

Szymańska Kamila, Widlak Karolina, Pawłowski Piotr, Kościolek Aneta, Jakubowska Klaudia. Media as a determinant of the sexuality of young Poles. *Journal of Education, Health and Sport*. 2022;12(7):197-206. eISSN 2391-8306. DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/JEHS.2022.12.07.019> <https://apcz.umk.pl/JEHS/article/view/JEHS.2022.12.07.019> <https://zenodo.org/record/6579905>

The journal has had 40 points in Ministry of Education and Science of Poland parametric evaluation. Annex to the announcement of the Minister of Education and Science of December 21, 2021. No. 32343. Has a Journal's Unique Identifier: 201159. Scientific disciplines assigned: Physical Culture Sciences (Field of Medical sciences and health sciences); Health Sciences (Field of Medical Sciences and Health Sciences).

Punkty Ministerialne z 2019 - aktualny rok 40 punktów. Załącznik do komunikatu Ministra Edukacji i Nauki z dnia 21 grudnia 2021 r. Lp. 32343. Posiada Unikatowy Identyfikator Czasopisma: 201159. Przepisane dyscypliny naukowe: Nauki o kulturze fizycznej (Dziedzina nauk medycznych i nauk o zdrowiu); Nauki o zdrowiu (Dziedzina nauk medycznych i nauk o zdrowiu).

© The Authors 2022;

This article is published with open access at Licensee Open Journal Systems of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, Poland  
Open Access. This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial License which permits any noncommercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author (s) and source are credited. This is an open access article licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non commercial license Share alike. (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted, non commercial use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the work is properly cited.  
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

Received: 02.05.2022. Revised: 20.05.2022. Accepted: 25.05.2022.

## Media as a determinant of the sexuality of young Poles

**Kamila Szymańska<sup>1</sup>, Karolina Widlak<sup>2</sup>, Piotr Pawłowski<sup>3</sup>, Aneta Kościolek<sup>4</sup>,  
Klaudia Jakubowska<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Second degree nursing graduate, Medical University of Lublin

<sup>2</sup>Department of Pneumology, Oncology and Allergology, Medical University of Lublin

<sup>3</sup>Student, Faculty of Medicine, Medical University of Lublin, Student Research Group at the Department of Nursing Development

<sup>4</sup>Department of Nursing Development, Medical University of Lublin

Correspondence address: Piotr Pawłowski, e - mail: [pawlowkipiotr56@gmail.com](mailto:pawlowkipiotr56@gmail.com)

### Abstract

**Objective of the work:** The aim of this study is to learn about the influence of the media on the sexuality of young Poles.

**Material and methods:** The diagnostic survey method and the survey technique were used, based on the research tool which was the original questionnaire. 310 respondents, different in terms of sex, faith, place of residence and education, current family situation, aged from 16 to 21, participated in the study. Statistical analysis was carried out with the use of Exel 2019 and the SPSS Statistics package, version 25, using the ANOVA analysis of variance and the Mann-Whitney and H Kruskal-Wallis t-tests. The data collection stage was carried out in the period from October to December 2019, via the Internet.

**Results and conclusions:** Both men and women participating in the study view sexual, erotic and pornographic content in the mass media available to them, but women viewed pornographic content significantly less often than men. The main source of knowledge about sexuality for young Poles is the Internet. Television is relatively rare. Most of the respondents find it difficult to assess whether the media is a credible source of information on human sexuality. Most of the survey participants believe that the media content does not accelerate sexual initiation and does not affect their attitude towards sex. Believers were much less likely to support the credibility of mass media in the context of sexuality than non-believers.

**Key words:** sexuality, sexual behavior, youth, media

## **Introduction**

Sexuality is described as one of the main components of existence. It creates a multidimensional sphere of life for every human being [1]. It deals with sex, gender identification, desire, sexual orientation, and reproduction. Is experienced and manifested in relationships, social roles, values, fantasies, behaviors, or personal beliefs [2]. It develops on five main levels, which include sociology, psychology, physiology, anatomy and interpersonal relations [1]. The parallel development of each of the above areas is a great challenge during the processes of upbringing, education or self-education, especially in the stage of individual maturation.[3].

