

Life Styles Risks: Pornography & other inappropriate sexual activities - John Steley

1. The problem of pornography use is real.

Nielsen NetRatings (2006) estimated that nine million men in the UK, almost 40% of the adult male population, had accessed pornography via the web in the last year.

The same survey indicated that 1.4 million women in the UK had accessed internet pornography in the same period.

2. There is still some denial.

3. 3.1 What to do if InterHealth or others say that there is a problem. NB. We will only know there is a problem if the person or his/ her spouse tells us.

* **Stay calm.** Remember we know the problem exists. There is no need to be shocked.

* **Be prepared to discuss the matter openly.** Try not to be judgemental. Don't make light of it.

* **Assess the behaviour and the risks.**

How long has the problem existed?

How frequent is the use of pornography?

Does the person concerned see it as a problem?

What safeguards can be put in place? E.g. Covenant Eyes or similar.

Will the person be working with vulnerable people?

Is the use of pornography linked to any other inappropriate behaviour?

Is it affecting the person's marriage or other relationships? (The person may say it does not affect his/ her marriage but it does.)

* **What is the reward that fuels the addiction?** (People in the organisation may or may not want to ask these questions of the person with the internet pornography problem. They may however be worth considering.)

Is the attraction purely sexual?

Is it a form of false intimacy?

Is the forbidden nature of pornography part of the attraction?

Does it give the person a sense of power or control?

Is there some other attraction?

* **Be kind but be firm!**

Addicts frequently deny or minimise their addictions. Pornography addicts are no exception.

3.2 In the field consider the possible effects on:

The mission's reputation

The local church

The local population

Any vulnerable individuals E.g. children, people with learning difficulties, those in extreme poverty.

The person concerned

3.3 On the person's return home

What do we say about the person's early return?

What is our responsibility to them and to others?

Discussion starters:

Should the use of an accountability programme such as Covenant Eyes be made mandatory for all staff?

Would it help for those working overseas to have a prayer partner/ supervisor/ spiritual director/ outside of the organisational structure? What are the possible problems in achieving this?

Do we need to consider acceptable ways for people to have a sense of adventure/ excitement if their job does not provide this? Or cope with a post that is not exciting?