

Helen R. Friedman, Ph.D.
7750 Clayton Road, Suite 210
St. Louis, Missouri 63117
(314) 781-4500

For the first time, sexual compulsivity is included in the ICD-11 as “compulsive sexual behavior disorder.” ICD-11 will take effect January 1, 2022.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6313247/>

[World Psychiatry](#). 2019 Feb; 18(1): 3–19.

ICD-11 Definition: Compulsive sexual behaviour disorder

Compulsive sexual behaviour disorder is characterized by a persistent pattern of failure to control intense repetitive sexual impulses or urges, resulting in repetitive sexual behaviour over an extended period (e.g., six months or more) that causes marked distress or impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

Possible manifestations of the persistent pattern include: repetitive sexual activities becoming a central focus of the individual's life to the point of neglecting health and personal care or other interests, activities and responsibilities; the individual making numerous unsuccessful efforts to control or significantly reduce the repetitive sexual behaviour; the individual continuing to engage in repetitive sexual behaviour despite adverse consequences such as repeated relationship disruption; and the individual continuing to engage in repetitive sexual behaviour even when he or she no longer derives any satisfaction from it.

Although this category phenomenologically resembles substance dependence, it is included in the ICD-11 impulse control disorders section in recognition of the lack of definitive information on whether the processes involved in the development and maintenance of the disorder are equivalent to those observed in substance use disorders and behavioural addictions. Its inclusion in the ICD-11 will help to address unmet needs of treatment seeking patients as well as possibly reducing shame and guilt associated with help seeking among distressed individuals.