Growing up in a sexualized media culture
Effects of media on adolescents’ sexual development

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- 1/3 interactions between media characters has a sexual meaning
- 8/10 TV fiction episodes address sexuality
- About 20 references per hour to sex in shows popular among adolescents
- 9/10 popular websites contain sexual themes
- 2/3 music videos are sexually suggestive
- On average, a Flemish teenager sees about 35,000 references to sex, just on TV
Does this affect teenagers?

X5

Selective exposure theory

Sexual exploratory behavior

Puberty
1/3 interactions between media characters has a sexual meaning
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Sex in a narrative context
The sexual *metanarrative* in media

1. An almost exclusive emphasis on the hedonic dimension of sexuality
2. Media tend to sexualize very often
Adolescents eagerly consume this sexual media culture – reason to be concerned?

1. An almost exclusive emphasis on the hedonic dimension of sexuality
2. Media tend to sexualize very often
3. Media follow the *heterosexual script*
Adolescents eagerly consume this sexual media culture – reason to be concerned?

- I don't know
- No
- Yes
Example 1: Self-objectification
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INTERNA-LiSERING

Self-objectification

MATH PERFORMANCE TASK

SILENCING

Risk behavior

Sexual Exploration

Slowing down the sexual trajectory
Example 2: Sexism & sexual violence
Media exposure ~ sexism stereotypes

- Correlational studies
- Longitudinal research
  - Not really reciprocal
- Experimental research
  - Music videos, magazines

Convincing evidence

Men are ‘sex driven’ and not interested in relational intimacy, and women are sex objects
Media exposure ~ Rape myths

Objectification of women
Rape Culture

Slide by D. Lisak

Bystanders

Facilitators

Core sex offenders

Sexism

Calloused sexual attitudes

Denigration of women

Hyper-masculinity

Bringing in the Bystander (Plante, Banyard, Moynihan, Eckstein)
Unlikely?

1. Evidence from over 200 studies, published in:
   - Developmental psychology
   - Media psychology
   - Pediatric
   - Criminology
2. Theoretically what can be expected
Unlikely?

3. Media have a ‘functional value’ for ‘susceptible’ adolescents

4. Not every adolescent is affected (to the same extent)
   - Research has started to identify risk categories
     - Involvement/immersion
     - Pubertal pace
     - Parental attachment
   - This puts the evidence in perspective as well as strengthens the evidence
Any questions?