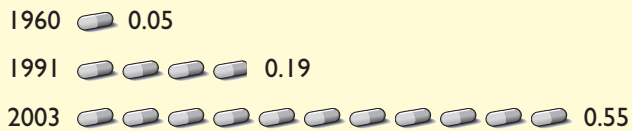


Comparisons continued

5 Sexually-induced mental illness

Mental illness often has a sexual component. Problems arise when a person's sexual thoughts and experiences conflict with his or her other thoughts and experiences. A measure of the level of mental illness in society is the number of anti-depressant drugs people use. The following chart compares the number of prescription items for these drugs in the community in England per person (9). Anti-depressants were introduced in 1957. The figure for 1960 is extrapolated.

Prescriptions for anti-depressants (per person):



6 Macho-driven bad behaviour and violence

Most hooliganism and violence is carried out by men. Much of this is driven by machismo: they do it to assert their masculinity. As such it is a sexual problem.

The chart below compares the number of violent offences against the person recorded by the police in England and Wales per thousand members of the population (10). The comparison is only very approximate because the police have changed the way they count violent crimes. I have increased the 1955 figure to allow for this (11). Much of today's violence is alcohol-related, but heavy drinking by men is itself, in many cases, macho-driven. Violence in the media and drugs are also factors.

Violent acts (per thousand population):



Conclusions

These comparisons show very clearly the harmful effects of sex in the media. The more pornography there is in society, the greater are the sexual problems.

This is because it encourages sexual activity among young people [hence problem 1], fosters the promiscuity that leads to spread of disease [problem 2], inflames the desires involved in sexual crime [problem 3], warps the role of sex in marriage [problem 4], feeds sexual thoughts in mental illness [problem 5], and raises the passions of machismo [problem 6]. **Anyone who disputes this analysis must find an alternative explanation for the level of these problems in Britain today.**

There is then a need to tighten the controls over sex in the media in Britain today. Compared with how they were in 1955, they are too lax. They give freedom to some people (pornographers and voyeurs), but take freedom away from many others (from women who would like to be able to go out alone at night; from parents who would like to bring up their children to be sexually responsible; from young mothers who would like to do what their other friends do; from men who find pornography addictive; from old people shut in for fear of macho-driven jobs etc). The result is a less civilised society. Pornography is an evil, and needs to be treated as such (12).

Notes

- (1). Data from Population Trends.
- (2). Source: Office for National Statistics. The age group is taken as 13.
- (3). I have taken the rate of illegal abortions to be approximately equal to the rate of legal abortions for under 16 year-olds when the 1967 Abortion Act was first introduced (25%).
- (4). Source: Health Protection Agency.
- (5). I have taken 75% of the number in 1971.
- (6). Source: Home Office.
- (7). Lords and Commons Family and Child Protection Group report 1998.
- (8). Source: Social Trends 35.
- (9). Source: Department of Health.
- (10). Source: Home Office.
- (11). By a factor of 2.
- (12). P. G. Nelson: *Nudity and Sexual Activity in the Media*, Whittles, 1998, chapters 3-4.

EAM Printers 01473 25629 Nov 2005



mediawatch-uk

3 Willow House, Kennington Road, Ashford, Kent TN24 0NR
Tel: 01233 633936

Email info@mediawatchuk.org Web www.mediawatchuk.org

For more information contact the Director

visit: www.mediawatchuk.org

Sex in the media: is it harmful?

By P. G. Nelson
Scientist and Author

In Britain today pornography is everywhere. Soft pornography pervades the media and hard pornography is readily available to those who want it. Young people are exposed to it from an early age, especially through television. The questions are: what is all this material doing for the nation? Is it providing harmless entertainment, or is it doing a great deal of damage?

These questions can be answered by comparing the sexual problems in Britain today with those fifty years ago, when hard pornography was illegal and aside from a naturist publication, soft pornography was confined to an occasional picture in a few magazines. Even fifty years ago there had been some relaxation in standards over previous years.

I will consider the following sexual problems:

1 Teenage pregnancies, 2 Sexually-transmitted diseases, 3 Sexual crime, 4 Family breakdown, 5 Sexually-induced mental illness, and 6 Macho-driven violence. I take account of changes in population, and show the statistics on the basis of "per thousand population" or "per person" (1).

I realise that it is difficult for the Government to address these questions. But it could set up a Royal Commission to do so. I urge that this be done.

Comparisons

1 Teenage pregnancies

One of the sexual problems of society is sexual activity among young people leading to pregnancy. This results in abortion, or in births to young mothers before they are ready to bring up children.

The following chart compares the number of girls in England and Wales becoming pregnant below the age of 14 per thousand members of their age group (2). The value for 1955 is based on the number of births to girls under 15 (3). The high number of pregnancies today is despite more sex education in schools and increased availability of contraceptives compared with 1955.

Pregnancy among under 14-year-old girls (per thousand):

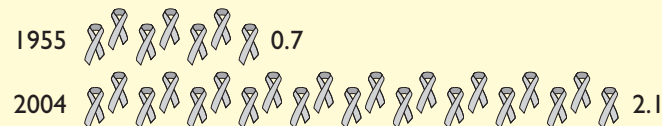


2 Sexually-transmitted infections

Another sexual problem of society is the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The number of new diagnoses in the UK is now running at 1.3% of the population per year. This is despite campaigns for "safe sex".

The chart below compares the number of new cases of syphilis, gonorrhoea, herpes and genital warts in England and Wales per thousand members of the population (4). The comparison is limited to these STIs because there was no HIV/AIDS in 1955 and no records were kept of chlamydia or other infections. I have estimated the number of cases of herpes and warts in 1955 from the number in 1971 (5).

New cases of four STIs:



3 Sexual crime

Another sexual problem of society is sexual crime. Most of this is carried out by males against females. The following chart compares the number of rapes and sexual assaults on women and girls in England and Wales per thousand members of the female population (6). This is based on the number of offences reported to the police. Reporting of sexual crimes against women has become easier since 1955, but against this, many women now take protective measures that women did not take then (e.g. avoiding going out alone at night).

Sexual attacks on women and girls (per thousand):



4 Family breakdown

There is frequently a sexual factor to family breakdown. Breakdown occurs because one or other partner has been unfaithful. (Other factors are money, alcohol and drugs.) The resulting separation has an adverse effect on the couple's children making them more likely to develop behavioural problems and to leave school with low qualifications (7). Family breakdown is a major problem for society.

The chart below gives the number of lone parents in Britain with dependent children (8) as a percentage of the total number of families with dependent children. I have estimated the percentage in 1955 from that in 1971.

Percentage of lone parent families:

