

Effects of cybersex addiction on the family: Results of a survey

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A brief survey was completed by 91 women and 3 men, aged 24–57, who had experienced serious adverse consequences of their partner's cybersex involvement.

In 60.6% of cases the sexual activities were limited to cybersex and did not include offline sex.

Although not specifically asked about this, 31% of partners volunteered that the cybersex activities were a continuation of preexisting compulsive sexual behaviors.

Conclusions

Open-ended questions yielded the following conclusions:

Reactions to discovery

In response to learning about their partner's online sexual activities, the survey respondents felt:

- a) hurt, betrayal,
- b) rejection, abandonment,
- c) devastation,
- d) loneliness,
- e) shame, isolation,
- f) humiliation,
- g) jealousy,
- h) anger
- i) loss of self-esteem.

Being lied to repeatedly was a major cause of distress.

Separation and divorce

Cybersex addiction was a major contributing factor to separation and divorce of couples in this survey:

- j) 22.3% of the respondents were separated or divorced, and
- k) several others were seriously contemplating leaving.

Relational sex

Among 68% of the couples one or both had lost interest in relational sex:

- a) 52.1% of addicts had decreased interest in sex with their spouse,
- b) as did 34% of partners.
- c) Some couples had had no relational sex in months or years.

Insecurity

Partners compared themselves unfavorably with the online women (or men) and pictures and felt hopeless about being able to compete with them.

As cheating

Partners overwhelmingly felt that:

- a) cyberaffairs were as emotionally painful to them as live or offline affairs, and
- b) many believed that virtual affairs were just as much adultery or “cheating” as live affairs.

Children

Adverse effects on the children included:

- a) exposure to cyberporn and to objectification of women,
- b) involvement in parental conflicts,
- c) lack of attention because of one parent's involvement with the computer and the other parent's preoccupation with the cybersex addict,
- d) breakup of the marriage.