

Study: Pro-smoking videos, often sexual, prominent on YouTube

May 12 2010

(PhysOrg.com) -- Pro-smoking videos, and especially those that are sexual in nature, are prominent on the online video site YouTube and very accessible to young people, says a Michigan State University professor whose study of the issue was recently published in the journal Health Communication.

"The high frequency of [smoking](#) fetish videos concerns me," said Hye-Jin Paek, an associate professor of advertising, public relations and retailing who conducted a study of what are known as "smoking fetish" videos - videos that combine smoking and [sexuality](#). "Also, the fact that we can see the videos and analyze their content means that teenagers can see them too."

By simply doing a YouTube search using the words "smoking fetish" and "smoking fetishism," Paek and her colleagues found that more than 2,200 such videos were presented. That compares to only 1,480 anti-smoking videos that were shown.

Despite efforts by YouTube to keep what's considered inappropriate material from young people, the MSU study found that 85 percent of smoking fetish videos were completely accessible to [adolescents](#).

Paek hopes that the study will alarm [tobacco-control](#) experts to carefully monitor YouTube along with other Internet websites and lead YouTube to strengthen its regulatory system.

"YouTube doesn't use the same guidelines as the movies do to regulate the videos," Paek said. "But why not, when YouTube is arguably more exposed to youth than movies are? I hope YouTube strengthens its system, but I also hope tobacco-control experts will pay more attention to the Internet and new media as potential channels for both risky and healthy messages."

The majority of smoking fetish videos studied explicitly portrayed smoking behaviors, such as lighting up, inhaling, exhaling and holding the tobacco product. More than half were rated PG-13 or R.

More than 21 percent of the videos contained at least one of the five fetish elements defined in the paper. The elements were a selection of five traditional fetish elements including gloves, high heels, boots, stockings and leather or latex clothes.

YouTube's regulation policy is carried out by the site's users, Paek said. Viewers can "flag" a [video](#) if they judge its content as inappropriate. Within 48 hours, YouTube staff reviews the video, although that does not guarantee the video will be deleted. For videos that are flagged and remaining on the site, users must verify they are 18 or older by creating a [YouTube](#) account to view the video.

Provided by Michigan State University

Citation: Study: Pro-smoking videos, often sexual, prominent on YouTube (2010, May 12) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-05-pro-smoking-videos-sexual-prominent-youtube.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.