

Documenting Patterns of Intimidation, Bullying and Defamation: Towards Public Accountability for the Actions of Dr. Nicole Prause

“At some point, someone’s going to tell me not to do this...So I’m just going to start, and see when they tell me to stop.”
- *Dr. Nicole Prause, Nova’s Secret Life of Scientists*

For the general public, individuals with the label of "scientist" are taken for granted as people seeking truth objectively and dispassionately – following the evidence where it leads. Perhaps more than any other, this title evokes credibility, believability and a kind of moral authority to help others ascertain truth.

By many outward indicators, Dr. Nicole Prause merits that label and that credibility (Ph.D., former research associate at UCLA,¹ published researcher, and frequent media commentator regarding sex research). These credentials are showcased regularly in her many media mentions as confirmation of the weight her statements presumably deserve.

For those with a more intimate experience of Dr. Prause’s work, however, a more concerning picture has emerged. As documented in hundreds of separate incidents over a period of several years, it’s become clear that Prause has been actively (and increasingly) involved in an ongoing pattern of both open and covert aggression in various forms against those who disagree with her own conclusions about pornography’s benefits. To those who push back to defend themselves against her attacks, Prause also pursues a consistent pattern of flipping the story: claiming that, in fact, *she herself* is a beleaguered victim of ongoing harassment and discrimination as both a female scientist and [someone studying questions](#) that we are told some people “would like us not to ask” and “don’t want us to know the answer to.”

My purpose here is to aggregate and summarize the extensive (but little known) evidence for these claims about Dr. Prause, just as should be required in making such serious claims. As will be demonstrated throughout, Dr. Prause has shown no such consideration for the targets of her own damaging public accusations.

I write anonymously, as a colleague of many of the recipients of Prause’s attacks – and a silent observer (until now) of what is happening. In preparing this review, I surveyed many accounts, public documents and other material documenting these experiences. I also conducted interviews and did a thorough review of Prause’s own published writings and speeches – with the aim of assembling an honest, fair and comprehensive account.²

¹This "Sexual Psychophysiology and Affective Neuroscience Lab" has often been represented by Prause as an official UCLA entity, despite being hosted on a website she herself created. In late 2014 or early 2015, UCLA chose not to renew Prause's employment contract. Although the details of her departure are unclear, Prause [has described it](#) as a personally courageous move to defy an institution not supporting her research. Others have followed suit, [portraying her as a kind of martyr](#) to "resistance and roadblocks she has run into in the process of carrying out her research agenda in an academic setting" which ultimately led her to begin her own private start-up company, [Liberos](#), a place characterized as “where she could work as a sex scientist without being subject to arbitrary research prohibitions.”

²I have never met Dr. Prause nor have I been personally targeted by her. I choose to remain anonymous here in order to avoid the type of aggression others have come to expect from her. In my own review of examples and content from a number of people and organizations attacked by Prause, there were certain examples, observations and quotes that felt more relevant or important, while others were left out as less central. Because four organizations, in particular, have received the bulk of Prause’s public and private aggression –International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals (IITAP), NoFap, Your Brain on Porn (YBOP)

Those unaware of these details may initially find them shocking and even implausible. Indeed, until one grasps the full spectrum of evidence for what is happening, Prause's own story of sexist victimization in the face of a rigid status quo is quite poignant and easy to buy. As with legitimate scientific inquiry itself, however, the invitation here is to allow the evidence – and the evidence alone – to lead you to your final conclusions.

Three Overlapping Patterns of Concern.

The evidence for the stated claim falls into three main, overlapping categories – outlined and illustrated below. The first section outlines the most public of Prause's actions and statements in social media and various presentations, followed by a second section exploring a much less public (and largely behind-the-scenes) set of commentary and actions. The third section highlights the aforementioned rhetorical re-frame that Prause consistently deploys in response to people raising concerns about her private and public behavior.

In the first section below, we start with Prause's statements about the scientific research, and then move to her statements on the individuals who hold views different than her own. To be clear, Prause's commentary is not just directed at those raising questions about her. As will be confirmed repeatedly, Dr. Nicole Prause's work over the last four years (between 2013 and 2017, in particular), demonstrates a marked pattern of retaliation against anyone who dares to raise critical questions about internet pornography on scientific or other grounds.

I. Public statements: "De-bunking" an entire scientific literature in one study.³ An early sign of this larger pattern emerged in how Prause first portrayed her own research findings in relation to the rest of a fairly substantial scientific literature on pornography. It was in 2013 that Prause published her first study on pornography users, [hailing it](#) as a "first ever" study of its kind with a ground-breaking study conclusion: namely, [as summarized in her own words](#), "we falsified the porn addiction model."

For anyone making such a challenging claim, the normative scientific process would require certain stringent benchmarks and customary cautions be followed, such as adequately addressing conflicting findings, acknowledging remnant complexity and engaging with dissenting voices at some level.⁴ Not only did Prause *not* do any of these requisite, expected scholarly tasks, she pursued a very different set of strategies, as summarized below:

1. Denying any (real) conflicting evidence. Dr. Prause has repeatedly, publicly and adamantly denied the existence of numerous legitimate, high quality peer-reviewed studies that disagree with her own conclusions. For instance, in response to a question about empirical evidence for negative effects from

and Fight the New Drug (FTND) – many of the examples are drawn from the materials they provided at my request. For a more chronological recounting of some of this material, I recommend [this comprehensive page on Gary Wilson's site](#), which was one of the helpful original sources for my own secondary analysis.

³ This line, once voiced by Gary Wilson, felt like a succinct summary of Prause's public statements regarding her own research relative to the rest of the scientific literature.

⁴ This would seem especially important given that extant findings provide such a robust contrast to her claims. Those colleagues who have reviewed her work have also provided sharply contrasting interpretations of her own findings – such as these five peer-reviewed papers which re-analyze Prause's 2013 study and conclude its findings align with the addiction model after all: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#).

porn, Prause stated recently, "I am a neuroscientist. I've published some of that work – it's definitely false. There's *no data* showing it has a multiplicative negative effect... People are making a lot of negative claims about the negative effects of erotica but when we test that in the lab we find no evidence of that – or evidence in contradiction."⁵

If that were true, of course, and there simply *wasn't any other evidence* with scientific legitimacy, then this kind of a comment would be justified. But as her critics have pointed out again and again, there's an extensive body of research documenting the observed consequences of porn that employs diverse methodologies and asking different, overlapping questions – a literature that, as a whole, starkly and consistently challenges Prause's conclusions.

2. *Pretending consensus*. Alongside denials of *any* legitimate evidence to the contrary, Prause has repeatedly underscored in public appearances that she herself is representing a scientific consensus with little to no dissent. As stated in one interview, "scientists generally have rejected the idea of porn, and largely sex, as addicting, so the scientific community actually has not generated any unusual resistance. In fact, several conference organizers have asked me to participate in debates concerning porn addiction and have been unable to find any scientist willing to take the 'pro' addiction position!"⁶

Despite the existence of a large body of work to the contrary, statements like this one strongly convey to the general public an idea that scientific consensus is incontrovertibly in support of her own conclusion – with no respected scientist opposing her. As a way to underscore this claimed consensus, Prause announced on Twitter in the fall of 2016 (starting weeks prior to its appearance) that a powerful new statement with other neuroscientists would be coming out – e.g., "letter by 9 neuroscientists supposed to print this week re FTND spreading fake 'science' will share link when out." Once published, her tweet read: "Neuroscientists across the world agree sex films positive."



In the statement itself, Prause was joined by 7 academic colleagues making the following claims: (a) sex films have "mostly positive effects" (b) "only a tiny percentage of those who viewed sex films" have any negative effects (c) those who disagreed were "systematically misrepresenting the science" and (d) it would be beneficial to make more available in public schools what they called more of a "balanced view of the currently available scientific evidence, which includes the positive effects of sex films." This kind of "balanced" education would, they argue, "truly serve our children."

⁵This same pattern often shows up in how journalists present her work as well. As relayed by one media outlet, "[Prause's] forthcoming study into 120 men and women... who presented with sex and porn addictions appears to *disprove any addiction theory*" [emphasis my own].

⁶The broader context for her own statement is that academic neuroscientists studying porn's effects (i.e., Drs. Kuhn or Voon) have no interest in debating the pros and cons in media appearances. In addition, Prause has often reportedly set tight boundaries on who she would debate: (1) Not Gary Wilson and (2) she would only debate a "neuroscientist" – refusing to speak with a brain surgeon and author of multiple academic papers like Dr. Donald Hilton, for example..

In a [comprehensive response to Prause and colleagues' statement](#), a number of other academics summarized the preponderance of research flying in the face of what Prause and her collaborators had proclaimed. Those responding went on to raise the following question: "Given how sharply out of line the authors' proposals are with the [preponderance of evidence](#) consistently documenting an array of potential harms associated with pornography consumption, we are compelled to ask... whose interest would be served by passing along these authors' conclusions to our children?"