The period of sexual maturation ranges from about 12 to 18 years of age. It is characterized by turbulent biological changes. The action of the gonads influences the development of secondary and tertiary sexual characteristics. The stimulus for the development of sexuality in this period is also a group of peers, which intersect with the influence of parents, the Internet, media, schools and other institutions. For both girls and boys, the growing up process tends to level out the differences between the emotional and sexual aspects [4].

The social plane is also the generator of sexual development, especially the conflict between the child and parents, who only create a model of femininity and masculinity, but not sexuality. At some point, a teenager starts rebelling against his parents and their sexuality. This results in directing the development of one's sexuality towards peers or attitudes propagated by the broadly understood media. Initially, the discharge of sexual tensions takes place in homogeneous groups, and only later in mixed groups [4].

## **Objective of the work**

The aim of the study is to learn about the influence of the media on the sexuality of young Poles.

## **Material and methods:**

The conducted study was based on the diagnostic survey method and the questionnaire technique. The research tool was a self-construction questionnaire containing 3 main questions together with items in which the respondents assessed the degree of compliance with their beliefs on a 5-point Likert scale (definitely no, rather no, hard to say, rather yes, definitely yes). The first question concerned the type of content (sexual, erotic, pornographic) watched in the media available to young people. Then, the respondents were asked about the sources of knowledge about sexuality, and then the respondents were asked to refer to the influence of the media on the acceleration of sexual initiation, their credibility as a source of knowledge about sexuality and their influence on the personal attitude of the respondents to sex. The second part of the questionnaire was a record containing socio-demographic data of the participant, such as gender, age, place of residence and education, attitude to religion and the current social situation regarding the family.

The study was conducted among a group of adolescents aged 16 to 21 through an online survey questionnaire on the website. The sample was selected randomly, with the age restriction to 21 years of age. 310 people were included in the study. The respondents were informed about the anonymity of the study and the use of data solely for scientific purposes. The research was carried out in the period from October to December 2019.

Statistical analyzes were performed through the use of software and Excel 2019 of SPSS Statistics version 25. A p-value of  $<0.05$  was assumed to be statistically significant. The analysis of variance ANOVA in mixed schemes was used to assess the differences between the measurements and the groups. Such a choice, despite the Likert format response variables used to measure the response variables, was dictated by the recommendations of Glass (1972) and Carifio (2007). Moreover, in order to compare the variables expressed on ordinal scales, which were either not measured with the Likert-format answers, or the research question posed did not require the use of a multivariate scheme, the Mann-Whitney and H Kruskal-Wallis tests were used.

## Results

Among 310 participants, the mean age was 18.09 years, the median was 18 years, and the standard deviation was 1.507. Most of the people were between the ages of 16 and 19, which means the distribution was right-skewed. Concentration of results around the mean value was low, the distribution was flattened - platokurtic.

In the studied group, the majority of people were women, and men accounted for only 13.55% of the total sample. Most of the respondents attended high school, while the smallest percentage of the research group studied in technical schools.

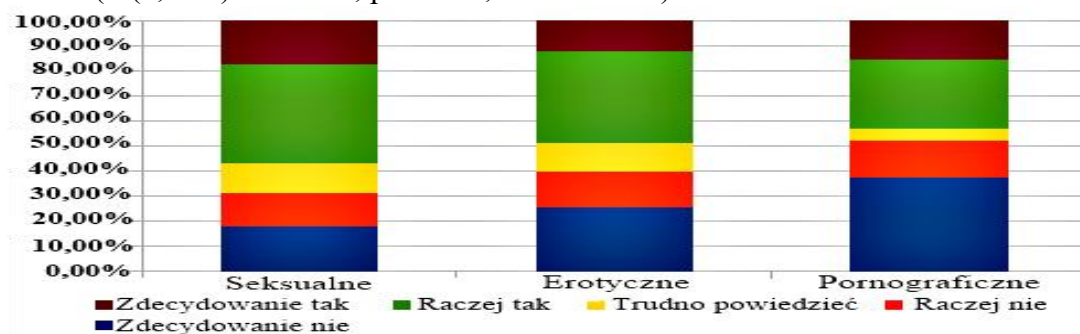
Also in terms of the place of residence, there were statistically significant disproportions in the research group. Most of the respondents came from the city.

