

Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum

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Involuntary Celibates' Experiences of and Grievance over Sexual Exclusion and the Potential Threat of Violence Among Those Active in an Online Incel Forum

Abstract

This article represents the largest ever primary data-based study of involuntary celibates (incels), previously studied nearly exclusively through analysis of online postings. The incel movement has been characterized by some as a radical ideology, with mass murderers such as Elliot Rodger, Alek Minassian, and Chris Harper Mercer being portrayed as prototypical of the movement. However, there is a dearth of research through direct questioning of incels and therefore very little nuanced understanding of the community, its shared grievances, and its opinions regarding violence in its name. The present study of over 250 self-identified incels demonstrates that although the majority of incels are non-violent and do not approve of violence, those who consider themselves to be staunch misogynists are likely to endorse a desire to commit violence and are also likely to become more misogynistic through participation on incel web forums, which validate their views. The study also finds that while many incels report experiencing a variety of psychological symptoms, they are loath to seek help from mental health professionals. This implies that the threat of violence from a subset of incels should not be ignored, but promotion of compassionate and understanding psychological may be more broadly beneficial to the community.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the potential threat of violence, including terrorism and mass murder, that could stem from the community of men who self-identify as involuntary celibates (incels). Incel-related violence represents acts of targeted violence based on anger over perceived and actual experiences of sexual exclusion in a modern world where sex before marriage has become a norm for many. Presently, Western men and women marry at increasingly older ages and tend to be sexually active for years prior to marriage.¹ Incels see themselves as involuntarily celibate because they feel undesirable and excluded from engagement in romantic or sexual liaisons. The incel community operates almost completely online and provides an outlet for members to express anger, frustration and blame toward women and society at large for feeling that they fail to include them in the prospect of sexual contact and partnership.

Alarmingly, over the last six years, some self-identified incels, and others claimed by the incel community as their own, have taken this anger out in acts of violence, including the 2014 killing of six people and injury of 14 in Isla Vista, California, by Elliot Rodger, followed by the 2015 Chris Harper Mercer Portland school shooting killing nine and injuring eight, an attack in which the perpetrator praised Elliot Rodger before carrying out his own. While Rodger did not self-identify as incel, his manifesto detailing his grievances became canon to the online community.² This was followed in 2018 by Alek Minassian, who carried out a deadly van attack killing ten in Toronto before which he proclaimed over Facebook that “the Incel Rebellion has already begun!” while hailing Elliot Rodger as his hero.³ After a 17-year-old self-identified incel fatally stabbed a woman in Toronto in 2020, the Canadian government moved to designate the case as terrorism, and many called for the government to brand the movement itself as a terrorist movement.⁴ While some incels distanced themselves from incel forums as a result of these acts of violence and the Canadian terrorist designation, and other online forums were shut down (though many had been shut down prior to the designation), other forums carry on in which users continue to lionize acts of violence on behalf of and carried out by incels.

All of this begs the question of whether the broader incel subculture actually represents a threat to society, potentially embodying the characteristics of a terrorist movement. To ascertain whether that is or is not the case experts would need to know more about what the incel community's experiences, perceptions, grievances, online expressions in favor of violence and real-life potentialities to enact violence are. Yet, to date there is a dearth of rigorous research and primary data collected from interactions with incels themselves that can help answer these crucial questions. This article begins to fill that void. To do so, the authors issued a comprehensive questionnaire over the largest and most active incel-affiliated communication forum in the world, with over 20,000 registered users and 1,000 regular daily users. In all, 312 answered the questionnaire and 272 of their answers are analyzed herein.

