



# PORNOGRAPHY USE AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH RISK-TAKING SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS

Among Adolescents in the West of Ireland

Dr. Nicola Murphy  
Specialist Registrar in Public Health Medicine



# BACKGROUND





“...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity... (it) **requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence** . For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the **sexual rights** of all persons must be **respected, protected and fulfilled** .” <sup>1</sup>



# PORNOGRAPHY USE



- “Professionally produced or user generated sexually explicit content, images or videos that are intended to sexually arouse the user”.<sup>2</sup>
- Has become increasingly available and easily accessible – smartphones/internet .
- Prevalence varies in the literature but use has increased among recent generations .<sup>2,3</sup>
- Sexual health education for Irish youths can be inaccurate, inconsistent and unreliable .<sup>4-6</sup>
- Adolescents often turn to sexually explicit material to garner sexual health information .<sup>7</sup>
- Can result in modelling their sexual behaviours on what they view, normalising sexual behaviours depicted online .<sup>8</sup>

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- National Sexual Health Strategy -  
“healthy sexuality throughout childhood and  
adolescence is more likely to lead to positive  
sexual health into adulthood”.
  - NSHS Review 2023 - Strategy to address the  
impact of early exposure to pornography is  
required.

# Literature Review: Evidence to Date

- Pornography use is more prevalent among adolescents who spend more time online. <sup>9,10</sup>
- Factors associated with pornography use include being male, from more affluent backgrounds and having lower levels of parental monitoring. <sup>2,9,11,12</sup>
- Pornography exposure is associated with engaging in risk-taking sexual behaviour and very early sexual initiation. <sup>7,13</sup>
- Sex under the influence is associated with less consistent condom use. <sup>14,15</sup>
- Sexual health education is associated with fewer risk-taking sexual behaviours. <sup>16-18</sup>









- International, evidence based, primary prevention model .
- Developed by the Icelandic Centre for Social Research Analysis (ICRSA).
- Planet Youth Survey 2022 comprises an anonymous, self-completed lifestyle questionnaire .
- Administered to 15-16 year olds in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon .
- Questions around health and wellbeing, family and school experience, substance use and sexual health .




# PLANET YOUTH SURVEY 2022




Target population:  
15-16 year olds in post  
primary schools in Galway,  
Mayo and Roscommon




81 post primary schools  
& 10 Youthreach centres  
invited to participate




Opt out using a  
passive consent  
process



Surveys conducted in  
November 2022 using  
CASI (computer assisted  
self-interview)



Sent to ICSRA for  
quality checking and  
cleaning of data



Results were returned  
to Ireland in February  
2023

## Exposure Variables

- 1 How often in the past year had participants **viewed pornography** ?
- 2 How often in the past year had participants used pornography as a **source of information** to learn about sex?
- 3 How often in the past year had participants **felt pressured** to view pornography by a peer or partner?



## Outcome Variables

- 1 How often in the past year had participants **engaged in condomless sex**?
- 2 How often in the past year had participants engaged in **sexual activity under the influence** of alcohol or drugs?
- 3 Had participants engaged in **very early sexual initiation** (<15 years old)?

NEVER(>15yrs or never)/ EVER(<15 yrs)

NEVER (last 12 months) or EVER (once, twice, 3 -4 times, >5 times in last 12 months)