The number of believers was similar to the number of non-believers. Believers constituted 53.55% of the entire group, while non-believers constituted 46.45%.

The largest percentage of the respondents came from complete families. In terms of the number, the second place was taken by people brought up only by their mother, and the third place was for people brought up only by their father. The remaining groups accounted for 1.29% of the total sample of respondents.

Chart 1 presents the behavior of the respondents regarding sexual content watched in the media. The medians calculated for these variables with 95% confidence intervals were, respectively: sexual content 4 (95% CI [4.4]), erotic content 3 (95% CI [3.4]), 2 (95% CI [3.4]).

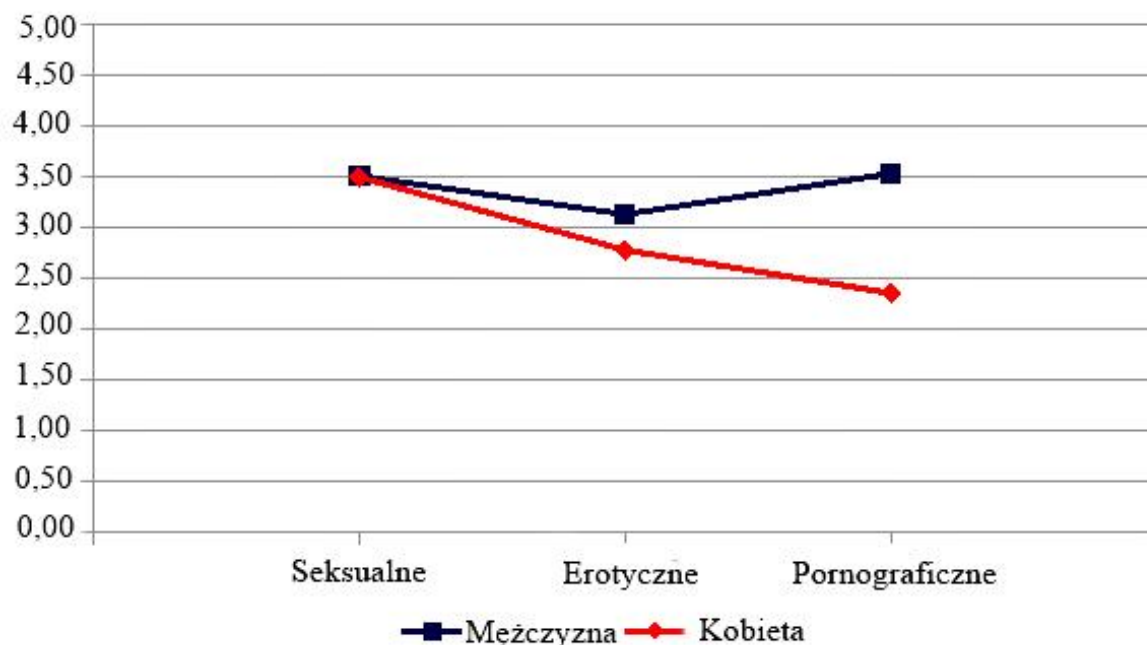
A multi-factor ANOVA in a mixed scheme (3x2x3x2x2x5, where the intra-group factor was the self-assessment of behavior related to viewing sexual, erotic and pornographic content, while the intergroup factors were selected demographic variables: gender, place of study, place of residence, attitude to religion, situation at home), testing The influence of the main effects, and the interaction between the intragroup factor and individual intergroup factors, showed a statistically significant effect of the intergroup and intergroup gender factor interaction ( $F(1, 299) = 19.661; p < 0.001; \eta^2 = 0.062$ ).



**Graph 1.** Behavior of respondents regarding viewing sexual content

The obtained data was further analyzed taking into account the frequency of the obtained results (Figure 2). In the group of women, there was a statistically significant difference between the assessment of the frequency of viewing sexual content and the assessment of the frequency of viewing pornographic content. Women watched pornographic content statistically significantly less often. A similar relationship was not observed in the group of men. The frequency of viewing pornographic content was not statistically significantly different from the frequency of viewing sexual content.