Prior Research

Before 2014, when Elliott Rodger killed six people and injured 14 in Isla Vista, California, there was virtually no scholarly literature studying involuntary celibates – incels. Since Rodger's attack, as well as self-identified incel Alek Minassian's Toronto van attack and incel-inspired Chris Harper Mercer's Portland shooting, research has grown exponentially, examining everything regarding incels, from the online "manosphere" more generally, to textual analysis of language related to sexual violence and misogyny, to the ideology as described in online comment threads, to incels' sociosexual desire, Big Five personality traits, perceptions of women's mating preferences, the public's perception of incels, and incels' sexual frustration and use of pornography.⁵ The quantity of studies on incels is increasing, but their quality and breadth nevertheless remain lacking. Notably, all of the studies which include primary responses from incels to research questions, as opposed to textual analysis and open-source data collection, utilized the same data set of only 28 incels.⁶ The other more widely cited articles do not include any direct experimental interaction with incels.⁷ Ergo, nearly all of the available research to date on incels is based on the researchers' analyses of online comments and posts. This literature is incredibly useful and certainly improves the public's understanding of incels as it looks at their online behaviors and attitudes expressed therein, but it lacks specificity and detail related to the psychology of incels that colors their online posts and

commentary. One can glean the internal mindset of incels only by asking them directly about themselves.

Incels comprise a section of the “manosphere,” a collection of online forums promoting some forms of masculinity, hostility toward women, and strong opposition to feminism. Specifically, Debbie Ging places incels, along with other so-called “beta males,” within the geek and gamer realms of the manosphere, a culture marked by “victimhood and aggrieved entitlement.”⁸ The manosphere has thrived on web forums like 4chan and Reddit, but Reddit banned the primary incel thread in 2017, leading incels to migrate to smaller, more niche forums, such as the one used to distribute the survey used in this study. One 2019 study of posts on a forum called incels.me notes that incels.me created a community for people who feel isolated in the real world due to their inability to make sexual and romantic relationships with women, although the creation of such an in-group also necessitated the creation of a negatively portrayed outgroup of women and of non-incel men.⁹

The high-profile cases of violence committed by incels and the notion that the incel ideology holds that the in-group is vulnerable and threatened by the out-group have led some to conclude that the incel ideology is a form of violent extremism and that incel forums constitute a source of radicalization.¹⁰ However, a competing argument could be made that incel forums allow for free speech and venting of anger over real and perceived grievances, thus allowing a means for avoiding real-life expressions of violence. That said, the 2019 study of posts on the incels.me forum found that much of the language used on incels.me could be classified as misogynistic or homophobic hate speech, which is more likely to fuel and cement grievances rather than presenting a means of calming responses to them. The authors’ profile of the posters also suggested nuances among the forum members who, according to Jaki and colleagues, varied in their risk levels for violence, admitting that violent fantasies may simply constitute “verbal tactics of self-enhancement in an online echo chamber.”¹¹

Of course, a limitation of the aforementioned analyses and assessments is the lack of direct interaction with the incels themselves. The University of Twente in the Netherlands conducted a small online survey of incels ($n = 28$), from which more detailed data could be gleaned. One study using this

data found that incels scored higher on sociosexual (uncommitted sexual relationships) desire than non-incels and lower on sociosexual behavior than non-incels, though the former result was only marginally significant, and both had small effect sizes. The same study also found a significant, moderately strong, negative correlation between degree of incelism (as measured through the survey) and general well-being, emotional well-being, social well-being, and psychological well-being. Degree of incelism also significantly predicted the four types of measured well-being.¹²

Another study using the same data found that incels scored higher than non-incels on neuroticism and lower on extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Incels and non-incels did not score differently on openness to experience.¹³ Yet another study of the same sample found that incels believed that physical attractiveness was important to women in their mating preferences more so than non-incels. Conversely, non-incels believed that interpersonal warmth was important to women in their mating preferences more so than incels did.¹⁴ Another study found that incels scored higher than non-incels on a measure of misogyny, which was also predicted by sexual frustration and by pornography usage. Based on this data, the researchers inferred that sexual frustration may be a mediating factor between incelism and misogyny, but this relationship was not directly investigated in the study.¹⁵

Notably, nearly all of the literature on incels has recognized that incels are a heterogeneous group demographically but has also assumed that there is some link to be investigated between incelism, misogyny, and sexual violence.¹⁶ This is a reasonable assumption, given that incels have been discussed in the mainstream media almost exclusively in the context of violent crime.¹⁷ The assumption is also unsurprising, as most of the data regarding the incel ideology has come from analysis of online content, which can be revealing but is also unreliable, as it may represent exaggeration amidst group polarization, rather than an actual representation of true beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. There is limited research that relies on direct questioning of incels or that compares the two. Therefore, these assumptions linking misogyny and sexual violence to incels may have been drawn from the most extreme and boastful online comments made by incels, rather than from the actual inner workings of incels' minds and life experiences.

