according to which men have the right to derive pleasure from dominating and subjugating women. At the same time, women are represented as submissive, willingly accepting the subordinate position imposed on them in sexual activity. However, the subordination of women is at its core (Dworkin, 1989; MacKinon, 1995; Jeffreys, 2011).

The list of types of violence, torture, humiliation, degradation, and degrading acts directly and really perpetrated against women in pornography is endless: beatings, slapping, whipping, hair pulling, choking, unwanted and abrupt penetration, pushing, tying, gagging, insults, threats, humiliating expressions and demands, oral penetrations that cause gagging, choking, and vomiting, and a long etcetera impossible to detail accurately. Nevertheless, it is worth referring to some authors such as Alario (2021) and Cobo (2020) whose recent works highlight the systematic violence that pornography exhibits towards women.

Without a doubt, violence has always been at its core. However, its prominence has only consolidated further. Researchers Ballester and Orte (2019) define “new pornography” as that distributed over the internet in recent decades, as opposed to earlier pornography, which was distributed in print images or recordings on VHS or DVD. They point out five characteristics of this new pornography: constant improvement in image quality, easy access through the internet with almost no restrictions in most cases, its free availability, its unlimited nature in terms of the range of sexual practices shown, from the most conventional to extremely violent and illegal ones, and its emphasis on interactivity. It is increasingly common for the viewer to be allowed to interact, creating and engaging with their own virtual pornographic reality through virtual reality glasses or masturbatory devices connected to specific audiovisual content.

The easy access, its free nature, and the limitless presentation of content seem to be a reaction to the significant advances made by the feminist movement in terms of women’s economic, social, and sexual emancipation. In contrast to the liberties achieved by women, pornography (and prostitution as well) operates as a bastion or refuge of male patriarchal socialization and as a space for reinforcement and pedagogy in exercising this dominant sexuality over women. However, in addition to this patriarchal reaction, it should be noted that the neoliberal system has played an essential role in the expansion of pornography, to the point that it has become one of the most powerful and lucrative criminal industries in the world. The current phase of capitalism is characterized

by a lack of limits and control over the market. Commodities are no longer the only things bought and sold; people themselves, particularly women and girls, are commodified for male sexual enjoyment. The pornographic industry, like prostitution or reproductive exploitation, turns them into instruments of production and, at the same time, marketable objects. Additionally, pornography and prostitution have benefited from both globalization and outsourcing (Cobo, 2017).

For all these reasons, combined with the scarcity of sexual education previously analyzed, pornography has become the place where children and adolescents satisfy their curiosity about sexuality.

Various studies have highlighted this issue and should be cited as precedents for this study concerning the analysis of pornography consumption among young adolescents and the sexual education they receive. The works of Ballester et al. (2020), Torrado (2021), and Sedano et al. (2024) are particularly noteworthy. The latter, the most recent and in line with previous works, emphasizes that pornography is becoming the main source of information and learning for adolescents regarding sex. It also highlights that the easy access to new pornography contributes to and heightens addictive behaviors among its consumers. Additionally, the report by Save the Children (2020), titled “Sexual Misinformation: Pornography and Adolescence,” demonstrates how pornography directly impacts the sexual practices of adolescents and confirms significant addiction rates. For example, this study reveals that 16.1% of adolescents have given up other activities to watch pornography.

Consequently, the objectives of this article are:

1. To demonstrate the poor quality of CSE and its limited implementation in the school curriculum.
2. To point out pornography consumption as a problematic phenomenon present in childhood, adolescence, and youth, leading to sexist and addictive behaviors and promoting the eroticization of violence against women among the male population from an early age.
3. To highlight the need for a greater and better implementation of CSE to provide a satisfactory and high-quality response to children and adolescents regarding their concerns about human sexuality, thereby avoiding the use of pornography as an unfortunate, uncertain, and dangerous source for their healthy and balanced emotional and sexual development.