3. *Claiming overwhelming evidence for positive effects.* As reflected above, Prause has increasingly gone on record insisting not only her success in "falsifying" evidence for negative effects, but also in promoting what she describes as the "overwhelmingly" positive effects of porn. For instance, as [noted in a response to the recent op-ed mentioned above](#), Prause outlines "an expansive list of purported benefits" from pornography ranging from "enhancing sex," to greater "happiness and joy" to improved "comfort with one's own appearance." [Some of her critics note](#) that "on the basis of a single citation," Prause and her co-authors insist that the production of pornography promotes "higher self-esteem" for performers while its consumption "reduc[es] violence and sexual assaults."

In a recent interview, [Prause expanded on this to say](#), "Looking generally at pornography in society, the effects are overwhelmingly positive. That is, the people who do it have more positive mood in general. They tend to be more egalitarian, that is the more porn you view the more egalitarian you are.⁷ They are more likely to donate blood, they are more likely to volunteer in their communities. So overwhelmingly, the effect on society is positive."⁸

Needless to say, these kinds of media statements have been well-received. A Google search for "[Nicole Prause](#)" + [pornography](#) returns about 9,000 pages. She's quoted in hundreds of journalistic articles about porn use and porn addiction – and has been received warmly in numerous appearances on TV, radio, podcasts, and YouTube.

4. *Trivializing and minimizing conflicting evidence.* When she has taken a moment to address some of the conflicting findings, Prause has most often tried to problematize a number of arcane and trivial points about other studies⁹ – this, as further evidence for why her own conclusions deserve a priority status over other research teams. In public messaging, for instance, she regularly insists that all such contradictory research is "fake science" or "not peer-reviewed, and in predatory journals" (without citing any supporting evidence). In doing so, once again, she writes off a remarkably consistent and extensive body of evidence documenting a range of potential harms (including addiction itself) associated with pornography consumption.¹⁰

⁷The single reference Prause often cites in support of greater egalitarianism involves carefully selected parameters that generated a correlation between porn use and the acceptance of abortion and other common feminist stances. What she does *not* point out is the preponderance of [25 additional studies reporting opposing findings](#) – namely, a worsening of attitudes toward women associated with pornography use.

⁸Most often, Prause makes these kinds of claims without providing any citation – perhaps because that would furnish immediate ways to confirm how shaky the empirical foundation for her claims is. For instance, she has never cited any study about donating blood or volunteering that I have observed – and a search finds no such studies.

⁹More than simply minimizing, many of these statements turn out to be patently false. For instance, [she claims](#) (a) "the assessment of possible positive effects was not included in any of the studies cited" (b) "the studies are not rigorous" (b) "sex film users were not sampled in any representative way" (c) "none of these studies provided controls for masturbation" and (d) "most cited studies rely on self-reporting." Each of these statements is a stark misrepresentation of the existing research, as illustrated [in the addendum to this response piece](#).

¹⁰This includes: [38 neuroscience-based studies](#) (MRI, fMRI, EEG, neuropsychological, hormonal) from universities like Cambridge, Yale and Max Planck exploring patterns in the brains of frequent pornography users.¹⁰ Also passed over are:

Instead of engaging seriously and productively with any critique or disagreeing view, Prause has pursued a very different approach.

Pathologizing resistance. Rather than take up actual critiques of her work, Prause has spent a great deal of time characterizing her opponents in ways that actively demean and discredit, as follows:

1. *Claiming (hidden) religious bias.* Whenever speaking about an individual with *any* known faith background, Prause makes sure to underscore this demographic characteristic as highly problematic (and somehow automatically de-legitimizing or disqualifying). For instance, in reference to Clay Olsen with Fight the New Drug (FTND), Prause relentlessly labels this organization's activities (all of them) as fundamentally "Mormon" or "LDS" or "religiously-motivated." Regardless of what FTND leaders have repeatedly described over the years as consistent efforts to position its work firmly in the secular discussion (and a diverse leadership and staff who have been offended by her mischaracterization), she continues to leverage this label as a way to invoke suspicion in readers. For instance, she recently explained resistance to her work as a bare reflection of "religious fanaticism, where several Latter Day Saint organizations have specifically targeted my research."

Given the unique effectiveness of this particular accusation in the public discourse, Prause has not limited it to "known" believers – accusing even avowed atheists, such as Noah Church, of being influenced by "religious" motives.

2. *Claiming anti-porn bias.* Whether or not a scholar has any ultimate philosophical concern with pornography, Prause also uses a label of "anti-porn" to describe anyone raising critical questions about pornography consumption. In a tweet about one recently published study, for instance, Prause claimed that the 9 researchers involved (including top researchers in the addiction neuroscience field) were members of "anti-porn groups." She often accuses the media in general of having an anti-porn bias as well (despite considerable evidence otherwise).¹¹

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- Over 55 studies—a preponderance of the evidence to date—linking pornography use to lower relationship or sexual satisfaction.
 - 24 studies linking porn use/sex addiction to sexual problems and lower arousal to sexual stimuli.
 - At least 21 studies reporting findings consistent with escalation of porn use (tolerance), habituation to porn, and even withdrawal symptoms.
 - Over 45 studies link porn use to poorer mental-emotional health & poorer cognitive outcomes.
 - Over 25 studies link porn use to "un-egalitarian attitudes" toward women
 - A full 13 recent literature reviews that conclude significant risks are involved in pornography consumption

¹¹It's much easier to argue for a general pro-porn media bias, rather than Prause's common contention of an anti-porn bias— "the media loves a good porn panic!!"

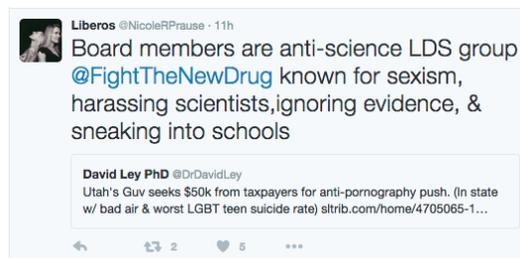
3. *Claiming junk science.* Critics are also regularly accused of “misrepresenting the science,” “ignoring evidence,” conducting “bad science”¹² or “pseudoscience.”¹³ Despite many blatant factual inaccuracies, Prause also regularly insists that all research documenting negative effects of porn is (a) not “balanced” and not even attempting to measure positive effects (demonstrably untrue) and (b) published in pay-to-publish journals (also obviously untrue) – e.g. she states, “Does [the] public know most anti-porn ‘papers’ [are] actually [in] predatory (fake) journals?” Regardless of being outright false, this makes no difference for her wide audience, where these accusations pack a rhetorical punch.

4. *Claiming anti-science bias.* Prause also frequently uses the label of “anti-science”—e.g., the “anti-science climate is real” and insisting organizations are filled with “anti-scientist extremists” (two examples targeting FTND provided).¹⁴

Those voicing opinions she disagrees with are often labeled “non-experts” and “inaccurate scientifically” (see screenshot at the bottom of this section). In one case, she even insisted an emeritus neuroscientist had “no neuroscience training.”

5. *Claiming financial conflict of interest.* As a final way to minimize resistance to her work, Prause often insinuates that unethical financial incentives are what *really* motivate opposing views. For instance, she stated recently, “I think there are many reasons why my research in this area has generated resistance. The most obvious are financial incentives, where some of the resistance comes from therapists who provide services to ‘sex addict’ patients, and bloggers who are selling books or trying to establish their therapy practices.” On another occasion, she called professionals working to treat addictive levels of pornography consumption “profiteering therapists.”

For instance, this recent tweet:



¹² Not only is the study she labeled as “bad science” an excellent study and now formally published in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology* despite all the incomprehensible resistance, its authors received first prize for this very research at the European Society for Sexual Medicine conference in 2016. More to the point, the authors have no affiliation with “anti-porn groups” (which Prause never names) – and, in fact, have extensive histories of scientific and scholarly work. For example, the lead author is Dr. Mateusz Gola, who is visiting scholar at UC San Diego, and has at least 39 publications to his name. Another author is Marc Potenza MD, PhD, of Yale University, who is considered by many to be one of the world’s preeminent addiction researchers. A PubMed search returns over 350 studies by Dr. Potenza.

¹³ One illustrative tweet about FTND: “Insidious Pseudoscience That Preys On Youth.”

¹⁴ These kinds of comments painting *others* as attacking science feel especially ironic to critics who have watched Prause continue to ignore or trivialize the vast preponderance of scientific research which contradicts many of her conclusions.



Replying to @Jfreegman @DrDavidLey and 2 others

"Those" is same as "all". Asked and answered.

