



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on February 7, 2011

Prime-time TV Exploits Young Girls, Study Shows

PTC's president Tim Winter said the key issue of the report is not the sick and predatory nature of the Hollywood entertainment culture, but how the industry is lying to a generation of girls about their worth and how they should behave.

"Storylines on the most popular shows among teens are sending the message to our daughters that being sexualized isn't just acceptable, but it should be sought after," Winter said upon the release of the PTC study. "It is outrageous that TV executives have made it their business to profit off of programs that depict teen girls blissfully being sexualized by casual partners."



The study found that when teenage female characters appear in prime-time shows, there is more sexual content depicted, and the teen girls characterized show little if any negative response to being sexualized.

The study analyzed a total of 45 episodes from 14 TV programs that were rated among the top 25 primetime shows for ages 12-17, including ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *Lost*; CBS' *NCIS*, *Two and a Half Men*, and *The Big Bang Theory*; NBC's *The Office*; FOX's *Family Guy*, *House*, *Glee*, *The Cleveland Show*, *American Dad*, and *The Simpsons*; and CW Network's *The Vampire Diaries*.

Among the PTC study's major findings, based on its analysis of prime-time program content:

- Underage female characters are shown participating in a higher percentage of sexual depictions compared to adults (47 percent to 29 percent respectively).
- Only five percent of underage female characters expressed any negative emotions about being sexualized.
- Of all the sexualized female characters in the underage and young adult category, 86 percent were depicted as being of high school age.
- 93 percent of the sexual incidents involving underage female characters qualified as "unhealthy," based on definitions of "healthy" and "unhealthy" sexuality established by the American Psychological Association.
- 98 percent of the sexual incidents involving underage female characters occurred outside of any form of a committed relationship.
- 73 percent of the underage sexualized incidents were presented humorously.

"To any parent of a pre-teen or teenage girl, the harm of sexualized imagery is readily apparent," said Winter. "We cannot allow our daughters, not to mention boys and adult men, to accept the message that women should be valued only for their sex appeal — even if it seems every magazine cover, billboard,



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movie, and television program convey that message.”

Winter warned that meaningful change will not come in Hollywood without serious pressure being applied to those producing the trash that passes for Emmy-winning prime-time programming. “It will take action from parents, actors themselves, and advertisers who pay for TV content — not to mention awareness on the part of the public and our elected representatives — to instigate change,” Winter said. “Combining the pervasiveness of teen sexualization with the well-documented research on the consequences — everything from body dissatisfaction to depression — should be more than enough.”



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