

Is Porn to Blame for Facebook Exploding as Sexual Victims Come Forward?

First there was Alyssa Milano. Then Rose McGowan.

Tuesday night came Reese Witherspoon's bombshell revelation that she was raped by a director at age 16.

Wednesday morning, the news was ablaze with Olympic gold medalist McKayla Maroney's allegations of rape by the team doctor when she was just 13.

The #MeToo movement, originally started by Tarana Burke in 1996, has reached tsunami proportions on Facebook this week.

Wave after wave of shocking revelations of sexual abuse committed by men in power over victims of a household-name fame just keep coming, echoed by an exponentially greater number of women and men acknowledging that the same has happened to them with the #MeToo tag on social media.

CBS News reported that more than 24 million have posted on Facebook using the #MeToo tag, and it's been used over 500,000 times on Twitter, according to CNN.

How has sexual abuse become so prolific in our culture?

Because we live in a sex-filled culture where pornography has become mainstream.

Porn causes sexual aggression

Research has shown that porn causes sexual aggression, changes attitudes toward women and desensitizes the viewer to rape, as found in a meta-analysis of 22 studies by Indiana University and University of Hawaii at Manoa researchers and published in

the *Journal of Communication*.

The work of other researchers has backed this up.

Repeated exposure to pornography was found to negatively affect attitudes toward sexuality and women, in a study by Dr. Jennings Bryant and Dr. Dolf Zillman. A University of Wisconsin psychologist found that porn causes men to not only become more aggressive toward women, but less likely to respond to and have empathy for a rape victim.

Porn is all around us—and it's changing who we are

Let's be honest: porn is everywhere.

In mainstream entertainment, the line has been pushed further and further toward vulgarity.

And if that is not enough, it's too easy to pick up the smartphone or the iPad and go searching for any kind of perversion.

It's so easy, that now 90 percent of kids ages 8 to 16 have seen online pornography. The largest group of internet porn consumers is children ages 12 to 17 as reported by Guard Child.

We imitate what we see, starting from birth. It's how we learn languages, learn to feed and care for ourselves and learn how to relate to one another. There are neurons called mirror neurons in the brain that are responsible for helping us learn.

In *The Effects of Porn on the Male Brain*, neuroscientist and author William Struthers wrote "These mirror neurons are involved when someone views pornography because what they view, they vicariously experience and learn from."

It's not just "monkey see, monkey do," though.

Porn changes the very structure of the brain.

As neuroscientist Dr. Tim Jennings tells us in the Conquer Series, a six-disc series that helps men break free from porn, “Incredibly, our beliefs, thoughts and behaviors... change our brain structure, ultimately changing who we are.”

In fact, the brains of a pornography addict look similar to that of a heroin addict’s.

One study published in *JAMA Psychiatry* found that porn use shrinks the size of your brain in the areas that are connected with impulse control, motivation, and decision making.

When you watch porn, powerful neurotransmitters such as dopamine are also released, which bond you to those images.

Even thinking about them can automatically cause arousal and a desire for more, just like an addict.

It’s hard to fight your brain

“What starts off as a moral problem quickly becomes a brain problem, explains Dr. Ted Roberts, former Marine Fighter Pilot, pastor and host of the Conquer Series, who has a 90 percent success rate in helping men break free from porn.

“Telling a man to try harder is only tightening the noose of bondage.”

Getting free from porn, therefore, involves reshaping the mind first.

For too long we have let porn teach men about human sexuality ... it’s infiltrated their thoughts and shown through in their actions.

When we help men break free from the chains of pornography and pursue integrity, maybe then we will finally see the numbers of #MeToo victims recede.

To stem the tide of sexual abuse that is overtaking us, we need healing for men who are trapped in a cycle of addiction and acting out.

“As a pastor and a church planter myself, this is one of our biggest issues, and it’s what captures men’s brains and their hearts and leads them in the wrong direction,” said Paul Cole, president of the Christian Men’s Network, “When the Conquer Series begins to be a part of who we are, it will begin to change what we do and what we are as a church.”