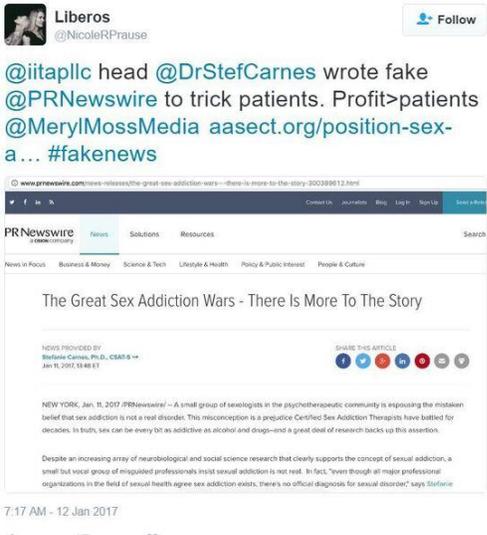
12:46 PM - 14 Sep 2017

By contrast, Prause never speaks of how much she gets paid for speaking engagements nor how much she and her colleagues charge in their own practices. Nor is any serious mention made of what motivates her own relentless public persuasion campaign or the vast industry profits that are at stake in what the public comes to believe about pornography's effects.¹⁵ Her focus instead remains on others' presumed misdeeds and corrupting financial incentive. She has also accused Gary Wilson of the same incentive, despite the fact that Wilson has been scrupulous about ensuring no financial conflicts of interest.¹⁶

And on her own twitter, Prause has insisted that Dr. Stefanie Carnes who directs IITAP had made up things and "wrote fake newswire to trick patients" due to the same corrupting motivation: "Profit>patients."

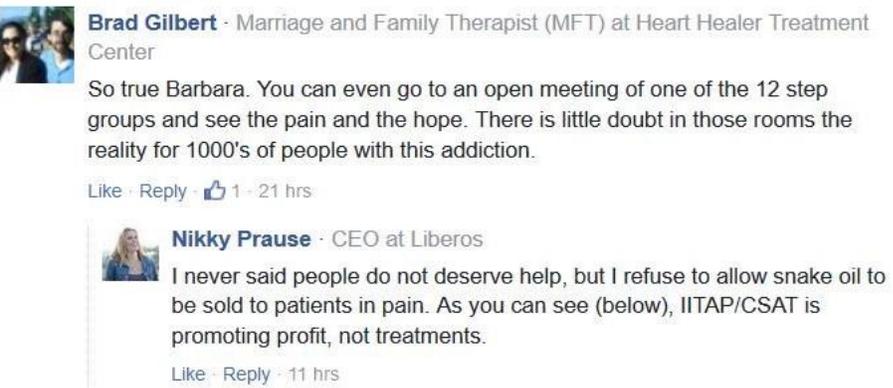
¹⁵ When possible industry involvement does come up, Prause has increasingly insisted that there's simply not as much money in the industry as people think. For instance, referring to the idea that the porn industry makes a lot of money, she recently stated, "this is a strange myth that is being perpetuated to fan porn panic despite all business indicators to the contrary (e.g., scene performer pay, producer pay, film budgets, etc.)...It is rarely lucrative to go in to porn these days." Never mentioned are the ad revenues that go to MindGeek and other porn giants who make money every time someone – of any age – clicks on "free" porn sites.

¹⁶ In Wilson's words: "We make no money on this. My website has no advertising and we accept no donations. We have no services to sell." After publishing his book, Wilson irrevocably donated all proceeds to a charity. When Prause discovered that he was donating to a charity, she reached out to this charity in 2015, harassing its officers and peppering the Scottish Charity Register with false allegations about Wilson.



The same day, Prause again claimed that Carnes, a respected and well-loved leader, had “lied in release” – as a reflection, once again, of “profiteering tactics deceiving patients.”

And in another response to a commentator sympathetic to the plight of those facing addiction, Dr. Prause insisted that organizations supporting addiction therapy were, in actuality, recklessly marketing “snake oil” and “promoting profit, not treatments”:



Prause increasingly strings together a number of these categories of accusations described above to target someone – such as calling Noah Church a “non-expert, religious profiteer” (combining three of her most common accusations in one), see below:



And in another case, she calls NoFap “an untested anti-porn profiteer” (tacking together, again, three different accusations):



When not trivializing, attacking or pathologizing disagreement, Prause more often than not simply ignores it. Indeed, I have yet to find in any of her public statements any acknowledgement or mention of the 12 peer-reviewed critiques of her own studies.¹⁷

So far, we have reviewed patterns of public rhetoric about (a) research and scholarly activity and (b) individual scholars and organizations holding views different than her own. In the next section, we turn to less public actions that have been reported by those who have interacted with Prause over the last decade.

II. Private actions: “She was going out of the way to make me nervous.” Apart from public attempts to discredit different perspectives, there are many other ways in the history of propagandists, that pressure can be applied behind the scenes in attempts to influence public discourse. In this context, it’s important to point out that *virtually all of the tactics pioneered by the tobacco industry* in the last half century to dismiss growing, justified public concern about cigarettes are evident in Prause's own actions – as demonstrated below (and above).

In preliminary summary, the overall pattern in the examples that follow involves (a) finessing some kind of situation that may be interpreted by public observers as evidence of wrong-doing (b) sending private correspondence to associated individuals with accusations of criminal, legal or ethical violations and (c) making a point to widely recount these personal accusations of supposed law-breaking and criminal activity in subsequent public interviews, blogs and tweets, as well as in private correspondence with media professionals and other thought leaders. Targets of these kinds of first-private-then-widely-public accusations have included medical doctors, researchers, journalists, therapists and non-profit leaders. Although such activities are, by their very nature, difficult to document, here are five substantiated examples:

1. Accusations of (unlawful/illegitimate) public or scientific disagreement. After Gary Wilson published a *Psychology Today* blog post responding to an article about Prause’s unpublished 2013 EEG study, Prause contacted

¹⁷Steele et al., 2013—[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#); Prause et al., 2015—[6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#); Prause & Pfaus, 2015 —[12](#) (Credit to Your Brain on Porn for compiling these)

Wilson and *Psychology Today* editors claiming that it was “illegal for [Wilson] to misrepresent our science” without first requesting a copy of the study. Although Wilson pointed out that he *had* requested such a copy (without response), Prause continued, “I am pursuing this with *Psychology Today* now, but I would advise you to remove the post yourself before I am forced to pursue further action.” The same day, she sent e-mails to the board and other editors associated with *PT* stating that “knowingly misrepresenting a person to denigrate them is illegal.”

Thus, began an interaction between Prause and Wilson that embodies many of the overall concerns outlined here. It was two years later that Wilson received a ‘cease and desist’ letter from a lawyer representing Prause. In it, Prause accuses Wilson of making four misleading statements about her, including purportedly saying that “Prause starred in porn films.” Wilson received no response when he asked for proof of these claims. Similar kinds of “cease and desist” letters threatening lawsuits have been sent to a number of others who have critiqued Prause's work – each involving comparable statements reflecting wildly inaccurate “violations” that never took place.

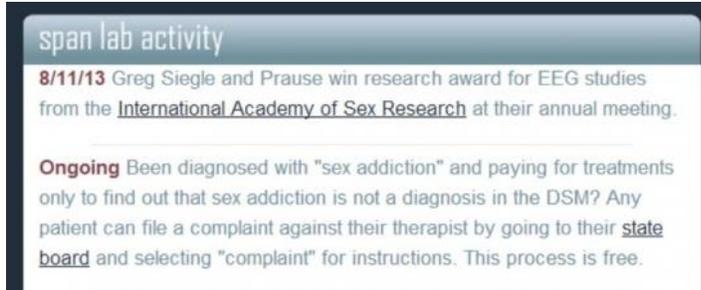
In another way to denigrate disagreement, Prause has repeatedly attempted to force retraction of peer-reviewed research with which she disagrees (despite strong support for the authors’ conclusions in the literature). [In one paper](#), for instance, she reported 7 authors (many of whom were health professionals) to their medical boards, as well as reporting the article to the journal and its parent company, MDPI, threatening them with adverse press should they fail to comply with her demands. (Prause followed through with her threat, reporting MDPI to a regulatory board and [tweeting accusations](#) the company supported “fake journals”).¹⁸ As reflected in other examples below, these kinds of spurious complaints to regulatory boards are another common pattern in Prause’s work over recent years.

2. *Accusations of (criminal) harassment.* Prior to sending Wilson this spurious cease and desist letter in 2015, Prause [sent an additional threat](#) to Wilson and his partner: “This is to notify both you and your wife that your (both you and your wife's) contact is unwanted. Per stalking statutes in your home state [she provides a link], any additional harassing contact will be interpreted as actionable harassment.” (In my interview with Gary Wilson & Marnia Robinson, they told me that they never initiated any contact with Prause).

Prause has also claimed she has a restraining order against Wilson, which is demonstrably untrue. Despite this, ever since that first interaction with Gary Wilson in 2013 (described above), [Prause has widely and repeatedly claimed](#) a “police report has been filed against Wilson.” The Wilsons confirm that they have never been contacted by the police nor have “calls to the Los Angeles police department and the UCLA campus police revealed [any] such report in their systems.” Despite this, Prause has repeated her claim about a police report in public interviews dozens of times (more details about Prause’s unsubstantiated assertions about being subject to harassment are provided in section III).

¹⁸ This tweet claims that MDPI is on a list of predatory journals (it’s clearly not). Her link also goes to an article that say nothing about MDPI.