The Present Study

The purpose of the present study is to expand upon the existing research on the incel ideology and views of potential psychopathology in order to better understand the potential dangers posed by this community to the public and themselves. Moreover, this study aims to carefully avoid conflating all incels with those few who have engaged in sexual violence and furthermore to identify areas of need for incels who may not be violent at all but may be appropriate for non-judgmental and understanding mental health or psychosocial support to deal with frustration and exclusion and to potentially find ways to overcome obstacles to realizing intimate interpersonal relationships.

Method

This study utilized a Google Forms survey that the research team designed after study of the forum, incelism and in-depth preliminary interaction with some incels and the owner of a large incel forum. The owner of the forum sent the survey to active members of the same large incel forum with an invitation for adult forum members who self-identify as incels to participate. The survey was open from December 7, 2020 to January 2, 2021. Before completing the survey, all participants electronically indicated their informed consent. The informed consent document indicated the purposes of the survey, that Light Upon Light, a division of the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism [ICSVE], was conducting the survey, and that it would be completely anonymous. After completing the survey, participants had the option to enter their email address for the chance to win a monetary prize (there were five prizes: Two of 100 dollars, two of 50 dollars, and one computer game). The researchers removed their email addresses from the exported data before they analyzed any of the data, thus de-identifying the data. Participants were informed that they could choose to skip any question, quit the survey at any time, or not participate at all. They were also warned that some questions were emotionally charged and that they might experience some distress while answering them. They were provided with a link to the Samaritans, an organization with a number of different helplines to provide emotional support if needed. They were also given an email address that they could use to contact the researchers. Participants were required to be at least 18 years of age.

The survey itself included 68 questions in a variety of formats (multiple choice, checklists, short and long answer) covering a wide array of topics, ranging from participants' social lives and personal experiences, their adherence to various facets of the incel ideology, their perspectives regarding incel-related violence, endorsement of those incels who have carried out violent actions and the debate over whether incels should be considered violent extremists, and demographic information. They were also asked about their psychological traits and symptoms, as well as their experiences with mental health professionals. The data was collected using Google Forms, which provides results in Google Sheets or comma-separated values [.csv] format. The .csv data was subsequently imported into IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26, where it was analyzed quantitatively. The researchers used descriptive analyses as well as Spearman's correlations and simple linear regressions to analyze the data, using a p-value of 0.05 to gauge significance.

The researchers are part of a small, independent, non-profit think tank with an internal Institutional Review Board [IRB], modeled after the first author's previous experience with the RAND Corporation's IRB. This process addressed all relevant concerns for conducting research with human subjects. First, the researchers ensured that the informed consent document was clear and detailed the risks and benefits of participating in the study. Risks included temporary emotional distress as a result of being asked about past life experiences and current psychological symptoms. This risk was mitigated by providing information about online mental health resources that the owner of the forum identified as being empathetic toward incels. Participation in the study did not require the participants to provide any personal identifiable information, but the participants did have the option to provide their email address if they wanted the chance to win a monetary prize. As described above, the researchers removed email addresses from the data prior to analysis, thus limiting the risk of a breach of confidentiality. The researchers also protected confidentiality by analyzing the data on a password-protected, personal computer. Direct benefits included the opportunity to win a monetary prize, as previously described. Indirect benefits included the opportunity to educate the public about incels from their own point of view and to provide their thoughts on various incel-related issues to a broader audience. The researchers excluded all respondents under the age

of 18 and followed all relevant national and international laws and standards, as many of the participants did not reside in the United States.

