

# Linking Male Use of the Sex Industry to Controlling Behaviors in Violent Relationships

## An Exploratory Analysis

Catherine A. Simmons

*University of Tennessee*

Peter Lehmann

*University of Texas at Arlington*

Shannon Collier-Tenison

*University of Arkansas at Little Rock*

In an attempt to better understand the relationship between male use of the sex industry (i.e., pornography and strip clubs) and interpersonal violence (IPV), 2,135 female residents of an IPV shelter were surveyed regarding their batterer's use of both the sex industry and controlling behaviors in their relationship. Findings indicate that male domestic violence offenders who utilize the sex industry use more controlling behaviors than male domestic violence offenders who do not. Implications for policy, practice, and research are discussed.

**Keywords:** *controlling behaviors; domestic violence; pornography; sex industry*

The sex industry, which includes pornography and strip clubs, is so profitable in the United States that it seems to have become part of mainstream American culture. Indeed, explicit images of sex are readily available, easily accessible, and are not going to disappear any time soon (CBS News, 2004). Pointing to a few studies that failed to support a direct causal relationship between viewing pornography and male initiated violence, supporters of this industry deny claims that pornography is harmful to women (Fisher & Grenier, 1994). However, a larger body of research indicates the opposite (see meta-analyses by Allen, D'Alessio, & Brezgel, 1995; Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000; Oddone-Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2000). Although a direct causal relationship between pornography and violence against women has yet to be firmly established (Malamuth et al., 2000), considerable evidence shows that men who view pornography are more dangerous than men who do not (e.g., Allen et al., 1995; Malamuth et al., 2000; Oddone-Paolucci et al., 2000).

Although some researchers have found that domestic violence offenders who view pornography initiate more sexual violence in their relationships (Cramer et al., 1998), the current literature on this topic does not address other aspects of intimate