



Correspondence

Global COVID-19 pandemic booms 'E-sex'

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Introduction

Recent COVID-19 pandemic has affected every sphere of life, including health. All over the world, beyond borders, its impact can be seen and felt. Sexual health is an essential essence of overall wellbeing (Ibarra et al., 2020). Unfortunately, it is the most neglected part of an individual's well being.

Period of isolation or quarantine had provided many opportunities to explore sexual behavior (Lehmiller et al., 2020). Some couples found a great time to spend together. On the other hand, some teams cannot meet for a long time due to social distancing and isolation (Dewitte et al., 2020). It leads to more leisure time and the availability of resources to use in internet technology and mass media. Most of the time, news regarding COVID-19 pandemic is discussed everywhere. In 24 hours of daily schedule, information regarding its pathogenicity, new cases, and transmission routes read by most people. It leads to anxiety, apprehension, and a tense atmosphere (Ballester-Arnal et al.,

2020). COVID-19 virus can be found in saliva, semen, and feco-oral transmission is also possible (Banerjee and Rao, 2020). Fear of transmitting infection, getting an unknown source of infection, being isolated, or living far from partner give rise to explore or seek alternative sexual behavior and means to achieve sexual gratification.

A trending quote worldwide is: "you are your safest sex partner" (Döring, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing or isolation led to the increasing use of "solo sex". Technology mediated sexual interaction or sexual recreation is popular among individuals to fetch or fulfill sexual desire (Lejars et al., 2020). Individuals are using alternative measures in the form of sex toys like vibrators or dildo to aid in masturbation. The purchase of massagers and penile pumps constituted about 19% and 16% of the total sale of sex toys (Joseph, 2020). Masturbation through these sexual aids or sophisticated means may cause immense sexual pleasure and satisfaction. Effective use of technology or internet-mediated sexual interaction has been observed (Döring, 2020). Frequent use of the internet for chatting, virtual sex, or cybersex has been increased (Lehmiller et al., 2020). Individuals who are single or separated, youth living far away from a

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partner or elderly age group prefer to use internet or telephone mediated sex in place of face to face or casual sex dating. Due to technological advancements and easy accessibility of the internet, various apps and resources are available now to guide about proper and safe use of technology-mediated sexual interaction. The use of pornography has increased drastically during COVID-19 pandemic.

Over a month, from February to March 2020, data collected by various countries showed an increase in pornography use near about 4% to 24% (Ibarra et al., 2020). A 95% spike in traffic to adult sites has been reported during a three-week lockdown in India. The purchase of sex toys has been boosted to 60% in Italy, 40% in France, 75% in the United States, and 65% in India (Rudd Matilda Addo Rianne, 2020). The export of sex toys increased by 50% in China to various countries (2020). Online dating websites have also shown a hike of 82% by singles (Rudd Matilda Addo Rianne, 2020). There is also increased use of the internet to search home-made sex toys as shower jets, toothbrushes, and ice cube (Joseph 2020). Various factors are responsible for these behaviors like flexible schedules due to work from home, loneliness, privacy, and alternative use of sexual gratification, and most importantly, exploring new means or ways for sexual relationships.

As a whole, it can be concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected every area of life including sexual life. On the other hand it also gives rise to critical areas for future research and education regarding Sex - Tech's role in sexual well being (Lehmiller et al., 2020).

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