## 2. Methodology and Materials

The study population comprises undergraduate students from the University of La Rioja (Spain). The sampling was incidental by convenience. The total number of participants is 647, representing 14.7% of the population. The sample includes students from the following degrees: Early Childhood Education (24.9%), Primary Education (35.1%), Chemistry (9.9%), Social Work (6.2%), Business Administration and Management (5.7%), Nursing (4.5%), Mathematics (3.7%), Spanish Language and Literature (3.3%), English Studies (2.6%), Geography and History (1.7%), Mechanical Engineering (1.4%), Law (0.6%), Elec-

trical Engineering (0.2%), and Computer Engineering (0.2%). Women constitute 69.9% of the sample and men 30.1%. The average age of the participants is 20.90 years. The survey was administered to students during class hours and in person in May and June 2023. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

The data collection instrument was a web-based survey consisting of three sections of questions. The first section addressed sociodemographic issues (gender, age, studies, place of residence, etc.), the second section questioned the sexual education received and pornography consumption, the third section referred to experiences of sexual violence, and the fourth section dealt with emotional well-being. This study focuses on the information collected in the first and second sections.

The data collected were processed using SPSS 25 for Windows. Basic descriptive analyses were initially performed, as presented in this article.

### 3. Results

#### *Sexual Education Received and Satisfaction with It*

The percentage of men and women who reported receiving sexual education is very similar. A total of 66% of men and 66.8% of women reported having received it. This indicates that more than a third of young university students have not received sexual education in their current or previous educational stages.

When asked about their sources of information (Table 1), friends and the internet stand out as the main sources.

**Table 1.** Sources of Information on CSE

	Men	Women
My father/mother	26.2%	27.4%
Another adult	17.8%	16.2%
Teaching staff	6.3%	4.4%
Friends	61.3%	82.5%
Books	5.8%	8.6%
Internet / Social media	52.9%	43.6%
Partner	1%	0.4%
Training organizations	1%	0.4%

Regarding satisfaction with sexual education, only 19.4% of men and 19.5% of women stated that it answered their questions, doubts, or curiosities. For 39.8% of men and 40.7% of women, it only did so partially.

#### *Data on Pornography Consumption*

Regarding the frequency of pornography consumption (Table 2), the high percentage of women who claim not to have watched pornography or to have watched it only occasionally, less than once a year, contrasts sharply with the clear minority of men who say they have not watched it. In all percentages, women score significantly lower frequencies.

**Table 2.** Frequency of Pornography Consumption

Gender	Men	Women
Almost every day	13.1%	0.9%
Two or three times a week	25.1%	1.8%
At least once a week	21.5%	5.3%
At least once a month	18.3%	10.8%
A couple of times a year	2.6%	4.2%
I've done it, but less frequently	11.5%	24.3%
Never	7.9%	52.7%

When asked about their perception (Table 3), only 14.2% of men admitted being addicted or somewhat addicted to pornography. However, 57.9% reported weekly or more frequent consumption.

**Table 3.** Perception of Pornography Addiction

Gender	Men	Women
Absolutely not	85.4%	94.4%
A little	11.9%	4.7%
Yes, possibly	2.3%	0.9%

Among male university students, the average age of first exposure to pornography is 14.35 years, with the minimum age recorded being 9 years and the maximum 20. For female university students, the average age of first exposure to pornography is 15.84 years, with the minimum recorded age being 8 years and the maximum 30. Regarding the evolution of consumption, only 5.7% of men and 3.7% of women reported watching more pornography over time, while 73.3% of men and 79% of women stated that their consumption has decreased over time. A total of 21% of both genders stated that their consumption frequency has remained constant, neither increasing nor decreasing over time. There is, therefore, a trend towards decreased consumption as age increases.

Most respondents watch pornography alone (Table 4). A total of 3.1% of men and 5.1% of women watch it with their partner, and it is more common among boys than girls to watch it with friends.

**Table 4.** Company When Watching Pornography

Gender	Men	Women
Alone	99.4%	95.3%
With my partner	3.1%	5.1%
With friends (boys)	2.6%	1.8%
With friends (girls)	1%	1.1%

### 4. Discussion

Regarding the reception of sexual education, it is surprising that 34% of male university students and 33.2% of female university students reported not having received

any education in this regard, despite several recent educational laws mandating such training. This suggests that even today, more than a third of the university population has not had access to basic aspects of sexuality and affectivity through official, institutional, educational, and formative channels. This is alarming as it suggests that a significant number of adolescents are growing up without receiving sexual education, at least not in school—the very institution that should be equipped to provide appropriate content to all its students. Schools should universalize access to this information, ensuring that no one is deprived of it, especially in other environments where there may be neither the interest nor the ability to offer this instruction adequately” (Martínez et al., 2011; Álvarez and Aveiga, 2023). Evidence provided by various studies confirms that CSE helps in preventing and reducing violence (UNESCO, 2018; Vives-Cases et al., 2023).