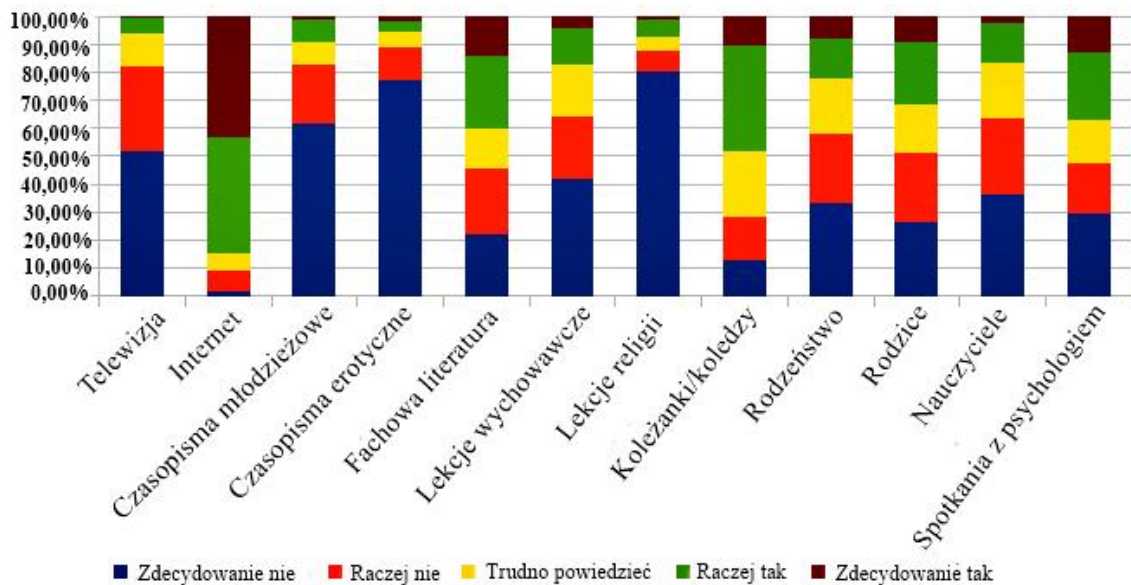
The conducted analyzes showed that there was a statistically significant difference between women and men in the frequency of viewing pornographic content. Men watched them more than women.



**Graph 2.** Average frequency of viewing sexual, erotic and pornographic content by the respondents

Calculated for the variable source of information on sexual behavior, the medians with 95% confidence intervals are as follows: TV 1 (95% CI [1.2]), Internet 4 (95% CI [4.4]), youth magazines 1 (95% PU [1.1]), erotic magazines 1 (95% CI [1.1]), specialist literature 3 (95% CI [2.3]), educational lessons 2 (95% CI [2.2]), religion classes 1 (95% CI [1.1]), friends 3 (95% CI [3.4]), siblings 2 (95% CI [2.2]), parents 1 (95% CI [2] , 3)), teachers 2 (95% CI [2.2]), meetings with a psychologist 3 (95% CI [2.3]). Chart 3 shows the quantitative distribution of this variable.

A multivariate ANOVA in a mixed scheme (5x2x3x2x2x5, where the intra-group factor was the assessment of the intensity of using sources of information on sexual behavior, while the intergroup factors were selected demographic variables: gender, place of study, place of residence, attitude to religion, situation at home), testing the impact main effects, and the interaction between the intragroup factor and individual intergroup factors, showed a statistically significant effect of the intragroup factor ( $F(1, 303) = 77.727$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.204$ ) and the intergroup factor attitude to religion ( $F(1, 303) = 4.796$ ;  $p = 0.029$ ;  $\eta^2 = 0.016$ ).