# CONFOUNDING FACTORS:



## **Socio -demographic Factors**

Age, Gender, Ethnicity,  
Maternal Education,  
Deprivation

## **Parental Factors**

Parental monitoring  
Parental rule -setting

## **Individual Factors**

Self-reported body image

## **Sexual Health Factors**

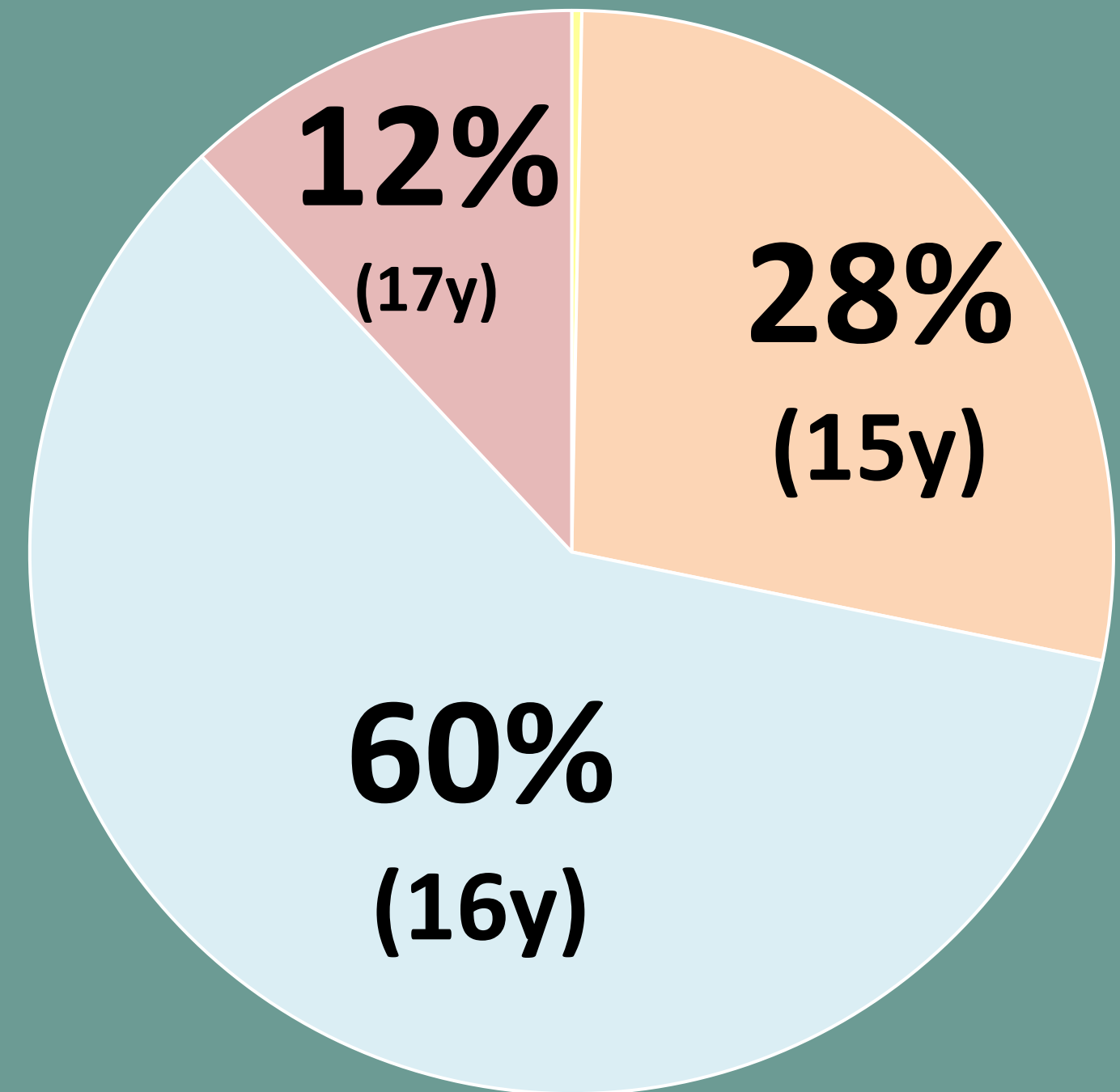
Sexual health advice from a  
parent, medical professional or  
received at school



# RESULTS



Age of Respondents



 <14 years     15 years     16 years     17 years

- 5277 survey responses were received (response rate 87 %).
- 60 % respondents were 16 years, 28% were 15 years, 12 % were 17 yearsold.
- Males 49%, Females 48 %.
- 88% recorded ethnicity as white.

