

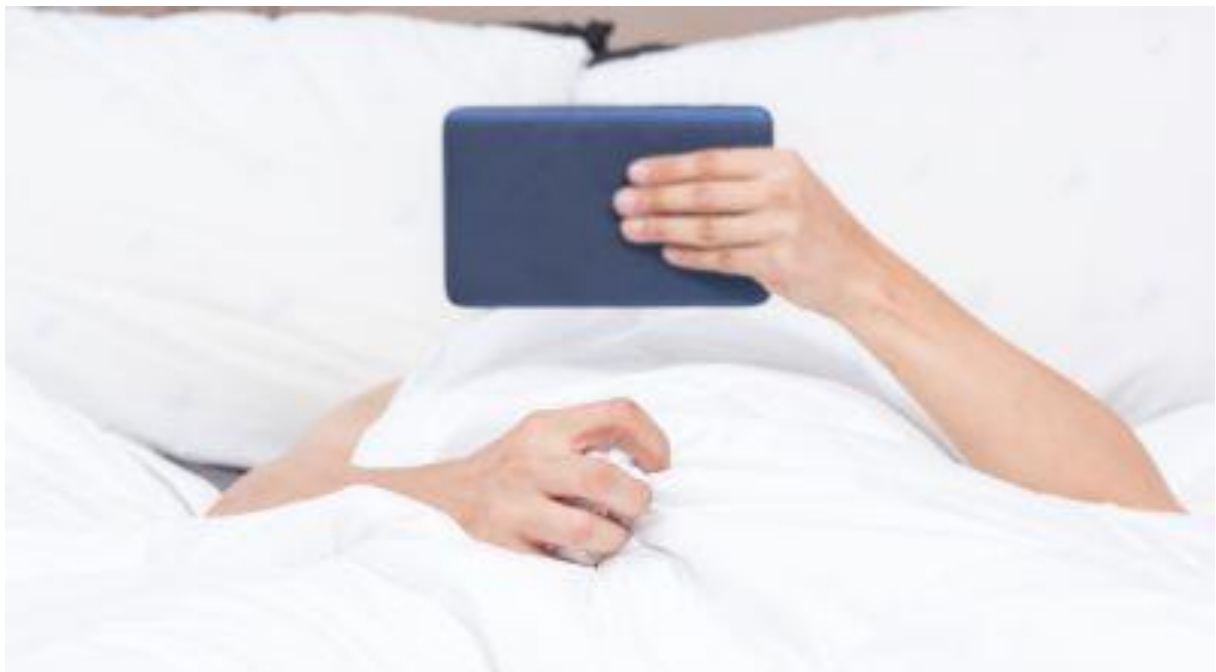
How much porn is too much?

Psychometric test identifies at-risk porn users



The test can be used as an initial indicator to see if someone's porn consumption is likely to be problematic.

By [Martha Henriques](#) Updated March 10, 2017 17:35 GMT



Psychologists have developed a scale to find out when someone's level of porn use puts them at risk of problems in other areas of life, such as social isolation and relationship breakdown.

More than 90% of people have watched porn at some point in their lives, and excessive porn use has been linked to problems ranging from feelings of loneliness and gaining less satisfaction from sex.

- People are turning to porn when sex education fails. Can it teach us anything about relationships?
- I'm a gay porn star and I'd like to teach you about safe sex
- How the proliferation of porn is ruining men's love lives

But how much is too much, and when should people be offered treatments for porn addiction?

"In most cases, viewing is not problematic and appears to have little or no negative impact in a person's life," write the authors of a study on a new psychometric test for problematic porn use, led by Beáta Bóthe of Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary.

"However, it can become problematic and can have negative effects, such as problems in romantic relationships or losing a job."

The science of internet porn addiction is an emerging field of research and tests for when porn use becomes problematic have been inconsistent, the authors write. Psychologists at Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary developed the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (PPCS) to identify when someone's porn consumption is likely to cause them problems in life.

It is not a test to find out definitively if someone is addicted to porn or not, as that can only be diagnosed through in-depth psychological interviews, the authors note. However, the scale is based in addiction theory and could be used as a useful initial test.

The scale put forward by Bóthe and colleagues looks at how porn affects several areas of life. It covers whether someone feels conflicted about their use of porn, how it changes someone's mood, any attempts to quit or reduce consumption, needing to watch more extreme porn due to get satisfaction, and instances of relapse and withdrawal.



90% of people say they have watched porn at some point. David Vespoli / Flickr

As part of the study, a group of more than 772 adults took the test online – 390 women and 382 men between the ages of 18 and 54. About half of the respondents were single and half were in a relationship or married. The average time the study participants spent watching porn was 16 to 30 minutes once a week. According to the PPCS, about 4% of people were identified as at-risk porn users.

Further research is needed before the test can be used among different populations, the authors say. Men and women, for example, can often have very different drivers for developing addictive behaviours relating to sex and porn, Peter Saddington, a sex therapist and sex addiction counsellor at the counselling organisation Relate told **IBTimes UK**.

"When women come and talk about sex addiction, it's quite often associated with having sex with real people. For men with porn addiction it's much more about getting aroused and masturbating. They're not necessarily wanting to engage with real people."

Treatment options for sex and porn addiction include talking therapies and cognitive behavioural therapy, according to the NHS. Other options include mindfulness approaches, psychoeducational groups and support groups such as Sex Addicts Anonymous, Saddington said.

The research is published in the Journal of Sex Research.

Take the test

Answer the following questions, rating them by how much you feel they apply to you from 1 to 7, where:

1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = sometimes, 5 = often, 6 = very often, 7 = all the time

1. I felt that porn is an important part of my life
2. I used porn to restore the tranquillity of my feelings
3. I felt porn caused problems in my sexual life
4. I felt that I had to watch more and more porn for satisfaction
5. I unsuccessfully tried to reduce the amount of porn I watch
6. I became stressed when something prevented me from watching porn
7. I thought about how good it would be to watch porn
8. Watching porn got rid of my negative feelings
9. Watching porn prevented me from bringing out the best in me
10. I felt that I needed more and more porn in order to satisfy my needs
11. When I vowed not to watch porn any more, I could only do it for a short period of time
12. I became agitated when I was unable to watch porn
13. I continually planned when to watch porn
14. I released my tension by watching porn
15. I neglected other leisure activities as a result of watching porn
16. I gradually watched more 'extreme' porn, because the porn I watched before was less satisfying
17. I resisted watching porn for only a little while before I relapsed
18. I missed porn greatly when I didn't watch it for a while

Add the scores for all the questions together. A score of 76 or higher suggests problematic levels of pornography use.

The Samaritans provides a free support service for those who need to talk to someone in the UK and Republic of Ireland. Visit [Samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) or call 116 123 (UK) or 116 123 (ROI), 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Visit this website to find a support phone number in your country.

Sex Addicts Anonymous holds recovery meetings for people who experience addictive sexual behaviour. Their website can be found at [Sex Addicts Anonymous UK](https://www.sexaddictsanonymous.org).