Among those who reported having received sex education, less than 20% of the students stated that the education they received fully addressed their questions, interests, and concerns regarding sexuality. This is likely due to the limited information provided, which does not address the emotional and social factors of sexuality and fails to consider human sexual diversity, preventing the satisfaction of the doubts and concerns of homosexual students. Meanwhile, the internet offers an overwhelming amount of sexually explicit pornographic material, accessible with a single click, without effective restrictions to prevent minors from accessing it. Studies have shown that the average age for first exposure to pornography is around 15 for both genders, with a significant percentage encountering it even earlier. As confirmed by previous research, in the absence of adequate alternatives and reliable sources of information, minors turn to pornography to explore sexuality, filling the gap left by the lack of proper education (Alonso-Ruido et al., 2022).

This consumption is generally not occasional, at least in the case of men. As noted, 92.1% of men watch pornography, and 78% of them do so with a frequency of at least once a month, with 13.1% watching it daily and 25.1% at least two or three times a week. In contrast, both the total number of female consumers and the frequency of their consumption are significantly lower. More than half of the women report never watching pornography, and when they do, the frequency is noticeably less. These figures are not surprising, as pornography consistently showcases extreme and explicit sexual violence rooted in patriarchy. It is designed primarily for male enjoyment but also serves to socialize and condition men to engage in a violent and dominant form of sexuality over women. Additionally, men are often socially conditioned to display hyperactive and potent sexual behavior, and are stigmatized when they do not exhibit early sexual initiation or show considerable interest in being sexually active.

On the other hand, it is essential to compare the data on the frequency of pornography consumption with the responses regarding self-perceived addictive behaviors related to pornography. When asked if they consider themselves addicted to pornography, 85.8% of men and 94.4% of women claimed they were not at all addicted; 11.9% of men and 4.7% of women admitted to being somewhat addicted, while 2.3% of men and 0.9% of women

acknowledged having a pornography addiction. However, it is important to recall that 13.1% of men reported watching pornography daily or almost daily, and another 25.1% admitted to doing so at least two or three times per week.

This comparison between real consumption and its perception as supposedly non-addictive or problematic is noteworthy. It suggests a lack of awareness regarding the amount of pornography consumed and a normalization of its use, probably because it does not have the same negative image as other types of addictions, such as gambling or certain substances. This happens because pornography is still perceived as harmless as long as it is kept away from minors. In the adult population, not only is its consumption not condemned, but it is generally assimilated to something belonging to personal intimacy and tastes, confined to the mere choice according to each individual's decision, in which no one should interfere. However, the consequences of its viewing, especially when it becomes a habit, are increasingly concerning to those who study this material and observe its effects on its consumers. Thus, Villena (2023) notes that continued and frequent use of it has a negative impact on the neurobiological system; encourages risky sexual behaviors; hinders emotional bonding with a sexual partner and deteriorates pleasure (Dwulit & Rzymiski, 2019); allows the eroticization of violence in increasingly extreme degrees, promoting its exercise; impairs the normal functioning of the sexual response, particularly causing erectile dysfunction. Additionally, it has been shown to significantly increase the likelihood of risky sexual behaviors among adolescents, such as substance use during sex or failing to use condoms. In this age group, pornography consumption also creates difficulties in body acceptance, as individuals compare themselves to the idealized physiques portrayed in pornographic content (Paslakis et al., 2022). It fosters isolation, impairs socialization, and hampers the development of social skills that are crucial during adolescence (Svendin et al., 2023). Furthermore, like other addictions, it causes obsessive behavior and emotional regulation issues when access to pornography is restricted. In severe cases, withdrawal leads to problems such as uncontrollable sexual desire, irritability, mood swings, or insomnia, among other consequences (Villena, 2023).