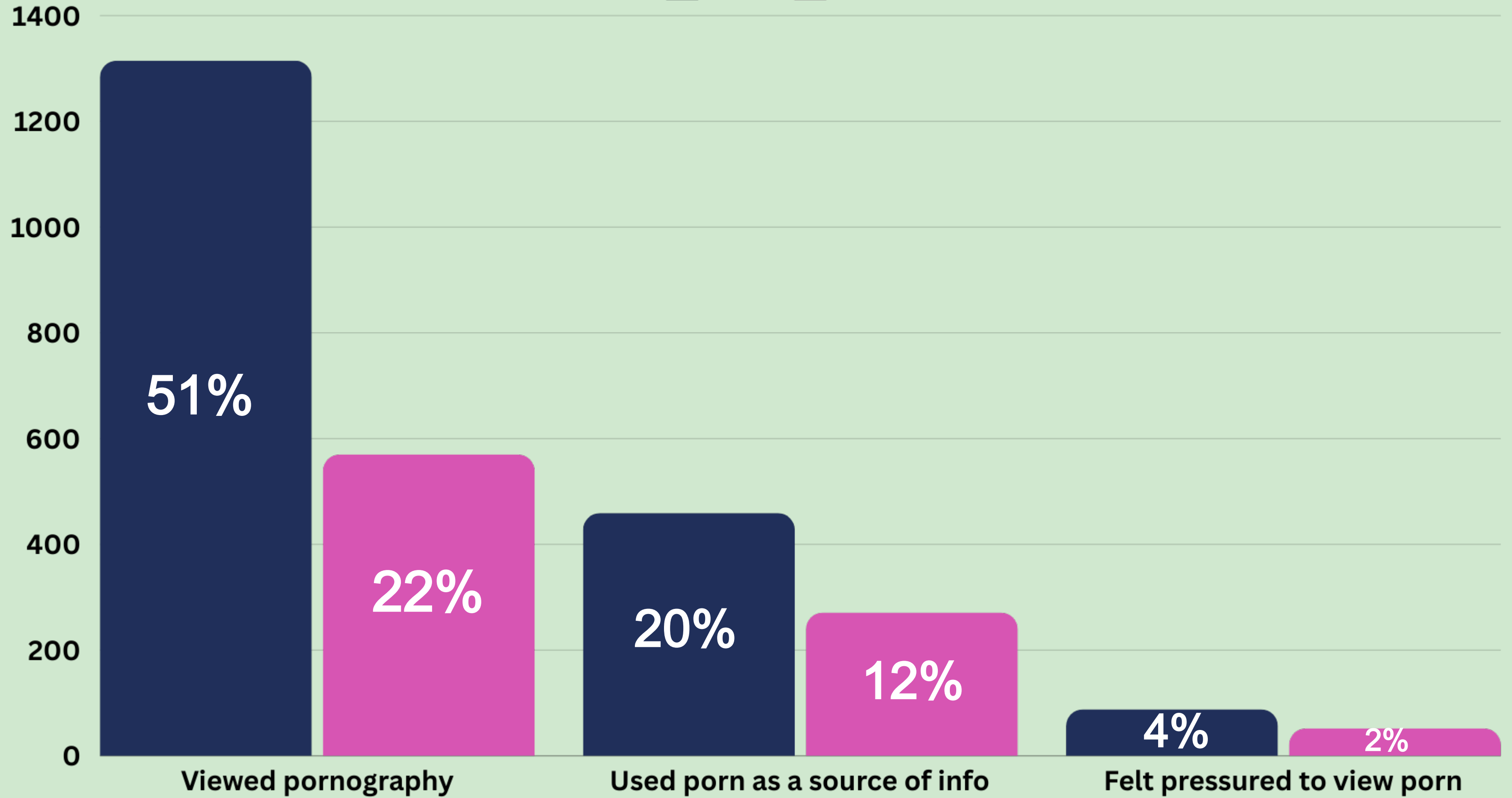
# RESULTS

- 37% of study population had viewed pornography (previous year).
- 15% report using pornography as a source of information to learn about sex (previous year).
- 3% reported feeling pressured to view pornography by a peer or sexual partner (previous year).
- All more common among **males**.