Results

In total, 312 people from the forum responded to the survey. Of those 312, 5.8 percent ($n = 18$) said that they did not identify as incel, and 8.0 percent ($n = 25$) said that they were under 18, even though they agreed to the informed consent procedure which clearly stated that participants needed to be 18 years old in order to complete the survey. All of these aforementioned participants were therefore excluded from the data analysis in order to confidently state that the sample ($n = 272$) is comprised of self-identified incels who are 18 or older.

Of the respondents included in the sample, 271 stated that they were male, and one declined to state their gender. Therefore, the results do not require any disaggregation by gender. The sample was demographically diverse on a variety of fronts. Ethnically, 53.3 percent were White/Caucasian (not Middle Eastern or Hispanic), 9.6 percent were Black or African American, 7.0 percent were Middle Eastern, 7.0 percent were Hispanic, 5.1 percent were Asian (not including Indian), 5.1 percent were Indian, and 12.9 percent were another ethnicity or were not sure of their ethnicity.

The respondents resided all over the world, with the majority living in the developed world, including 32.4 percent residing in Western Europe, 30.9 percent residing in North America, 14.3 percent residing in Eastern Europe, 9.9 percent residing in Asian countries, 7.7 percent residing in Central or South America, 2.2 percent residing in Africa, and 2.2 percent residing in Oceania. They were also religiously diverse: 35.7 percent were atheist; 25.4 percent were agnostic; 19.1 percent were Christian; 5.1 percent were Muslim; 4.0 percent were Hindu, Buddhist, or Taoist; and 1.5 percent were Jewish. Twenty-four participants (8.8 percent) said they were another religion, and one declined to state their religion.

With regard to their sexual orientation, 93.8 percent said they identified as heterosexual and 4.8 percent said they identified as bisexual. One person said they identified as homosexual, and the remaining three participants said they identified as a sexual orientation other than heterosexual,

bisexual, or homosexual. The majority of the participants did not have a college degree, with 29.0 percent having a high school diploma or equivalent and 23.2 percent having completed some college. Beyond that, 7.7 percent had a two-year college or university degree (associate's), 21.0 percent had a college degree (bachelor's), 1.5 percent had completed some graduate school, and 5.9 percent had a graduate degree. Additionally, 11.0 percent said they had not completed high school, and two participants did not state their educational level. This educational distribution is unsurprising, given the age distribution of the sample (mean=24.84, median=23, mode=20).

Socioeconomically, 65.4 percent identified as lower-middle, upper-middle, or middle class. Another 30.1 percent identified as working class, 2.6 percent identified as upper class, and 1.8 percent declined to state their socioeconomic status. These self-identified socioeconomic statuses are consistent with self-reported income levels, when split by whether the participants were still in school or not, as students may have low incomes but identify with the socioeconomic status of their parents.

In terms of income, the sample split into four groups, those who were still students, those who were working students, those who worked and those who were unemployed. Of those who were still students, 62.7 percent said they earned less than ten thousand dollars per year, yet only 27.7 percent said that they considered themselves working class, compared with 65.1 percent who said they were lower-middle, upper-middle, or middle class, and 3.6 percent who said they were upper class. Of those who worked, 31.8 percent said they earned less than ten thousand dollars per year, 28.2 said they earned 10 to 30 thousand dollars per year, 17.6 percent said they earned 30 to 50 thousand per year, and 12.9 percent said they earned 50 to 70 thousand dollars per year. Of the participants who said they worked and were in school, 32.3 percent said they earned less than 10 thousand dollars per year, 22.6 percent said they earned 10 to 30 thousand dollars per year, and 19.4 percent said they earned 30 to 50 thousand dollars per year. Of the participants who said they were not in school and did not work, 69.9 percent said they earned less than 10 thousand dollars per year. Across the whole sample, only 14 participants said they earned 90 thousand dollars or more per year, with four of those earning 90 to 100 thousand dollars per year, six earning 100 to 150 thousand dollars per

year, and four earning more than 150 thousand dollars per year. Sixteen participants did not report their income level.

What Defines an Incel?