3. *Accusations against those offering professional services self-identified porn addicts.* Prause makes it no secret that she vehemently opposes the concepts of sex and porn addiction – regularly attacking-via-tweet any therapist or organization that employs the phrase porn or sex addiction. In the summer 2014, Prause urged any individual being treated by sex addiction therapists to report and “file a complaint” to state boards – placing the following notice on her website:



Given that terminology related to sexually compulsive behavior can be used for reimbursable diagnoses in both the DSM and the ICD, this seems both an odd and potentially unethical request. In case anyone missed her message, Prause followed it up with this tweet:



A month later Prause reminds people again to report their local sex addiction therapist. (It's free and easy!)¹⁹



Prause uses this same tactic of “report it to the authorities!” repeatedly – here, for one assessment inventory (for addiction) that she dislikes:

¹⁹ While I alone take full responsibility for this summary, without Your Brain On Porn’s careful documentation efforts this would not have been possible. Thanks, as well, to Fight the New Drug, NoFap, and the International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals for providing crucial source material and examples.



Prause has pursued a similar strategy with other professionals with whom she clashes. For instance, Dr. Rory Reid (who stated in a 2013 article that his office was right next door to Prause's during her brief time at UCLA) has been [attacked several times by Prause](#), including in a "press release" urging readers to report this former colleague to California authorities.²⁰

4. *Educating teens about pornography's effects.* Prause has made frequent accusations ([here](#) and [here](#) and [here through collaborators](#)) that Fight the New Drug is unlawfully offering sex education in schools (but deceitfully not calling it that). In FTND's response, the CEO Clay Olsen [noted that their organization](#), "does not, and has never attempted to provide, substitute or circumvent sex education curricula in schools. Like other guest speakers brought in by schools, FTND presentations are independent of the important work of ongoing health and sexual education classes."

Despite this effort at unambiguous public clarification, Prause has continued tweeting that FTND is an organization "well known for sneaking into schools"—and continued to insinuate law-breaking misdeeds in its efforts to raise awareness among youth about the harms of pornography.²¹

5. *Seeking to provide supportive education to teens trying to break free from pornography.* Leaders of FTND also recounted how in late 2016, Nicole Prause wrote an e-mail to the Utah State Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) accusing their organization's Fortify platform (an online educational curriculum for teens and adults seeking to overcome compulsive pornography use) of "soliciting sexual stories from children" without parental consent and "coercing" children to provide these stories. She [later targeted a researcher](#) with the same accusation: "Jay Stringer & @FightTheNewDrug caught soliciting children's sexual fantasies & behaviors online."

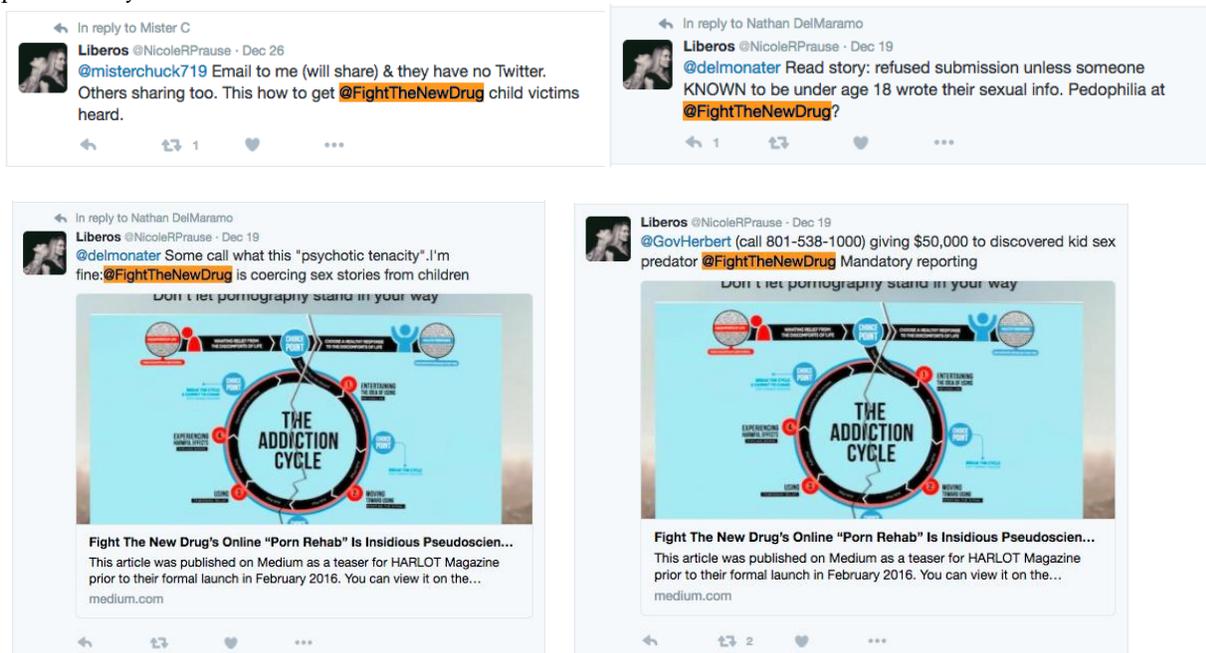
Wow! The rhetorical frame Prause was trying to invoke here clearly insinuates that these respected leaders and professionals are akin to online predators interacting in dangerous, illegal ways with children. As

²⁰ While Dr. Reid is still at UCLA, Prause's contract was not renewed by UCLA.

²¹ Prause seems to tweet more about Fight The New Drug (FTND) than she does about her or others' research. A quick look reveals that Prause tweeted 35 times about FTND in November & December 2016.

outrageous as these accusations are, Prause does not relent. In other tweets, she called FTND a “discovered child sex predator,” exhibiting a “psychotic tendency” and guilty of “pedophilia” with “child victims.”²²

Since I personally found the tenor of these accusations hard to believe, illustrative texts were requested and provided by FTND below.



While underscoring that she was a "licensed psychologist in California (CA #27778)" and a "mandated reporter," the single reference Dr. Prause provided to support her initial claim to DCFS was a hit-piece from an online website called "Harlot Magazine." Olsen reported that their own subsequent phone calls to DCFS revealed that (while they could not officially confirm nor deny whether an investigation was taking place) (1) what they understood from Olsen’s description of Prause's accusation met “none of the criteria for something DCFS investigates” (2) it was not likely necessary for FTND to meet with DCFS since there was "nothing to investigate" and "nothing to explain."

No matter the merits of her case, Prause has continued publicly tweeting dramatic rhetoric about "@FightTheNewDrug child victims" and posted the following request to all her Twitter followers, "if your child completed @FightTheNewDrug Fortify program...Utah DCFS wants to talk to you. This how to get heard."

As if these weighty accusations were not enough, Prause recently tweeted an insistence that, alongside harassment of scientists like herself, the head of FTND Clay Olsen, “lies to children.”



More examples might be given, but for now these five are sufficient to illustrate a pattern of (a) formulating scandalous accusations of misconduct against (otherwise widely respected) people and organizations she disagrees with, followed by (b) leveraging (and misusing) regulatory bodies as very public recipients for her

²² In response to Prause’s careful effort in this instance to present herself here as a concerned psychologist doing her duty, one PhD researcher reviewing this exchange told me, “This isn’t your average psychologist who stumbles upon something and felt an inner moral pang to report something to authorities. This is clearly a propaganda artist.”

groundless claims (“I just made an accusation to DCFS regarding FTND”) and then (c) generating documents subsequently used to stir up suspicion in broader media opportunities. Whether anything is corroborated or substantiated by law enforcement, ethics panels, government agencies, judges or licensing boards, Prause then uses these self-generated documents to create an aura of culpability.²³

In the age of “fake news” this generation of documents is an important point that deserves further examination.

Creating a paper-trail. As reflected in the examples above, while making accusations about cases that appear to have no merit or possibility of action, the materials generated by such claims *are still widely distributed* to contacts in the media, colleagues, and journal editors as “proof” of wrongdoing. Regardless of substantiating evidence, the baseless accusations seem to serve a distinct purpose of generating a paper-trail of official looking documents that Prause publicly and privately cites. Even if the content is blatant fabrication, there is evidence this has been an effective strategy, for instance, in persuading journalists to avoid contacting individuals or groups who have been critical of Prause’s stance. Similar to the way fake news proved an incredibly effective tool in generating attention and influence in the 2016 presidential election, each additional denunciation becomes another piece of evidence in an ongoing, widening public indictment against her critics.

In late 2016, for instance, Prause [placed the following document](#) about a colleague’s meeting with a police detective online.²⁴ As provided here, Prause apparently had co-presenter Susan Stiritz “warn campus police” that Gary Wilson might fly 2000 miles to listen to one of Prause’s presentations. Without any evidence to back up the claim, Stiritz dutifully related Prause’s fabricated accusation to a campus policeman. No matter the reality, the document serves its purpose: depicting Gary Wilson as a dangerous stalker who must be guarded against by conference authorities (see here’s his picture!)

As [summarized in a comment on the Your Brain on Porn website](#) “So this is the ‘proof’ that Gary Wilson is dangerous: a made-up tale by Prause, told to a friend, who relayed it to a campus cop 2000 miles from where Wilson lives via message, which Prause now publicly offers as ‘proof’ of Wilson’s evil actions. What’s missing from all of this . . . is one iota of evidence that hints that Wilson ever indicated that he intended to attend a Prause lecture – or threaten her in any way whatsoever.”