# PORNOGRAPHY USE AMONG STUDY POPULATION

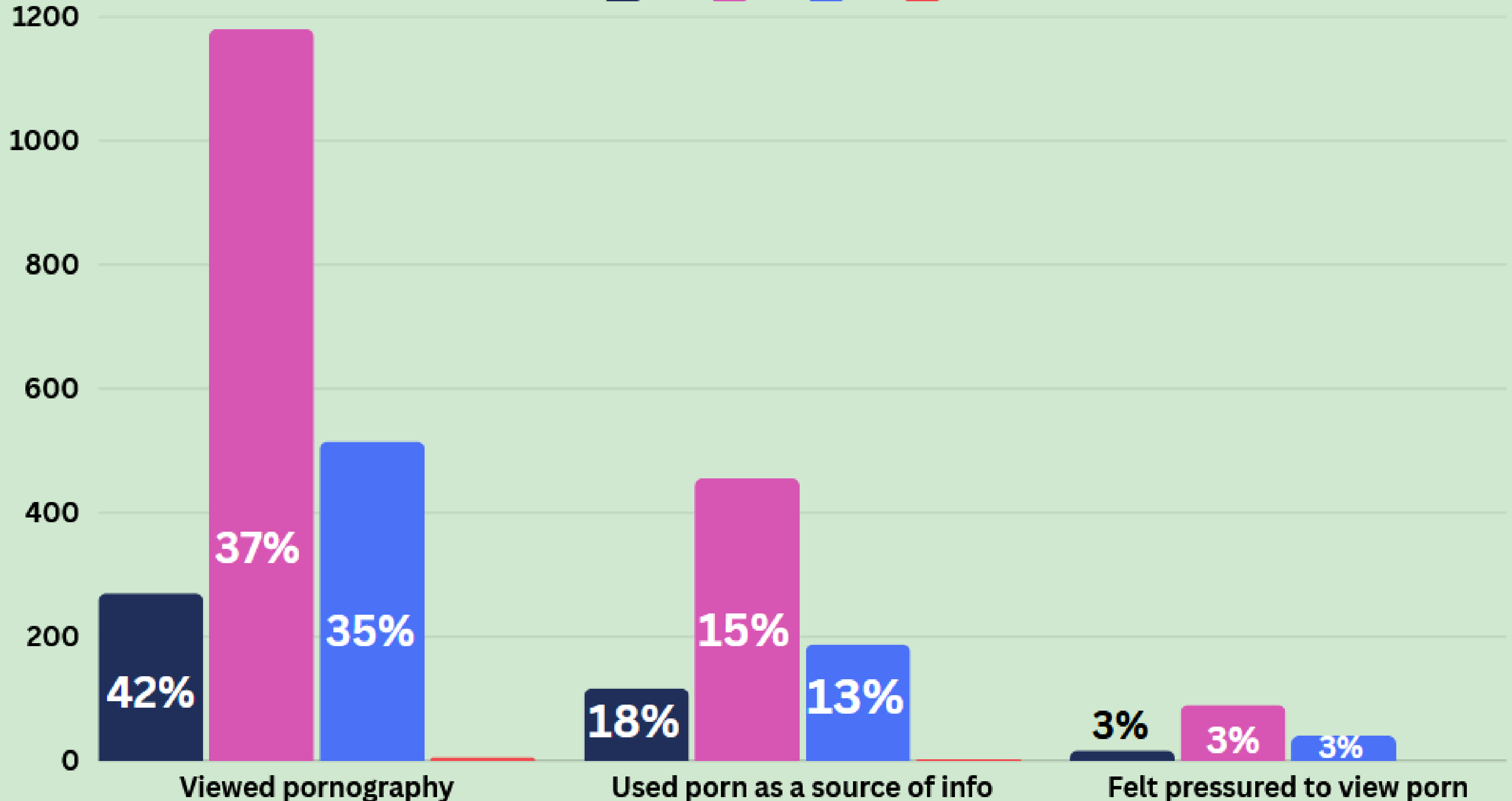
Male Female





# PORNOGRAPHY USE AMONG STUDY POPULATION

17+ 16 15 <14



# condomless sex

- 6.5% respondents (previous 12 months) or 46% of the sexually initiated
- No differences - gender or ethnicity