Just under 10 percent of respondents said that incels were not exclusively male, while this particular forum allows only men to be members, and 25.0 percent said that incels were not exclusively heterosexual. Furthermore, while incels generally complain of exclusion based on looks, income, lack of social skills, or other perceived deficits from modern day “hook up” culture, serial monogamy involving sexual and romantic relations prior to marriage and marriage itself, 40.4 percent of respondents said that one did not need to still be a virgin, but could identify as incel even if they had previously engaged in intercourse, and 27.6 percent said that one could identify as incel even if they were not physically unattractive. In the same vein, 34.9 percent reported that incels need not be “outcasts of society.” There were also disagreements regarding more specific criteria: 63.2 percent said that incels had to be older than 18. In agreement with popular notions of sexual exclusion, 69.9 percent said incels could not have kissed another person for at least six months, and 77.9 percent said that incels could not have had sexual intercourse for at least six months.

Finally, only 44.1 percent said that incels had to believe in the blackpill, which refers to acceptance of their incelhood as a permanent and hopeless state of being, a negative outcome attributable to the current societal order including the rise of feminism, women’s rights, and women’s abilities to support themselves financially without a man, online dating, and women’s superficiality in choosing a mate based on prestige, earning power and good looks. In this sample, 94.9 percent said they believed in the blackpill and 71.3 percent said that they believed their incelhood, and hence their frustration over being unable to experience sexual or romantic relations, to be permanent.

On a scale of one to ten, only 15.4 percent rated themselves higher than five (mean=3.86, median=4, mode=3). Their romantic experiences were also limited but not non-existent, although 51.5 percent admitted that they had not ever had a sexual or romantic experience. Commonly reported

romantic and sexual experiences included kissing (32.7 percent), paying for sex (19.1 percent), and having unpaid sex (12.9 percent).

The Blackpill and Incel Ideology

Participants were asked to express the extent to which they agreed with statements associated with blackpill-related statements. Responses were gauged on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. All percentages represent the number of participants who rated the statements as 4 or 5. Participants agreed with the following tenets of the black pill:

"Women, in general, can always get sex"	97.1 percent
"Western society is more favorable to women than men"	89.7 percent
"Looks are important in starting a relationship"	92.6 percent
"Equality between men and women has not been good for me"	66.2 percent
"Feminism is responsible for the state of relationships today"	68.0 percent

They also disagreed (rated as 1 or 2) with statements negating the black pill ideology:

"Men, in general, can always get sex"	94.9 percent
"Personality is important in starting a relationship"	57.4 percent

Participants also expressed the extent of their agreement with various statements regarding the blackpill specifically. The participants generally agreed (rated as 4, or 5) that the blackpill is:

"True"	87.5 percent
"Objective"	79.4 percent
"Depressing"	75.0 percent
"Worrying"	70.2 percent

"Liberating"	74.6 percent
"Refreshing"	64.0 percent

They generally disagreed (rated as 1 or 2) that the blackpill is "comforting" (59.9 percent), although some proponents of the blackpill state that there is relief in being set free by the truth.

The survey also explored participants' views of women that are also expressed in the black pill ideology in terms of their feelings of sexual rejection by and potential anger at women. On a Likert scale from 1 to 5, participants agreed (rated as 4 or 5) that women:

"Are self-centered"	77.6 percent
"Are never satisfied"	76.1 percent
"Are always looking for something better to come along"	84.2 percent
"Are not loyal"	69.5 percent
"Are manipulative"	78.3 percent
"Are selfish"	69.9 percent
"Only care about appearances when considering male partners"	71.3 percent
"Like to be dominated"	59.9 percent

They were also asked to what extent they considered themselves to be misanthropist ($\bar{x}=3.50$) and misogynistic ($\bar{x}=3.34$), with 54.0 percent rating themselves as 4 or 5 on the misanthropy scale and 51.1 percent rating themselves as 4 or 5 on the misogyny scale. Participants' scores on these variables were strongly correlated with each other.

Participant Social History and Psychopathology

Only 24.6 percent reported that their experiences in middle school and high school (ages 12 to 17) were positive. Indeed, 28.7 percent said that they did not have friends during that period. Moreover, 80.9 percent described themselves as shy during that time period and 63.6 percent said that they were ostracized in middle and high school. The participants also reported specific school experiences that contributed to a feeling of emasculation. For example, 86.4 percent said that girls rejected them in middle school and high school, and 60.3 percent said that they had trouble

with sports during that time. Only 12.9 percent said that they had never been bullied.

