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Cybersex is More Damaging to Relationships Than Pornography According to a Report in *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*

Larchmont, NY, October 28, 2003—"Hot chatting" and online sexual encounters pose more of a threat to relationships than does pornography report the authors of a study of male and female attitudes toward infidelity. The study, which also revealed that online infidelity is seen as no different than other forms of betrayal including sexual or emotional infidelity and pornography, is being pre-published online and will appear in the December 2003 issue (Volume 6, Number 6) of *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, a peer-reviewed journal published by **Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.** (www.liebertpub.com). The article is available free online at www.liebertpub.com/CPB.

"This is an interesting finding, given that physical bodies are not actually touching each other during the sexual online encounters, and in fact, more visual nudity is probably available for those viewing pornography," says **Monica Therese Whitty, Ph.D.**, author of the paper "Pushing the Wrong Buttons: Men and Women's Attitudes Toward Online and Offline Infidelity," from the University of Western Sydney, Australia. Whitty speculates that the study participants probably perceived that sexual acts such as cybersex and hot chatting are more of a threat than pornography because individuals are more likely to meet face-to-face with their cyber-lovers than they are with porn stars. The lack of physical contact does not make Internet actions and interactions 'unreal' she concludes. The study indicates that infidelity is not based on the amount of physical contact or the idea that one's partner is masturbating, but rather that the partner has desire for another and is seeking out a sexual encounter with another individual.

"This study confirms a variety of other studies, which have shown that Internet behaviors are often as vivid, real, and meaningful as those experiences occurring offline," says **Mark D. Wiederhold, M.D., Ph.D.**, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal and Medical Director of The Virtual Reality Medical Center in San Diego, CA. "Mental healthcare professionals should be aware of the level of involvement with Internet activities when patients come for evaluation for treatment."

CyberPsychology and Behavior is an authoritative peer-reviewed journal published bimonthly in print and online that explores the psychological and social issues surrounding the Internet and interactive technologies. A complete table of contents and free sample issue may be viewed online at www.liebertpub.com/CPB.