**Chart 3.** Sources of information on sexual behavior used by the respondents

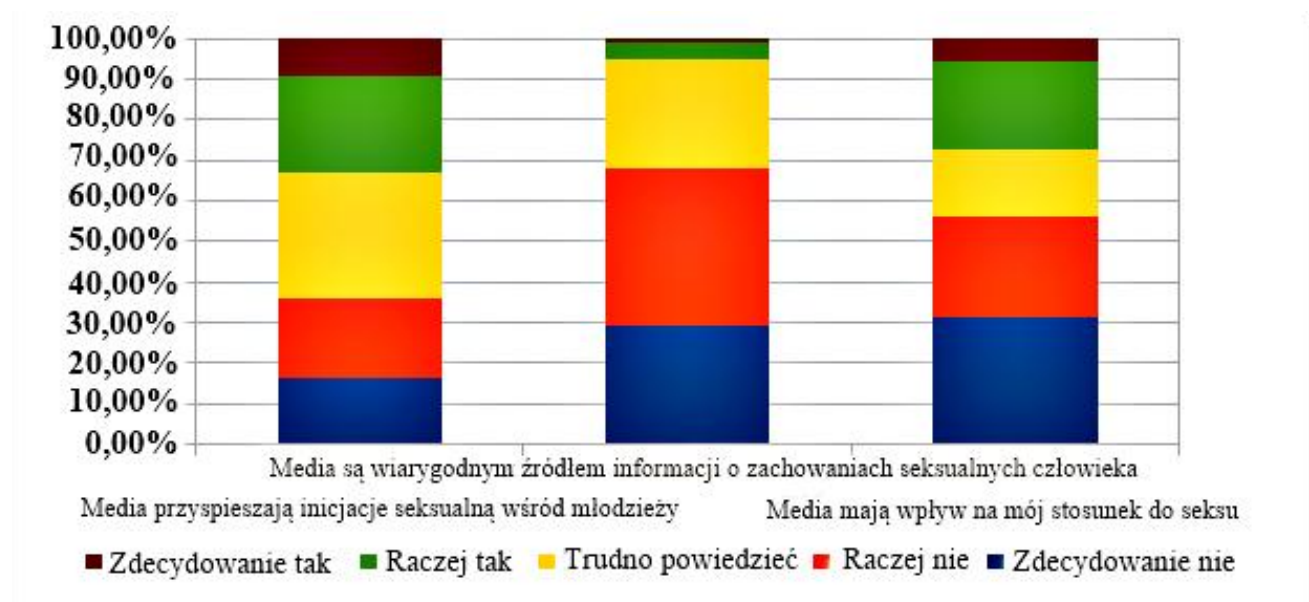
Figure 4 presents the profile of respondents' answers regarding the frequency of using various sources of information on sexual behavior.



**Chart 4.** Sources of information on sexual behavior used by the respondents

Post hoc analyzes showed that television is statistically significantly less frequent source of information than: educational lessons, teachers, siblings, parents, meetings with a psychologist, professional literature, colleagues, and the Internet. There were no statistically significant differences between the given source of information and the others. Moreover, the obtained data show that the Internet is statistically significantly more frequent source of information for respondents than: colleagues, professional literature, meetings with a psychologist, parents, siblings, teachers, educational lessons, television, youth magazines, erotic magazines, lessons religion.

Chart 5 presents a summary of the respondents' answers to questions about the influence of the media on the acceleration of sexual initiation, their credibility as a source of information on sexual behavior and the impact on the participants' attitude to sex.



**Chart 5.** The influence of the media on the sexual behavior of the respondents

Calculated for the variables presented in Figure 5, the medians along with 95% confidence intervals are: media accelerate sexual initiation 3 (95% CI [3.3]), media are a reliable source of information on sexual behavior 2 (95% CI [2.2] ), the media influence the attitude to sex in respondents 2 (95% CI [2.2]).

In order to compare the groups distinguished by demographic variables, analyzes were carried out using the Mann-Whitney U test and H Kruskal-Wallis test. The analyzes showed a statistically significant correlation between the attitude to faith and the belief in the credibility

of the media in the field of sexuality, as well as the place of study and the belief in the influence of the media on one's sexuality. The surveyed believers were less convinced of the credibility of the media in the field of sexuality than the non-believers. The respondents studying in high school were more convinced about the influence of the media on their sexuality than the respondents learning in higher education. There was no statistically significant difference between the pairs of high school - technical high school, technical high school - college.

### **Discussion:**

Contemporary media undoubtedly influence many aspects of human life. This impact applies not only to adults, but also to children and adolescents, as shown by studies on the impact of the mass media on the process of upbringing, socialization and education in the school environment [5].