With regard to reporting current psychological symptoms, participants were asked to rate the intensity with which they experienced various symptoms on a scale from one to five as well as to indicate whether they had been diagnosed formally with associated disorders. Most of the participants agreed (rated as 4 or 5) that they experienced:

Depressive symptoms	64.3 percent
Symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder	24.6 percent
Symptoms of posttraumatic stress	27.9 percent
Anxiety symptoms	59.6 percent
Suicidal ideations	47.8 percent

It was unclear if the trauma causing the reported posttraumatic stress predated their incelism or if their PTSD related to their overwhelming sense of sexual rejection and inability to partner with a woman. Additionally, 33.5 percent of participants reported ever engaging in acts of self-harm ever (rated as 2, 3, 4, or 5), and 41.2 percent of participants reported ever experiencing problems with drug and alcohol abuse (rated as 2, 3, 4, or 5).

Quantitative Analysis

While this study provides a great deal of exploratory information regarding the background and makeup of individual incels, popular and academic interest in incels still lies primarily in the question of whether the group poses a significant public security threat. From the respondents' perspective, incel groups are communities, movements, self-help groups, and groups defined by a shared circumstance, but 17 of the survey participants agreed with the statement that incel groups are "groups willing to endorse violence." Nevertheless, it is important to stress that nearly half of the survey participants (46.3 percent) completely disagreed (rated as 1) with the opinion that incels are violent and dangerous, while only eight much or completely agreed (rated as 4 or 5) with that opinion.

Despite the general disagreement with the idea that incels are dangerous, the participants were well aware of the individuals who gave them that reputation. For instance, 53.3 percent said they had read Elliot Rodger's manifesto, and 31 respondents said (rated as 4 or 5) that they admired him for his attack in Isla Vista, which gives lie to some degree, with their also claiming that incels are not potentially violent. Similarly, 28 said that they admired Alek Minassian and 26 said that they admired Chris Harper Mercer.

Participants were also asked about their own thoughts of violence. In response, 26.1 percent of the participants agreed (rated as 4 or 5) with the statement, "I sometimes entertain thoughts of violence toward others." Moreover, 37 respondents, comprising 13.6 percent of the sample, at least somewhat agreed with the statement, "I would rape if I could get away with it." Importantly, the vast majority of the participants (82.0 percent) completely disagreed (rated as 5) with the Canadian decision to designate incels as a terrorist group and most did not see incels as dangerous.

Although the number of individuals who strongly agreed with the statements of admiration or endorsement of violence is small, it was possible to predict such agreement. The extent to which a participant considered themselves a misogynist significantly predicted agreement with the statement "I would rape if I could get away with it," $F(1, 263)=44.328$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.144$.

Self-reported dangerousness also significantly predicted agreement with that statement, $F(1, 263)=54.340$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.168$.

Self-reported misogyny also significantly predicted agreement with the statement "I sometimes entertain thoughts of violence," $F(1, 269)=40.801$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.128$; as well as admiration of Elliot Rodger, $F(1, 268)=58.974$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.177$; Alek Minassian, $F(1, 268)=53.427$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.164$; and Chris Harper Mercer, $F(1, 267)=43.682$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.137$.

This variable also significantly predicted self-reported dangerousness, $F(1, 270)=35.766$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.114$.

All of the aforementioned dependent variables significantly correlated with one another. Participants' self-reported misogyny also significantly correlated with agreement regarding the negative statements about women reported previously, except "Women in general only care about status when considering male partners."

Although participants lauded the attributes of the forum, they also agreed to some extent that their membership in the group had made them more misogynistic, with only 27.2 percent of respondents completely disagreeing with that sentiment. Self-reported misogyny and extent of agreement with the sentiment that the forum increased feelings of misogyny were highly correlated (spearman's $\rho=0.507$, $p<0.001$).

