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Psychopathology and compulsive sexual behavior among 86 men who sought for treatment in Sao Paulo, Brazil

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Abstract

This study examined compulsive sexual behavior (CSB) and psychopathology in a treatment-seeking sample of men in São Paulo, Brazil. Eighty-six men (26% gay, 17% bisexual, 43% heterosexual) who met diagnostic criteria for excessive sexual drive and sexual addiction completed assessments consisting of the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview, a structured clinical interview for DSM-IV Axis I Disorders – Clinical Version (segment for Impulse Control Disorder), Sexual Compulsivity Scale (SCS), and questions about problematic CSB. The sample was composed of predominantly middle-aged, well-educated men in good socioeconomic standing, in comparison to the Brazilian general population. The average SCS score for our sample was above the cut-off score reported in other studies, and 72% of the sample presented at least one Axis I psychiatric diagnosis, and 22% reached criteria for suicide risk. The most commonly reported problematic CSB were masturbation (82%), use of pornography (72%), and excessive casual sex (59%). There were no differences among gay, bisexual, and heterosexual men on SCS scores and psychiatric conditions, but gay and bisexual men were more likely than heterosexual men to report casual sex and sex with multiple casual partners as problematic behaviors. On average, gay and bisexual men reported a greater number of problematic CSB than heterosexual men. SCS scores were associated with psychiatric co-morbidities, mood disorder, and suicide risk, but diagnosis of a mood disorder predicted higher SCS scores in a regression analysis. The study provides important data on the mental health needs of men with CSB in São Paulo, Brazil.

Biography

Dr. Marco de Tubino Scanavino is a psychiatrist, and has completed his Ph.D from University of São Paulo Medical School (FMUSP). From 2002 to 2012 he was the Educational Coordinator of the Specialization Course in Human Sexuality of the FMUSP. He is the responsible for the Excessive Sexual Drive Outpatient Unit from the Institute of Psychiatry of the Clínicas' Hospital of the FMUSP, and he is conducting studies on sexual compulsivity in São Paulo, Brazil, funded by Foundation for Research Support of the state of São Paulo (FAPESP). He is a member of the Comission's Research of the FMUSP.