No matter the evidence, proof or documentation, the point once again, is that manufactured documents like this become quite *effective* in painting a particular kind of picture about those raising concerns about



²³ The irony of Dr. Prause accusing FTND of hurting children, while simultaneously calling for teaching children the benefits of pornography is both richly revealing and deeply troubling.

²⁴ This document was placed on Amazon Web Services – linking to that document under a petition addressed to Psychology Today.

pornography (especially to an online audience increasingly disinterested in digging any deeper than the latest eye-popping article to come to their attention).

Anonymous amplification. There are a number of other ways Prause appears to work behind-the-scenes to expand her impact. For instance, there is evidence that Prause sometimes provides copy for other thought leaders to post anonymously.²⁵ And as [documented across several years](#), Prause also uses an assortment of anonymous online identities to make comments and critiques.²⁶ Available evidence connects her to usernames that include: "GaryWilsonStalker" "GaryWilson IsAFraud" "GaryWilsonPervert," "HighHorseNotOn" "FightPower" "RevealingAll" "SexMythBusters" "PenisAddict" which have collectively been responsible for hundreds of online comments in Reddit and other social media forums or blogs. For instance, in the same day as [another major study](#) confirming addiction-related brain changes in non-addicted pornography users, four different aliases linked to Prause posted approximately 100 contentious comments on [YourBrainRebalanced.com](#).²⁷

What do these anonymous commenters like to say? Here are a few illustrative comments:

- "Gary Wilson you are seriously, obsessively mentally ill. You are a fake, a troll, and have no life other than harassing people online."
- "Here's the picture I took inside your bedroom last night: <http://www.pornhelps.com/gary-wilson-naked/>²⁸
- "Gabe Deem is scamming the community. By pretending to have had this problem and blogging like a fool, he gets flown to meetings and shows, where he had zero recognition before this. He will do anything for a little false fame."
- "It's Gabe Deem back again reposting anti-sex rants again. You might remember him from the Reason post where he was shredded for posting this anti-science message with links back to his own website. He has no college degree, no job, and is paid for speaking about his erectile problems he claims (with no doctors' evidence) were 'due' to porn."
- "Gary Wilson is completely unable to control himself. This man is a laughing stock, an idiot, and in dire need of professional help. He is completely unwilling or unable to inhibit his obsessive behaviors....But oh man am I having a party for how unbelievably stupid Gary Wilson is."
- "I am so GLAD he is an idiot! Made this job much easier. Unbelievably stupid!"

As reflected in the sample comments above, Prause has particular venom for those who have, in my own judgment, been most effective in substantively critiquing her own work.

²⁵ For instance, it is clear to all who know Prause's work that [these responses from an "anonymous guest" on Natasha Helfer Parker's blog](#) are coming from Dr. Prause, who subsequently [joined Natasha and others on a podcast](#) challenging the addiction paradigm.

²⁶ Wilson shares extensive corroborating evidence tying Prause to these online identities, including (a) detailed defenses of her studies from these online personas (b) prescient foreknowledge of upcoming chapters and manuscripts authored by Prause that would be difficult for strangers to know (c) identical language made in accusations made by Prause publicly and via what Wilson calls these "sock-puppet" anonymous commentators. As the evidence mounted that Prause was often tweeting with a handle called "@pornhelps," Wilson announced his findings online — and the account was promptly deleted.

²⁷ Some of these responses are [documented on this page](#), with Gary Wilson noting, "I'll ask, who (other than Prause herself) knows details of a complex EEG study enough to attempt defense of it, or want to post 100 times on a porn recovery forum to defend it?"

²⁸ This link is dead since, as noted, the elaborate "pornhelps" website (and the accompanying pornhelps Twitter account) were taken down soon after Gary Wilson presented evidence that Prause was behind it.

Seeking out any other way to effectively discredit in the public eye. Throughout her various critiques, Prause seems to experiment, almost like a marketer, with different "tacks" to make those who disagree with her look bad. For instance, with the progress of the gay rights movement, she decided to [accuse sex addiction therapists of reparative therapy](#): "Another CSAT therapist using 'sex addiction' as a justification for reparative therapy."

Not only was this not true, the specific man she targeted is openly gay and affirmative of clients, [as documented in his response](#) to this accusation. Regardless, Prause has continued to leverage this accusation regularly against sex addiction therapists:



The fact is that IITAP has a strict ethics policy against reparative therapy and to date have not had a single occurrence of reparative therapy reported that was conducted by a CSAT, seems to matter little here.²⁹

In a similar way, the day after Donald Trump's election, she tweeted "the world reacts in shock at hate against women, ethnicity, non-Christians in America," adding "[that] I experienced @FighttheNew Drug."

Any rhetoric that may invoke suspicion seems to be tried out – even (incredibly) tweeting recently about "more KKK and anti-porn alliances."



Racism? Women hatred? Religious zealotry?



²⁹ According to Stefanie Carnes, all CSATS sign forms agreeing to that when they begin training. She has employed this same



strategy to attack NoFap efforts as presumably driving one gay teen to suicidal ideation:

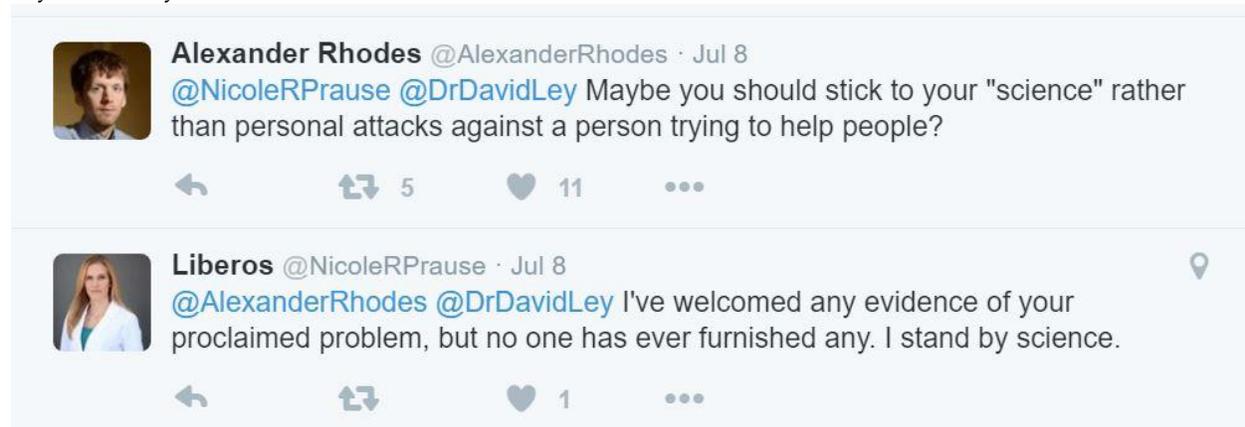
Homophobia? Child sexual abuse? Lying to children?

All are fair game. And all are attributed to those who disagree with Dr. Nicole Prause and her conclusions about pornography.

Show me the evidence. None of the above is an exaggeration, as illustrated by the references above. And yet, what's really happening continues to get overlooked, in part due to Prause's credentials as a scientist and the rhetoric about all-the-research-on-my-side she continues to employ, contrary to the clear preponderance of the evidence.

When porn recoverer [Alexander Rhodes's story was published](#) in the *NY Times*, Prause joined David Ley to [attack Rhodes on Twitter](#). Rhodes eventually responded with this tweet: "Maybe you should stick to your 'science' rather than personal attacks against a person trying to help people?"

Prause responded: "I've welcomed any evidence of your proclaimed problem, but *no one has ever* furnished any. I stand by science."³⁰



She [recently accused](#) the IITAP organization of "Fraud discovered" – claiming they were "unable to produce data for [their] Sexual Dependency Inventory" and would likely "face ethics charge" (emphasis my own).

This is another example of passing along damaging (and consistently baseless) public accusations as a way to pressure or harm the reputation of targeted organizations – with a continued (unbelievable) insistence on the *absence* of any evidence contrary to her own conclusions.



³⁰Emphasis my own. As mentioned in the earlier section, Prause is remarkably ignoring a large body of evidence not convenient to her view, using her scientific authority to assert that, in fact, *no* evidence exists.

Beyond simply challenging organizations, however, Prause has also actively and personally confronted individuals trying to quit pornography.

Individual attacks. In various ways, Prause and colleague David Ley have shown themselves quite willing to berate and embarrass young men trying to quit porn, regardless of the fact that attacking those trying to recover is a stark violation of APA (American Psychological Association) principles for psychologists. One observer summarizes: "Prause come[s] off as blithely dismissive of the very real, painful experiences of those struggling with the sort of problem porn use documented [on recovery discussion boards]." As a powerful illustration of the personal impact of Prause's minimizing rhetoric, this individual continues:

People struggling with porn live in a waking nightmare of behavior that they return to over and over, despite the negative consequences and repeated, failed attempts to stop. For many, porn use has escalated over time to the point where they crave porn at all hours of the day, have an unceasing, overwhelming obsession with finding a "perfect," but ever-elusive, picture or video, "lose time" over the course of night-long binge sessions, and experience physical and psychological torment when they try to stop....And when those poor souls read articles in trashy magazines quoting Prause and Ley in support of the claim that their suffering isn't "real," or that they're just repressed because of their (often non-existent) religious beliefs, or that viewing porn has actually been *good* for them...well, not only does that seem maddeningly obtuse, it also just plain hurts.