Time spent on the forum daily also significantly positively correlated with self-reported misogyny (spearman's $\rho=0.250$, $p<0.001$), but not with agreement that the forum increases feelings of misogyny. As previously mentioned, the participants also agreed (rated as 4 or 5) that participation on the forum had some positive impacts but also some negative on their lives, namely that it made them:

Feel at home	59.2 percent
Feel less lonely	58.1 percent
Feel a sense of belonging	69.9 percent
Feel understood	74.6 percent
Have freedom of speech	76.5 percent
Learn about the blackpill	71.7 percent
Feel hopeless	54.4 percent

Moreover, self-reported intensity of depressive symptoms significantly correlated with agreement that the forum made them feel depressed (spearman's $\rho=0.342$, $p<0.001$) and that the forum made them feel suicidal (spearman's $\rho=0.310$, $p<0.001$). Parallel to those correlations, the participants' self-reported intensity of suicidal thoughts significantly correlated with agreement that the forum made them feel depressed (spearman's $\rho=0.222$, $p<0.001$) and that the forum made them feel suicidal (spearman's $\rho=0.436$, $p<0.001$). Moreover, the intensity of participants' self-harm significantly correlated with agreement that the forum made them want to harm themselves (spearman's $\rho=0.364$, $p<0.001$). Perhaps most worrying, participants' self-reported

dangerousness significantly correlated with agreement that the forum made them feel violent (spearman's $\rho=0.417$, $p<0.001$). Participants' agreement with the statement "I would rape if I could get away with it" also significantly correlated with agreement that the forum made them feel violent (spearman's $\rho=0.325$, $p<0.001$), as was participants' self-reported misogyny (spearman's $\rho=0.339$, $p<0.001$).

Discussion

The participants in this study did not differ demographically from the broader population. Their educational distribution is similar to that of the United States, where 28.1 percent of adults aged 25 or older have a high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment, and 22.5 percent of adults aged 25 or older have completed a college degree.¹⁸ It is also similar to educational attainment in the European Union, where 34.6 percent of adults aged 25 to 54 have completed any level of tertiary education, compared to 36.8 percent of this sample. While the entered age range was 0 to 69, it is likely that the true age range of the participants was 18 to 52. Given the sexually suggestive connotation of the number 69 among this population and the fact that no ages between 52 and 69 were entered, it is likely that the participant who entered his age as 69 did so in jest and is not actually 69 years old.

From this sample of over 250 self-identified incels, it is clear that although incels may share both common grievance and ideology, their willingness or even desire to act violently as a result of that ideology is far from ubiquitous. The popular definition of incels is broad and generally refers to a frustration about perceiving and experiencing oneself as excluded from popular Western mores in which youth engage in sexual relations, often with multiple partners over time prior to marriage, and see themselves excluded from romantic sexual and marital relationships as well. However, when offered a list of potential requirements of incelism, incels themselves were not in agreement with regard to what constitutes incelism. Despite disagreement over the exact criteria of incelism, however, participants largely fit into the popular definition of being excluded by perception, and in reality, from sexual and/or romantic relations with women, as well as having experiences of childhood bullying and ostracism. They generally rated themselves as unattractive.

Beyond debates regarding the definition of incels, an important question remains over whether incels share an ideology or whether they simply share a common grievance of feeling excluded from romantic relations and sexual contact. The results of this survey support the idea that incelism is associated with a specific ideology. This ideology is encapsulated in the incel notion of the blackpill, which is an expansion of the online far-right community's notion of being "red-pilled," which references the popular movie *The Matrix*, in which taking the red pill awakens the person to the true reality of their situation. The concept of the Red Pill originated on Reddit, as did the incel movement.¹⁹