E. Pęczkowska's research confirmed that the psychological and sexological problems of adolescents arise with important role of the media in their lives, where they mentioned cinema and small-screen films among the sources of knowledge [6].

The EU NET ADB research shows that over a quarter of the surveyed adolescents have contact with pornography on the Internet at least once a week, including boys more often. In the group of respondents, some explore pornographic content of their own free will, the other accidentally [7]. The results of the EU Kids Online research, which showed that for the vast majority of young people, the contact with pornography on the Internet is the most worrying threat that exists on the Internet, may be the optimistic fact. It can be assumed that the results obtained are the result of the spreading trends in sex education among school-age youth and the more and more often emerging new tools preventing the display of pornographic content [8].

The obtained results may prove useful for the development of effective tools for the sexual education of adolescents, which would help teenagers find their gender identity and awareness, also through the use of media. Proper sex education, in the long term, may lead to responsible sexual activity in accordance with the principles of sexual health. It can also prevent many negative consequences of irresponsible sex life, such as unwanted pregnancies, underage pregnancies, or diagnosing many sexually transmitted diseases [9].

Broadly understood media have become a carrier of many values for young people, but also anti-values, carrying both positive and negative effects of this impact. The media (mainly the Internet and television), as the main source of knowledge about sexuality among



young people, should promote the principles of sexual life in accordance with WHO recommendations [10].

The strength of the study was definitely the size of the study group and the distribution of independent variables such as faith or the current family situation, while the limitation was the small differentiation of the study group primarily in terms of gender (the vast majority of women), but also in terms of the place of confusion (city).

The conducted research with the use of the proprietary questionnaire may constitute the basis for future, extended research on the sexuality of young Poles and the influence of independent variables other than the media.

### **Conclusions:**

1. The obtained results of own research showed that men viewed pornographic content statistically significantly more often than women.
2. The main source of knowledge about sexual behavior of young Poles is the Internet. Television is rarely one. There was no statistically significant advantage of one of the sources of knowledge available to young people.
3. The surveyed believers were less convinced about the credibility of the media in the sexual sphere than non-believers.
4. High school students were more convinced about the influence of the media on their sexuality than high school students.

### **Literature**

[1] Brown R.T. Adolescent sexuality at the dawn of the 21st Century. *Adolesc Med* 2000, 11(1): 19-34.

[2] Laphimon M. A Glossary of Term In Gender and Sexuality, The Rockefeller Foundation Mahidol University Thailand, Seul 2005. [w:] *Podstawy seksuologii* pod red. Lew-Starowicz Z., Skrzypulec V., Wydawnictwo Lekarskie PZWL, Warszawa 2010: 25.

[3] Allen R.H, Forcier M. Seksualność nastolatków i zapobieganie ciąży. *Ginekologia po dyplomie* 2011; 9 (1): 18-24.

[4] Beisert M., Rozwój psychoseksualny człowieka [w:] *Podstawy seksuologii* pod red. Lew-Starowicz Z., Skrzypulec V., Wydawnictwo Lekarskie PZWL, Warszawa 2010: 83-91.

[5] Morbitzer J. Development in the World of New Media – an Outline of the Issues. *Journal: Labor et Educaio* 2014; 119-144.

- [6] Wejber – Wąsiewicz E., Pęczkowska E., Problemy edukacji seksualnej w Polsce. Przegląd Socjologiczny, Uniwersytet Łódzki, Łódź 2009: 173-192.
- [7] Włodarczyk J. Zagrożenia związane z korzystaniem z Internetu przez młodzież. Wyniki badania EU NET ADB. Dziecko krzywdzone. Teoria, badania, praktyka 2013; 12 (1): 49-68.
- [8] Livingstone S., Kirwil L., Ponte C. i in. With the UE Kids Online Network. In their own words: what brothers children online, London School of Economics & Political Science, London 2013: 1-19.
- [9] Mińko M., Barańska A., Religioni U. i in. Edukacja seksualna jako element kreowania polityki zdrowotnej w Europie. Hygeia Public Health 2014, 49(2): 348-352.
- [10] Imacka J., Balsa M. Świadomość seksualna młodzieży w polskiej rzeczywistości. Probl Hig Epidemiol 2012, 93(3): 453-456.