Others without her same status and power have become specific targets as well. One observer noted in an evaluation of Prause's tweets that she also "exhibited a regrettable tendency to mock non-academics who offer opinions about the use and abuse of pornography." Prause has also been quick to encourage organizations to fire certain people-e.g., "consider letting this freelancer go."³¹

In October of 2015, Prause's original Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/NicolePrause>) was permanently suspended for harassment after she violated Twitter's rules on more than one occasion by posting the personal information of one of the authors of this paper "Neuroscience of Internet Pornography Addiction: A Review and Update" (2015), which included another critique of Prause's EEG studies on porn users.

Persona of a disinterested scientist. In sharp contrast with the 18 pages of examples above, Prause continues to portray herself fundamentally disinterested and only getting involved publicly to defend her own research, as stated in one interview, as a way to fight misrepresentation: "In my case, I did almost no social media until I started publishing in sex addiction. I realized that, if I didn't take the interviews, do press releases, and make the television appearances, Dr. Random a 'sex therapist from New York' would accept them and misrepresent my research. The benefits are certainly helping to make sure your work is accurately portrayed, but you may be personally attacked. A media office can help greatly with accurate dissemination and police can help with online threats. I needed both." In the same interview, she said of her critics: "I ignore them and just let the professionals handle them."

The reality, as documented above, is that Prause has consistently and aggressively gone after those who publicly disagree with her, including via hundreds of social media tweets about Your Brain on Porn, Fight the New Drug, NoFap, IITAP, and others.

³¹ This "freelancer" was an MD, CDC expert in communicable disease who wrote an article in support of Prop 60 (condoms in porn). Prause, who has no background in communicable disease, launched incendiary attacks on this woman – all of which reflects, once more, her unwavering support for the porn industry.

Were these broader activities more publicly known, of course, they would deeply transgress her public image as an objective, trustworthy scientist. Indeed, despite her occasional admission as a self-described “debunker of porn addiction,” Prause has sought to carefully cultivate a public portrayal as an objective scientist just happening to stumble upon a truth that is deeply upsetting to people.³²

With the growing evidence for Prause's covert actions becoming more and more evident, however, Prause has increasingly turned to a third rhetorical strategy to distract attention from her own actions.

III. Accusing those who respond to her as attackers. In the face of mounting accusations that she herself has attempted to intimidate and silence her critics, Prause has followed the same tactic of Donald Trump in facing his sexual assault accusers: *accuse them of attacking you!*³³

And, indeed, Prause often seeks to convince people that “I am regularly threatened for my science.” Targeting the very people she herself has harassed and bullied, Prause has continued to repeatedly bring her own spurious charges of some kind of harassment, including that: (a) those raising critiques of her work have stalked her (b) these critics are under a “no contact” order, (c) these people are dangerous and have threatened her personal safety.

³²[Recounting what she concluded](#) from her first study, for instance: “Unfortunately for us, the data indicated it wasn’t consistent with an addiction....So we falsified the porn addiction model. There were some people who were unhappy with our data...to put it mildly.” She goes on to attribute the public backlash to her ground-breaking findings as partly responsible for driving her from UCLA.

³³ In all this, it’s very difficult not to see familiar rhetorical moves Donald Trump made in 2016 (and continues to make). When a [number of women accused Trump](#) of improper sexual conduct, how did he respond? “[I am the victim!](#)” Prause even tends to favor some of the same name calling: especially “faker” and “idiot.”

The most common motivation cited for the claimed harassment is that people are targeting her as a female scientist,³⁴ – labeling people who disagree with her as "sexist" or "openly sexist" or "known for sexism" or "promoting sexism against scientists" or "misogynist" or even being "hate groups" [which epithet, at various times, has been applied to various organizations].

She frequently [self-describes as a](#) "woman being subjected to misogynistic oppression when she tells truth to power" – frequently [tweeting this infographic](#) that she also shares at public lectures. In doing so, she portrays herself as being heartlessly victimized "as a woman scientist" and a trailblazer forging ahead to prove porn's harmlessness despite prejudiced attacks.³⁵ For instance, she recently [claimed she had been](#) criticized only for being "outspoken because, you know, we female scientists should shut-up."

Prause is no doubt well aware at how willing to believe such accusations the general public is today. Such accusations of misogyny have been [combined](#) with aforementioned accusations of poor science, fake data, and other sundry misdeeds she claims from her critics. As the denunciations add up, these screeds against her critics really hold some persuasive power! Indeed, most any of her presentations now include a few minutes where she tacks through a harrowing list of purported attacks in a rhetorical tour-de-force. For instance, [in a recent talk](#), she claims she has been called a "child molester, an anti-Christ" as well as falsely accused of being "funded by pornography organizations" and "faking data."



Anti-porn groups Wilson, Rhodes, and Deem promote stalking & misogyny, qualifying them as hate group splcenter.org

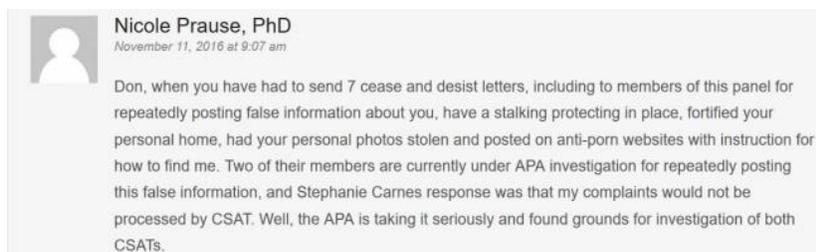
Neuroscience
Anti-porn zealots and neuroscientist Dr. Nicole Prause

WHAT SCIENCE SAYS ABOUT GENDER DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FEMALE NEUROSCIENTISTS

- "Results suggest that for women pursuing STEM, feminine appearance may erroneously signal that they are not well suited for science" Banchevsky et al (2016)
- "Variation in feminine appearance has the potential to negatively impact the current national strategic goal of creating a diverse, welcoming, and egalitarian STEM workforce" Banchevsky et al (2016)
- "Progress for women in the sciences, including neuroscience, is still slowed by personal, institutional, and cultural gender biases" Society for Neuroscience (2016)
- "Only one in five papers published in Nature Neuroscience has a female corresponding author" Nature Neuroscience (2006)

ANTI-PORN ACTIVISTS SEXISM

- "Miss Prause", "nicki [sic]" Gary Wilson, obsessed blogger yourbrainonporn.com
- "His sidekick Prause" Marnia Robinson, blogger pornstudycritiques.com, wife of Gary Wilson
- "Child molester" Donald Hilton, anti-porn LDS author/activist
- "Outspoken, funded by pornography" Senator Todd Weiler, Utah
- "Look at those shoulders" PBS NOVA comment
- "Freak of nature" TEDx comment "Was that thing on stage a transgender?" TEDx comment
- "She looks like a drunk bitch" TEDx comment
- "Blond bimbo dyke" TEDx comment
- "If they're not men's legs I'll eat two cows"



Wow! This woman is clearly facing some truly sinister attackers....

Or something else is going on entirely?

Judge for yourself what is happening. Take as another example the individual (Don Hilton) who Prause plaintively claims "called her a child molester."³⁶ For yet additional evidence of what's really happening,

³⁴On her Twitter: "When people disagree with [men], they tend to attack my ideas. When men disagree with her, they sometimes attack her existence." #feminism

³⁵ From my own assessment of all the evidence, any suggestion that Wilson, Olson, Hilton, Deem or Rhodes are motivated by misogyny is invented by Prause, as their objections have nothing to do with Dr. Prause as a person or as a woman, and only to do with her untrue statements and inadequately supported claims about her research.

³⁶Among other things, the irony of claiming that someone else falsely called her a "child molester" is significant in light of her own false accusations of sexual abusive behavior by an organization trying to educate teens to find freedom from pornography.

read Hilton's account of a single conversation that Prause herself initiated – focused on Alfred Kinsey and documented abuse of children by pedophiles as a part of his research.³⁷

The take-away here is consistent with earlier evidence: Regardless of whether her claims have any basis in reality, Prause finds an effective cultural pressure point and just keeps hitting it. Given the societal sensitivity to any sort of oppression against women, her claims of repeated and incessant harassment give almost immediate pause. Who could *not* seriously wonder about a comment such as this: “Board members are anti-science LDS group @FightTheNewDrug "best known for harassing scientists?”

³⁷ This account offers a particularly vivid reflection of how Prause can twist small aspects of experience to malign someone. Here is Dr. Hilton's account [in his own words](#): "With regard to Prause's claim, the facts are presented here. I did not call her a child molester. About 6 or 7 years ago I spoke in 3 Idaho cities in one day for a group called Citizens for Decency. I spoke on evidence supporting an addictive model related to problematic porn use, which was mainly molecular biology at that point. This model has since been substantiated by structural and functional MRI studies.

