Pornography addiction and hypersexuality are ill-defined terms and understudied phenomena in the realm of psychology, as evidenced by their absence as disorders in the DSM-V. The stated reason for their omission in the DSM-V is the lack of diagnostic criteria; however, several diagnostic criteria have been proposed by various authors. Studies have been undertaken in order to legitimize hypersexuality as a disorder, many of which have found similar behavioral tendencies to and even comorbidity with recognized addictions. There is also mounting evidence that hypersexuality activates similar reward pathways to other addictive disorders, including gambling and drug addictions. Dopamine and ΔFosB are specific neurochemicals that have been studied in the context of hypersexuality and found to work similarly to recognized addictions. This presentation will focus on the biological basis of hypersexuality, and pharmacological options for treatment will also be discussed. In addition, questions will be presented related to why Pornography Addiction or hypersexuality should be included in subsequent versions of the DSM.

Kaleb Shumway
Epigenetic Interactions with Oxytocin and the OXTR Receptor Genes

Oxytocin is both a neurotransmitter and a neurohormone that affects multiple systems in the body and is produced by cells in the hypothalamus. This polypeptide has been implicated in social behaviors and has been linked to increased positive prosocial interactions in humans (Christ, Carlo, Stotlenberg, 2014). For example, the intranasal administration of oxytocin in adults was found to increase generosity, trust, eye gaze, and the ability to infer the affective mental states of others (Rodrigues, Saslow, Garcia, 2009). Studies suggest that polymorphisms in the OXTR gene contribute to this modulation of social behavior (Kumsta, Heinrichs, 2013). This presentation will discuss how the variations of the oxytocin receptor (OXTR) genes, (such as the single-nucleotide polymorphism rs53576 in particular) have been found to affect the empathetic state of individuals. Discussion will also include how the interactions between our environment and biology can potentially affect the expression of genetic traits by epigenetic factors.