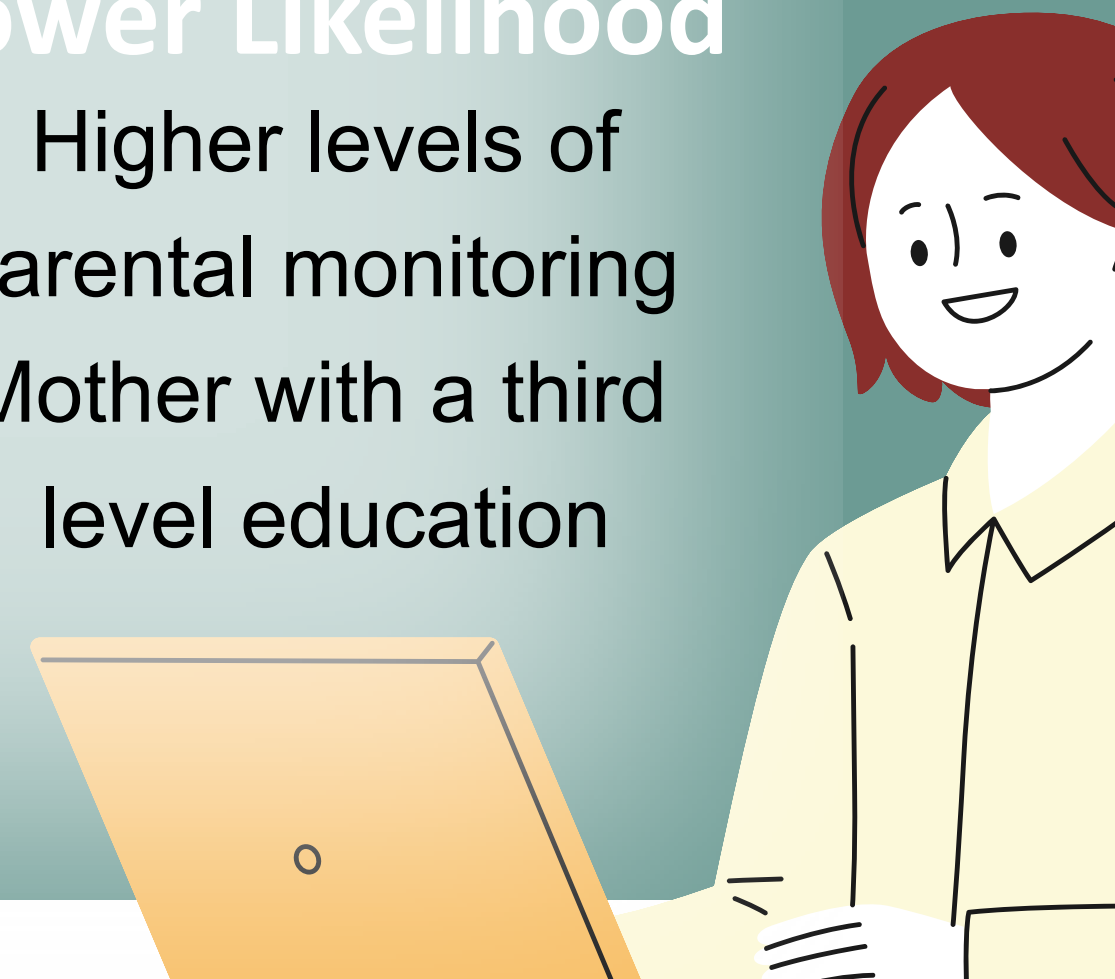
## Higher Likelihood

- Deprivation
- Sexual health advice from a parental/medical source ✨

## Lower Likelihood

- Higher levels of parental monitoring
- Mother with a third level education

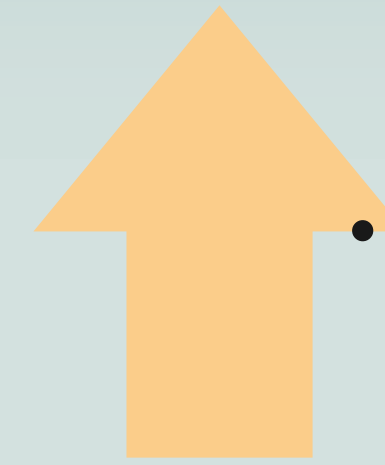
- Viewed pornography
  - Used porn as a source of information
    - Felt pressured to view porn
- =
- x 2-3 likelihood** of condomless sex



Condomless sex in the last 12 months (n=4751)				
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Unadjusted OR (95% C.I.)</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Adjusted OR (95% C.I.)</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Viewed Pornography (last 12 months)</b>				
Never	Ref		Ref	
Ever	3.28 (2.59-4.17)	<0.001	3.38 (2.60-4.43)	<0.001
<b>Maternal Education</b>				
No third level	Ref		Ref	