At the end of my talk a young woman came up and basically said that she did not think there was any evidence supporting the addiction model. I only learned later that it was Nicole Prause, who was then employed in Idaho. Next, she said she had trained at the Kinsey Institute, implying that she was an expert on sexuality. I asked her if she supported the research and methodology of the namesake of her institution, Alfred Kinsey. I explained to her that Kinsey had collaborated with pedophiles, and trained and instructed them to time with stopwatches how long it took children they molested to reach orgasm. I asked her if she supported Kinsey and his methodology. At that point she became hostile.

Her claim that I said she was a child molester is untrue; I didn't know her, her name, or anything about her other than that she admired Kinsey. My point was that the person she considered her philosophical mentor had knowingly collaborated with child molesters. This is perfectly true. Attached is attached a copy of Table 34 from the Kinsey book on male sexuality published in 1948 [reproduced below]. The youngest child is 5 months old, and is described as having 3 orgasms. Note that most sessions are timed.

AGE	NO. OF ORGASMS	TIME INVOLVED	AGE	NO. OF ORGASMS	TIME INVOLVED
5 mon.	3	?	11 yr.	11	1 hr.
11 mon.	10	1 hr.	11 yr.	19	1 hr.
11 mon.	14	38 min.	12 yr.	7	3 hr.
2 yr.	{ 7	9 min.	12 yr.	{ 3	3 min.
	{ 11	65 min.		{ 9	2 hr.
2½ yr.	4	2 min.	12 yr.	12	2 hr.
4 yr.	6	5 min.	12 yr.	15	1 hr.
4 yr.	17	10 hr.	13 yr.	7	24 min.
4 yr.	26	24 hr.	13 yr.	8	2½ hr.
7 yr.	7	3 hr.	13 yr.	9	8 hr.
8 yr.	8	2 hr.		{ 3	70 sec.
9 yr.	7	68 min.	13 yr.	{ 11	8 hr.
10 yr.	9	52 min.		{ 26	24 hr.
10 yr.	14	24 hr.	14 yr.	11	4 hr.

Table 34. Examples of multiple orgasm in pre-adolescent males
Some instances of higher frequencies.

Incidentally, Paul Gebhard (coauthor of Kinsey's female sexuality book published a few years after the male book), was interviewed by J. Gordon Muir years later. This is an excerpt from the interview: *Muir*: “So, do pedophiles normally go around with stopwatches?” *Gebhard*: “Ah, they do if we tell them we're interested in it!” Kinsey, Pomeroy (an early president of AASECT), Gebhard, and others worked with 2 child molesters, Rex King and a Nazi named Fritz Ballusek. Ballusek's trial is well documented, but King was never caught. An example of the collaboration is from a letter on Nov 24, 1944 from Kinsey to King: “I rejoice at everything you send, for I am then assured that that much more of your material is saved for scientific publication.” Kinsey also warned his pedophiles to be careful not to be caught. For documentation, see *Kinsey: Crimes and Consequences*, whose author confirmed to me that she has the original tapes of the phone interview in her archives.

Although I did not call Nicole Prause a child molester, I did ask her then, and I ask her now, if she condones or refutes the collaboration of Kinsey, his coauthors, and the Kinsey Institute with child molesters. I am still waiting for her answer.”

You might think that such serious accusations would be used sparingly – or only directed to particular organizations, or at specific times. Yet these sorts of wild accusations number in the hundreds, with even entire professional organizations with hundreds of people targeted. [In late 2016](#), Prause claimed that *all* members of IITAP and SASH were "openly sexist" and "assaultive to scientists."

What evidence did Prause provide to incriminate *all* the members in these two very large and diverse organizations, accusing them *all* of "sexism and assaults on scientists?"

Remarkably enough, it was documents generated by her spurious accusations against Gary Wilson. *Those* documents are offered as proof against IITAP.

Following the logic here? Me neither.³⁸

The making of a martyr.

Despite the lack of evidence or substantiation, some [listeners and followers](#) have been all too ready to lament her professed mistreatment: As one person said, "I was very surprised and saddened to learn that scientists can be a target of personal attacks for their work in sex-research in this day and age, that go beyond online harassment/trolling."

Colleagues have also quickly lauded her as a courageous voice against hostile forces: "Dr. Prause is a thoughtful, careful and passionate scientist and researcher. The attacks on her credibility, fostered by those who have made 'porn addiction' their identity, are sad and disheartening." Others have [portrayed her as a kind of martyr](#) for the "threats and harassment she has endured as a sex scientist." So argues supporter Dr. Justin Lehmilller: "Sex research is a tough business to be in. This field has more than its fair share of critics, some of whom have gone to great lengths to intimidate sex scientists with the goal of shutting down their labs or scaring them away from studying certain topics! *If there's one person who understands this better than anyone else*, it's sexual psychophysicologist Dr. Nicole Prause" [emphasis mine].

As reflected here, Prause has convinced others that she represents exactly the opposite of what her behavior reflects. Where she attacks others relentlessly, intensely and deceptively, she insists that *she* is the one being attacked.



Nikky Prause · CEO at Liberos

I am a licensed psychologist now and I did see some of the patients, as have my colleagues, whose lives were shattered by your treatments, not "porn". Anecdotes are never valuable beyond science. Your board members and practitioners are openly sexist and assaultive to scientists, so the issues are in IITAP/CSAT, not Psychology Today, including:

SEXISM

<https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/.../SexismInNeuroscien...>

STEALING AND REPEATEDLY POSTING STOLEN PERSONAL PHOTOGRAPHS TO ENCOURAGE STALKING

<https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/.../Wilson...>

PHYSICAL THREATS REQUIRING PROTECTION AT PUBLIC TALKS

<https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/.../AASECT...>

FAKE FUNDING CLAIMS

You were told by your "trainers" that I received porn funding. I have never received such funding, and they knew it:

<https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/.../Cease...>

<https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/.../PressRelease...>

IITAP/CSAT has been lying to you about this for years. It's time you asked them why they encourage sexism, stalking, and physically threatening scientists for profit.

Like · Reply · 11 hrs · Edited

³⁸ Even if any of this were true (all available evidence suggests none of it is true), since Wilson is not a member of either organization, it's curious how this justifies her defamation of over a thousand therapists, PhDs, medical doctors and psychologists belonging to these two organizations. Once again, there are inflammatory, defamatory (and yet potentially damaging) claims without a shred of evidence.

Furthermore, while she ignores (or actively attacks) any researcher or data that does not support her convictions, she insists on twitter, “Listen to data, we must.” And while she actively promotes the idea that she represents an unquestioned consensus (while viciously fighting any disagreement), she laments on Twitter the “manufacturing perception of agreement to suppress dissent” that some claim to be happening with the new presidential administration.

Tales of a persecuted, beleaguered field. As reflected here, the entire field of sex science is portrayed as a brutal place of inherent backlash and discrimination.³⁹ Thus it is automatically believable to her broad audience to hear Prause decry an “active effort to shut down labs that study this kind of thing” and claim in a PBS video series that “Our lab is periodically shut down when we try and ask questions that *someone didn't want us to ask. It's a problem—you will have to fight for the right to be able to study.*” She also bemoans a supposedly “complete lack of funding” and recounts UCLA turning down grant money earmarked for her as a great travesty and injustice.⁴⁰

Over and over, Prause paints a picture of her own bravery in the face of a witheringly hostile atmosphere. At the end of one talk, Prause stated “now as you've heard me mention several times in here, this is a *troubled field*. We get in all kinds of squabbles and we have challenges getting our work done in the United States especially.” She stated in another interview, “The sex research field is still facing too much discrimination to enter it as a new faculty member in the USA....Alternatively, consider a move to Canada or Europe.” She also stated “it was quickly apparent how strongly that area of science is discriminated against in the USA. I was inspired not only by the big-science questions that were still open in the field of sexuality – but also the incredible suppression of sexual information in this country.”

Coming from an articulate researcher with published studies and letters after her name, most people have little reason (or time) to question any of this, despite the absence of hard evidence Prause supplies in support of her statements. And so, she presses on. In another talk, after recounting a harrowing series of threats, including “congressional defunding of federal grants, bomb threats” and “sexist attacks on female scientists,” Prause again insisted that there are a “*whole lot of people* out there that don't want us to know the answer to this and other sexuality questions.”⁴¹ Elsewhere, she has continue to pain a convincing portrayal of a persecuted field under fire: “The USA is behind other countries in this area – but sexual psychophysiology continues to persevere and try to answer this and other questions. We ask *anyway*.” Then at the end of her presentation, she repeated, “There are some people who would like us not to ask these questions. But we're going to ask anyway!”⁴²

No doubt, this own paper will be cast as yet-additional evidence of the crushing opposition Dr. Prause faces today. And no doubt, many people will believe her.

³⁹ The truth is that little opposition exists to Prause's work in sexology journals or conferences, which are aligned with her agenda philosophically (Archives of Sexual Behavior was funded by Hugh Hefner).

⁴⁰Details of what actually happened with the grants, tension with colleagues and UCLA not renewing her contract remains unknown.

⁴¹Evidence for these serious accusations might be expected to show up in her presentations or papers. However, in all presentations reviewed *no concrete evidence* is ever provided outside of the paper trail she's managed to self-generate. To repeat: I have found in Prause's body of writing and speaking no evidence of sexism, police reports, bomb threats, lab being shut down, “no contact” orders, stalking, bullying, etc. None!

