

What US Pornography Research Tells Us

Two studies asked different questions about pornography use in the United States. Keep the population and the question beside every number: reported use, feeling addicted and a clinical diagnosis are not interchangeable.

About 11% of Men and 3% of Women Reported Feeling Addicted

In a nationally representative sample of 2,075 US adult internet users, those proportions expressed some agreement that they were addicted to pornography. This was a self-report question, not a clinician's diagnosis. The study was published in 2019. [1]

The same study reported 1,056 participants with some pornography use in the past year. Use alone is a different measure from feeling addicted. Self-reported addiction was associated with several factors, including amount of use, religiousness and conflict between behavior and moral beliefs. The findings cannot determine whether a particular reader has a disorder. [1]

Distress and Problematic Use Were Related

A 2026 study of 2,773 US participants found that problematic pornography use was associated with anxiety, depression and loneliness. It examined how these measures related to one another; it did not establish which caused which. The authors called for longitudinal research. [2]

A Claim You Can Make, and One You Cannot [1] [2]

Finding	Keep the meaning	Avoid turning it into
Self-reported addiction	Some participants felt their pornography use was addictive.	A national clinical diagnosis rate.
Past-year use	People reported viewing pornography during that period.	The proportion harmed or addicted.
Association with distress	Higher problematic-use scores occurred alongside distress.	Proof that pornography caused every symptom.

Before Sharing a Pornography Statistic

- Name the country and who was sampled. Adult findings do not automatically describe children.
- State what was measured: any use, frequency, self-perceived addiction, symptoms or a clinical diagnosis.

- Keep the study's publication year separate from its data-collection dates. Those dates were not confirmed in the abstracts used here.
- Do not combine percentages from different definitions as if they were a single trend.

These are two selected US studies, not an exhaustive evidence review. Neither abstract provides a number that can diagnose you. If pornography use is affecting your life, you can bring specific concerns to a qualified clinician without first deciding which label fits. [1] [2]

Explore the Evidence and Support

[Pornography research and statistics](https://www.addictionhelp.com/porn/statistics/)

<https://www.addictionhelp.com/porn/statistics/>

[Pornography support resources](https://www.addictionhelp.com/porn/resources/)

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Sources

[1] [Grubbs, Kraus and Perry \(2019\): Self-Reported Addiction to Pornography](#) (pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

[2] [Engelhardt et al. \(2026\): Problematic Pornography Use and Psychological Distress in the USA](#) (pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)