Third level	0.57 (0.45-0.73)	<0.001	0.63 (0.49-0.82)	0.001
<b>Deprivation*</b>				
Rarely	Ref		Ref	
Sometimes	2.10 (1.37-3.23)	0.001	1.61 (1.01-2.56)	0.04
Often	1.50 (1.06-2.13)	0.02	1.52 (1.04-2.22)	0.03
<b>Parent monitoring‡</b>				
Lower level	Ref		Ref	
Higher level	0.37 (0.25-0.53)	<0.001	0.48 (0.32-0.71)	<0.001
<b>Trusted source of sexual health information¶</b>				
Never	Ref		Ref	
Ever	1.55 (1.24-1.93)	<0.001	1.33 (1.04-1.69)	0.02

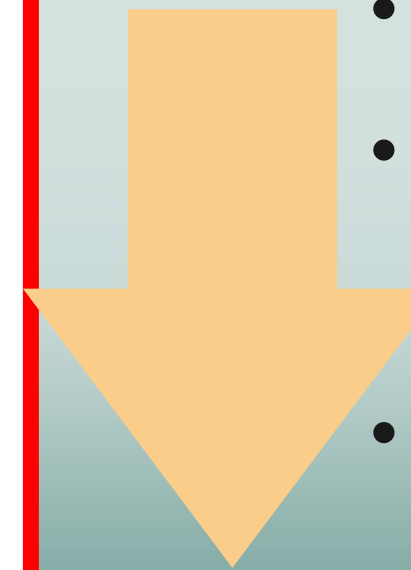
# Sexual activity under the influence

- >27% respondents reported engaging in sexual activity ( previous 12 months)
- 14% respondents reported this occurred under the influence of alcohol/drugs



## Higher Likelihood

- Sexual health advice from a trusted source
- Female



## Lower Likelihood

- Non-white ethnicity
- Higher levels of parental monitoring
- Mother with a third level education
- Better self -image