⁴² In contrast to this portrayal, many have concluded that the exact opposite is happening. Namely, the United States has fallen way behind other countries in the study of porn. It appears that very-loud sexologist allies of Prause have, to a great degree, prevailed in setting the terms of the conversation and may even be acting as international gatekeepers for porn research worldwide.

As reflected above, Prause casts herself convincingly as some kind of sexuality liberator, even choosing a name for her laboratory, Liberos, invoking a motif and archetype of a courageous freedom-fighter for “eros.”⁴³

In light of the evidence compiled above, however, I cannot resist asking *whose* field is under fire? *Which* researchers are really being assailed and persecuted? And *who* really are the ones needing to fight for their right to ask questions?

Black is white + white is black? No matter how many times Prause says it, slander is not the truth. And no matter how often she may insist, a perpetrator is *not* a victim. That’s what she continues to do, however, telling one national journalist recently that the "porn addiction community" had "targeted and bullied her, trying to discredit her work."

To reiterate, these claims are rendered especially (almost automatically) believable in a cultural context primed and vigilant about sexism. It’s remarkable to see how quickly and loyalist progressive publications like the *Huffington Post*, *Daily Kos*, *Daily Beast* and *Salt Lake Tribune* have passed along Prause's “ground-breaking” conclusions to their eager readerships.

Within such a climate *primed* to condemn any vestige of oppression, it becomes quite easy to brand therapists as “harmful,” researchers as “anti-porn” and educators as “anti-science.”

Just say it!

How about accusing entire organizations as being sexist and involved in "child sexual abuse"?

Surely many will re-tweet it!

And how about dismissing an entire body of pertinent, opposing scientific evidence?

Let’s publish that on our front page!

Maybe it’s time, in our era of “fake news,” to begin thinking a little more critically about sources that confirm our biases.

Dr. Prause’s behavior has reached such a fever pitch that there is ongoing debate among those who know her about whether she has a mental disorder *or* is paid by the industry.⁴⁴ Those are the only two ways some of us have found to explain her incessant, unsubstantiated, night-and-day campaign.

⁴³This, of course, has a much better ring to it than “propagandist for the pornography industry”!

⁴⁴ If this were true, of course, it would be very difficult to confirm. There are at least five lines of evidence that point towards some kind of industry connection:

(1) A well-documented friendly relationships with porn stars (see this [photo of her and porn stars on the red carpet of the Adult Video awards](#)). Rather than hiding this association, she publicly showcases some kind of a connection via this photo:

Despite her protestations,⁴⁵ most who are aware of her behavior believe the latter. Indeed, her behavior mimics with remarkable precision a whole set of tactics that researchers supported by the tobacco industry pioneered over the last half century.⁴⁶



(2) Private behind-the-scenes actions that have clear relevance for industry interests (see Section II above for examples).

(3) Public statements about the science that are clearly helpful to industry interests (and indeed, almost perfectly mirror similar statements from researchers associated with the tobacco industry). (See Section I above for examples). It's hard to imagine what else would lead someone to insist there is *no* evidence to dispute claims remarkably out of line with the rest of the relevant scientific research.

(4) Notably, strident advocacy against for Proposition 60 —#NoProp60. This measure, which would have mandated condoms and appropriate medical care for adult performers, appeared to many observers to be a no-brainer public health measure to protect workers. By contrast, Prause was among those leading the charge to characterize it as an “egregious” misuse of funds that *really aimed* to “attack [the] adult industry.” As with her scientific opponents, complex disagreements about the measure were boiled down by Prause as her opponents simply being “outside all facts.” She tried to point out scientific errors such as “not a randomized sample of performers” and claimed that “independent scientists” were all opposed (and that everyone supportive of Proposition 60 reflected “clear bias”). She also called out commentary from non-academics by deriding their lack of familiarity with science — aka: “citation?”/“also not any science in the video. I repeat: ANY citation?” In the absence of that, Prause accused people of being merely agenda driven: “another propaganda repeat?” Lest people were not clear enough on her passion about Proposition 60, she couldn’t help tweet a picture of her filling out the bubble sheet in the voting booth!

(5) As a final point, since departing UCLA, Prause has launched her own lab in an expensive district of LA with plenty of expensive equipment. She explains this has been possible with the help from “grants,” but the sources of these grants have never been publicly revealed (as it would be remarkably easy to do if the sources were not suspect).

⁴⁵Prause turns around those accusations as laughable (and insists the *real* thing happening is that people cannot challenge her impeccable science). One illustrative statement: “A number of harassers of mine...often claim I am funded by pornography.... Anyone who knows the adult industry knows how laughable their claims are that I have any funding from 'pornography,' but these harassers perpetuate this myth because they have failed challenging my science. This is just one example of why people want to make it appear that sex films have especially deep pockets, despite no facts supporting their claims.” In this way, Prause makes light of the idea she’s involved in an absurd “mass conspiracy” to promote the pornography industry — all the while making numerous allegations of conspirators targeting her lab, her home, her science, and her career in a malevolent way.

⁴⁶ For instance:

(1) Researchers associated with what was called the “Tobacco Industry Research Committee” steadfastly insisted for nearly 40 years that there was *no proof* of any harm associated with cigarettes: “It is an obligation of the TIRC at this time to remind the public of these essential points: There is no conclusive scientific proof of a link between smoking and cancer.... every scientific means will be used to get all the facts as soon as possible” (see Brandt, 2007, p. 173).

(2) Under pressure to deliver “a definitive statement that cigarettes posed no risk,” researchers associated with the industry created a document called “A Scientific Perspective on the Cigarette Controversy” cataloguing quotations from physicians and scientists casting doubt on the link between smoking and lung cancer. As Brand documents, over 200,000 copies were

If nothing else, the evidence above confirms reasons to be concerned about how Dr. Prause is injecting herself in the scientific discourse around porn's effects. No doubt, armed with [her own three pornography studies](#), her own review of the literature, her "ground-breaking" consensus statement and a cadre of cease-and-desist letters proving the malevolence of her critics, Prause surely will continue her campaign into 2018 and beyond. She will continue [volunteering to testify](#) about porn's benefits and reporting to anyone willing to listen her heart-tugging stories of harassment (while all the while continuing her own incessant campaign of harassment). All this will likely continue until, in her own words, someone **"tells me to stop."**

Stop, Nicole.

As abundantly documented above, what you're doing is unethical and clearly fits the criteria for harassment and defamation, for starters – betraying both research and psychology ethical codes, as well as the norms of healthy scientific and civil exchange.

Imagine the impact you could have for good if you change...*right now*: Stopping the harassment, the intimidation and the public misrepresentation/defamation of individuals, organizations and entire research literatures...and then issuing an apology for these actions.

Imagine the good you could do if you acknowledge your part in misinforming the public, and instead directed your attention moving forward into questions and activities that actually move forward the scientific discussion.

To reinforce a better discussion moving forward, we have shared this document with major media outlets all across the United States and abroad. We have sent this weeks ago to all major sexuality journals in the country and to academics in this field as well.

This is what accountability looks like, Dr. Prause.

We sincerely hope you will reconsider your trajectory. But if not, before you prepare your next cease and desist letter or lawsuit or report to authorities, we leave two additional challenges:

1. Document your claims. If you still, in fact, believe you're suffering awful harassment and discrimination, *show* people documented examples of this abuse supposedly perpetrated against you and

distributed to the medical community and to the general media – with arguments "deployed by industry interests for the next half-century" ([see Brand, 2007, pp. 188, 192](#)).

(3) One oft-repeated claim in that white paper was that "scientific reports of cigarettes' harms promoted public hysteria" ([see Brand, 2007, p. 192](#)).

(4) Researchers associated with the industry also often dismissed any kind of scientific method that appeared to show a connection with cancer, including animal experiments and quantitative studies (which were labeled as "merely statistical") ([see Brand, 2007, p. 139](#)).

These are just four of many similarities between the tobacco industry's research-oriented propaganda effort and Prause's own public statements in recent years that parallel with remarkable precision each other—aka, to paraphrase: (1) *there is no proof porn causes any harm* (2) *here are 7 neuroscientists who agree that porn is beneficial* (3) *those who talk of porn addiction are causing substantial harm and a "moral panic"* (4) *any method that says otherwise is deeply flawed and biased, unlike my own*.

your field. To date, we have only seen snippets of remarks from trolls (who attack us all), alongside your paraphrase of what people have told you.

While all of this makes for a rousing infographic (and tugs on the heartstrings of your frequent audiences), we can't imagine you are not well aware that this *is not enough* to justify the kinds of serious, damaging accusations you continue making. If you intend to ethically make the claims you are making, real, legitimate documentation is not optional.

2. Stop harming the public integrity of science. As documented here, you and your colleagues are doing a great deal to harm scientific integrity – and in an area of huge importance to some of the most vulnerable among us, including youth looking for guidance on these matters. No one (including you) should be punished for raising questions – but as you well know, you have proven to be an especially effective voice in punishing others.

And it's time for someone to call you on it.

That's what we're doing right now, Dr. Prause.

It's time for you to stop.