Many people are concerned about the impact of pornography on adolescents and young adults. Pornography has changed and what curious youth see today is not the same type of sexual content that their parents saw in magazines in the 1970s or 1980s.

It’s easy to assume that because pornography is different, and easily accessible, the news is all bad. While evidence suggests that pornography viewing is associated with youth dating and sexual violence, there are some subgroups of youth that are more vulnerable to adverse consequences of pornography viewing than others. Moreover, the ideas that pornography is “addictive,” is causing the dissolution of stable relationships, and is bad for girls’ body image are not clearly supported by the majority of the peer-reviewed literature.

In short, the evidence base on pornography is mixed. Based on recent research on teaching adolescents “porn literacy”—there is reason to hope that the current generation of adolescents can develop the skills to navigate sexually explicit media just as they must learn to navigate other media.