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# **Sexting in times of confinement. An analysis of sending online sexual content before and during COVID-19 pandemic amongst university students**

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**Abstract:** Sexting is a common practice among young adults that consists of sending material with sexual content to other people. During the COVID-19 pandemic containment situation, the main means of exploring sexuality have been through digital devices. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the practice of sexting before and during confinement due to COVID-19 amongst Spanish university students. A longitudinal design was adopted from the application of an online survey based on three standardized and internationally used instruments on a sample of university students (n = 499) before and during confinement. The results indicated that the practice of sexting was slightly higher during confinement. At the same time, the use of dating applications was a conditioning factor in sexting. Furthermore, it was noted that sexting had a significant influence on college students' levels of self-control, depression, anxiety, and stress during confinement. Finally, the main conclusions of this study are discussed where the situation of confinement has had an impact on the lives of students and their habits of digital consumption and expression of sexuality.

**Keywords:** sexting, sexually explicit images, sexual behavior, psychosocial factors, university students, COVID-19

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