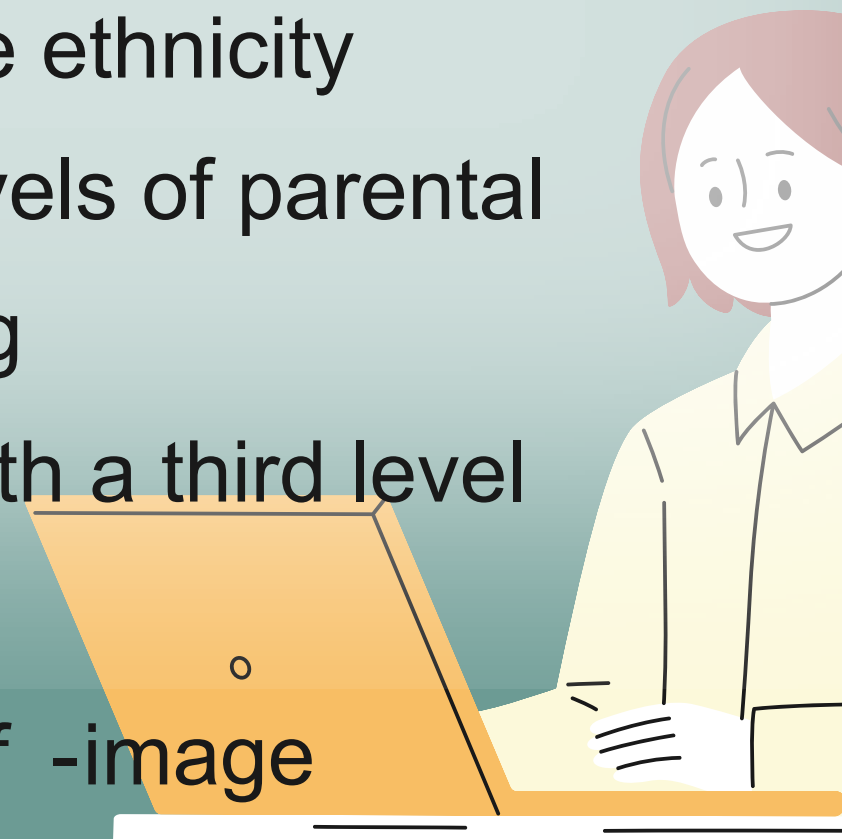
- Viewed pornography

- Used porn as a source of information

- Felt pressured to view porn

=

**x 2-3 likelihood** of sexual activity under the influence





Sex under the influence in the last 12 months (n=4732)				
Variables	Unadjusted OR (95% C.I.)	p	Adjusted OR (95% C.I.)	p
<b>Viewed Pornography (last 12 months)</b>				
Never	Ref		Ref	
Ever	3.11 (2.63-3.66)	<0.001	3.60 (2.97-4.37)	<0.001
<b>Gender</b>				
Other	Ref		Ref	
Male	0.94 (0.59-1.52)	0.81	1.19 (0.71-1.98)	0.51
Female	1.20 (0.75-1.93)	0.45	2.37 (1.42-3.95)	0.001
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White	Ref		Ref	
Non-white	0.56 (0.42-0.75)	<0.001	0.54 (0.39-0.74)	<0.001
<b>Parent monitoring‡</b>				
Lower level	Ref		Ref	
Higher level	0.29 (0.22-0.38)	<0.001	0.29 (0.21-0.40)	<0.001
<b>Self-image§</b>				
Poor	Ref		Ref	
Good	0.65 (0.55-0.76)	<0.001	0.75 (0.63-0.90)	0.002

# VERY EARLY SEXUAL INITIATION

- Just under **15 %** were sexually initiated
- Of which, **29 %** aged <15y at sexual initiation

