

2017 Nationwide Online Study of Nonconsensual Porn Victimization and Perpetration

The 2017 Nationwide Online Study of Nonconsensual Porn Victimization and Perpetration was conducted by the Research Team at Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI) from November 2016 through March 2017 on Facebook. Three thousand forty-four adult participants were recruited for an online survey using Facebook ads shown to men and women in each of the fifty states proportional to their representation in the U.S. population.

Previous research^{1,2} has used narrow definitions of nonconsensual pornography (NCP), limiting it, for example, to that committed in intimate relationships or with the explicit intent to harm. The current study endeavored to use a more inclusive definition, as well as a nationwide sample. Specifically participants were asked "Has anyone ever shared a sexually-explicit image or video of you without your consent? By 'sexually explicit' we mean images or videos of full or partial nudity, or of sexual acts (such as penetration/intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, and the use of sexual toys). Sharing could include distributing or uploading images or videos via email, text message, social media, apps, websites, DVDs, or printed photos. This does NOT include commercially-distributed pornography." Also, complementing past research, the present study is the first-ever nationwide study to examine self-reports of victimization as well as perpetration, along with motives for perpetration, methods of perpetration, deterrents to perpetration, and health outcomes for victims.

Findings

One of the key findings of this study is that 12.8% of all participants reported having either been victims of NCP (having had a sexually-explicit image of themselves shared without their consent) *or* having been threatened with NCP. From our sample, a total of 8% of all participants reported having been victims of NCP at some point in their lives, while 4.8% of all participants reported having only been threatened with NCP, without it ever being distributed. Importantly, women were significantly more likely (about 1.7 times as likely) to have been victims of NCP or to have been threatened with NCP compared to men, with 15.8% of all women reporting having been victimized or threatened vs. 9.3% of men across all age groups.

In terms of perpetration, 5.2% of all participants reported having perpetrated NCP (having shared a sexually-explicit image of someone without their consent) at some point in their lives. The most commonly chosen reason for perpetration was just to share "with friends" without the intention "to hurt" the person (79% of all self-identified perpetrators selected this option). Only 12% of perpetrators reported having committed NCP because they were upset with the victim and/or wanted to harm them. Perpetrators in our sample reported that the most commonly chosen method for sharing the image(s) was via text message (44.7% of all perpetrators reported having used this method). The second most common method was "other" (31.4% of perpetrators selected this option) with most of this category representing in-person sharing. This survey also inquired as to the consequences that would have deterred perpetrators of NCP. The sanctions with the greatest deterrent potential centered around severe criminal punishment (e.g. imprisonment).

¹ Lenhart, A., Ybarra, M., Zickuhr, K., & Price-Feeney, M. (2016). *Online harassment, digital abuse, and cyberstalking in America*. Data & Society Research Institute Report 11.21.16. Retrieved from https://www.datasociety.net/pubs/oh/Online_Harassment_2016.pdf

² Reed, L. A., Tolman, R. M., & Ward, L. M. (2016). Snooping and sexting: digital media as a context for dating aggression and abuse among college students. *Violence against women*, 22(13), 1556-1576.