However, a surprising finding in our study is that only 5.7% of men and 3.7% of women reported that, over time, their consumption has increased compared to the frequency at the beginning of their demand for this content. This is striking as it contradicts the findings of most studies conducted to date. However, it is worth noting that in the study conducted on the young population in Tenerife (Torrado, 2021), 36.3% reported a constant frequency of consumption; 36.1% stated that they were watching less and less, and only 26.1% said that as time went on, they were watching more. Although a minority claims to be watching more and more pornography, they exceed a quarter of the respondents, while in our survey, only about 5% acknowledged this. Nevertheless, in the study by Ballester and Orte (2019), 32.5% of men and 13.4% of women admitted watching more and more pornography. In that study, only 18% of men reported watching less and less, a percentage much lower than those indicating

increasing consumption and also lower than the 33.8% of men who reported maintaining constant consumption.

## 5. Conclusions

We find it appropriate to reflect on the capacity of schools to address the epidemic of early pornography consumption. Both the average age of initiation into pornography consumption and the minimum age recorded in this regard are very discouraging. The same is true when observing the recurrence in consumption, habitual in a significant percentage of the young men studied in this research. These data reflect a bleak picture, which becomes even more alarming when the deficient and scarce CSE received by students throughout their entire educational journey is evident. In the absence of this education, it is pornography that becomes the encyclopedia where minors, sometimes at extraordinarily young ages, attempt to answer their questions about sexuality. When this happens, they take as their only model of sexual relations, uncritically, the practice of violence and domination over women. However, it is worth considering whether education can solve everything. Undoubtedly, providing children and adolescents with reliable information about sexuality and an education that addresses their concerns and warns them of the negative effects of pornography can help reduce consumption, but more actors will be needed to tackle this serious problem. Society and families need to be aware, and institutions must act accordingly. The power of laws to transform social reality should not be overlooked. Therefore, allowing minors access to these contents is an absolute failure by States to fulfill their duty to protect children and ensure the best interests of minors. Without effective restriction and elimination of access for children and adolescents, and ideally without its eradication and complete elimination, no matter how much effort is made by schools, families, associations, or the feminist movement, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to prevent pornography from being one of the main sources of sexual imagery for the population, with the misogynistic values it implies and, therefore, with the consequences it entails for women and girls, due to the socialization and training of men to only find satisfaction in the exercise of sexual violence.

Consequently, we conclude the absolute and urgent need to improve both the content and the implementation of CSE. It is necessary for it to be constantly present and scientifically accurate at all educational stages, adapting the content to cognitive maturity. As can be seen, although many of the educational laws passed in Spain mention its implementation, few develop its content in depth, and even fewer allocate the appropriate curricular space for the development of values of equality and respect between the sexes, as well as the egalitarian, empathetic, peaceful, and reciprocal skills required by human sexuality. Truly comprehensive sex education should address the ethical, psychological, emotional, and social dimensions of sexuality. Overcoming the biologicistic model does not mean abandoning a scientific approach to our anatomy, reproduction, STI prevention, and unwanted pregnancies. However, it involves addressing the emotions involved, communication skills, sexual freedom of

expression, and linking it to values such as equality, respect, reciprocity, communication, self-knowledge, and diversity, among others (Neagu, 2024). This is a prerequisite for the exercise of full bodily autonomy and the ability to make informed decisions. That is, the right to sexual education is a human right in itself and a means to realize other human rights, such as the right to information, health, and sexual and reproductive rights.

## 6. References

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### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

### Author Contribution Statement

Andrea Gutiérrez García developed the state of the art, the methodological section, the analysis of results, the discussion and the correction of style. Ana Cuervo Pollán contributed to the writing of the introduction, conclusions and discussion.

### Ethics Statement

This scientific article, called “Evaluation of training in comprehensive sexual education and pornography consumption in university students in Spain”, reports the results of an investigation that involved people. For this



reason, the authors of the article declare that they respected the autonomy and anonymity of the people participating in the research, who were informed of the objectives, risks and benefits of the study, and gave their voluntary

and informed consent to participate. These participating subjects were selected equitably, without discrimination of any kind.