## Higher Likelihood

- Deprivation (sometimes)
- Sexual health advice from a parental/medical source

## Lower Likelihood

- Higher parental monitoring
- Mother with third level education

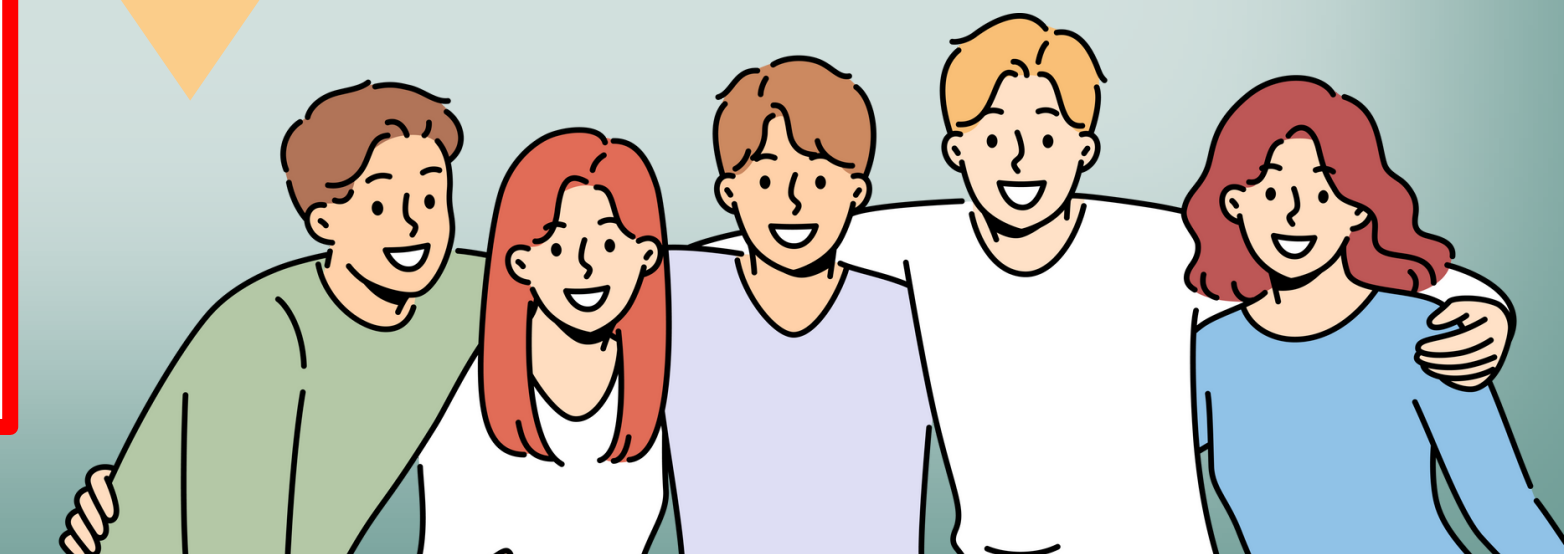
- Viewed pornography

- Used **porn as a source of information**

- **Felt pressured** to view porn

=

**x 2-3 likelihood** of very early sexual initiation



Very early sex initiation (<15 years) (n=4749)				
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Unadjusted OR (95% C.I.)</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Adjusted OR (95% C.I.)</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Viewed Pornography (last 12 months)</b>				
Never	Ref		Ref	
Ever	2.82 (2.12-3.77)	<0.001	2.79 (2.00-3.91)	<0.001
<b>Maternal Education</b>				
No third level	Ref		Ref	
Third level	0.64 (0.47-0.86)	0.004	0.63 (0.45-0.87)	0.006
<b>Deprivation*</b>				
Rarely	Ref		Ref	
Sometimes	2.70 (1.67-4.35)	<0.001	2.23 (1.33-3.74)	0.002
Often	1.49 (0.96-2.29)	0.07	1.41 (0.88-2.26)	0.16
<b>Parent monitoring‡</b>				
Lower level	Ref		Ref	
Higher level	0.31 (0.20-0.47)	<0.001	0.39 (0.24-0.61)	<0.001

# \* strengths and Limitations

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

## STRATEGIC

- National strategy addressing impacts of pornography use
- Targeted public health campaign promoting consistent condom use

## EDUCATIONAL

- Collaborative approach
- Training for educators – new curricula
- Resources for parents

## RESEARCH

- Longitudinal research on adolescents
- Potential mental health impacts & aggressive behaviours

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR AT

The 2022  
Planet Youth Survey  
is completed

Thank You!

*Special thanks to:*

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Mr. Emmet Major

Dr. Breeda Neville



## Questions??



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