Furthermore, the results indicate a high incidence of psychological challenges, including depression, anxiety, and symptoms of autism. Despite so many participants reporting psychological symptoms, however, only 51.5 percent said that they had ever tried therapy. Indeed, there is significant discussion among the incel community on the forum that suggests that therapy is unhelpful to incels. This survey underlined that view, as only 15 survey participants said that therapy made them feel better about themselves. Those who had not tried therapy reported that they viewed it as "a scam," "a waste of money," or that it would not help them fix the physical aspects to which they attributed their status as incel. It remains unclear, however, whether the respondents who indicated psychological concerns had experienced symptoms prior to their incelism, or if their onset occurred after their involvement with the community. Clearly, autism-related, or similar behaviors were not caused by being rejected sexually, yet they could be contributing to their incelism. Nevertheless, while many clearly viewed their incelism as causing them distress, few saw psychotherapy or other clinical interventions as a solution, with 92.3 percent agreeing at least somewhat (rated as 3, 4, or 5), with the idea that being in a sexual relationship would improve their quality of life, and many felt their frustrations would be better addressed with solutions that offered them a better means of realizing sexual or romantic ambitions. For instance, 55.5 percent of the participants agreed at least somewhat (rated as 3, 4, or 5) with the idea of getting plastic surgery to change their appearance.

Indeed, it appears that most incels on this forum are depressed, lonely, and non-violent. Likewise, while the forum currently offers them a sense of belonging, understanding, and a place to vent, it also appears to

increase their sense of depression, suicidality and misogyny, the latter of which correlated with endorsements of violent attitudes and behaviors. Clearly, the forum could potentially offer more positive support than pushing the black pill ideology to a group whose grievance appears to make them feel angry, depressed, suicidal, and hopeless. It is also important to stress, however, that it is unknown how these symptoms might manifest absent incel community involvement. While all of these can be highly beneficial for one's mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, these attributes can also have a compounding effect by reinforcing previously held beliefs, such as exacerbating misogyny. Likewise, the forum might also foster a sense of anger related to giving into hopelessness and helplessness about sexual exclusion, rather than seeking positive solutions or alternatives that led to fulfillment in other ways.

Most incels in this survey (71.3 percent) see their situation as permanent, and while the vast majority (97.1 percent) report having some sort of psychological issues and features of autism (44.9 percent), most do not think that psychological support is an answer for them. Instead, an ideology that revolves around interpreting the world through a "lookist" lens stimulates a belief that nothing short of plastic surgery to alter their physical appearance can help.²⁰ This seems to show how deeply incels suffer from their perceived and actual sexual exclusion as well as a denial that some of their psychological issues, such as features of autism, may be standing in their way of making successful sexual and romantic partnerships.

As a result of their feelings of hopelessness, incels turn to online communities such as the forum used in this study in an effort to find community, understanding, and belonging. The respondents generally agreed that participation on the forum was more helpful than harmful, but there remains an admitted concern among them that the sense of understanding and belonging gleaned through participation, particularly in coming to believe in the black pill ideology, serves to compound certain maladaptive characteristics. Thus, even though participants did not, on average, highly agree that the forum made them more depressed, suicidal, or self-harming, those who were already prone to such psychopathology did. In this respect, concern is warranted, as experts have already learned from school shooters and terrorism studies that, while large groups of

individuals may be radicalized into endorsing violent attitudes, only a minute few go on to commit violent acts. However, with the ready availability of guns in the United States and the potential for copycat crimes, there remains significant cause for concern.

The results may also indicate a slightly higher incidence of violent ideation than non-incel men, even if the incels do not intend to act upon those ideas. In comparison to the 20.6 percent of the sample who at least somewhat agreed with the statement, “I would rape if I could get away with it,” a study based on a sample size of 86 college men found that only 13.6 percent said that they would commit rape if they could get away with it, though that study also found that putting rape into relatable terms, rather than using the word rape itself, increased the likelihood of endorsement. Thus, when asked if they would “force a woman to sexual intercourse” without consequences, 31.7 percent of the college men surveyed said that they would. Such a study offers an interesting comparison and suggests that the alarming data included in the incel survey should ideally be juxtaposed against similar data collected from non-incel control groups, and also that it would be useful to phrase the question of rape in relatable terms to incels to see if it enhanced reported levels of endorsement as well.²¹ Moreover, the fact that few participants actually believed incels to be violent and dangerous indicates the group’s apparent belief that incels generally will not act on their violent thoughts despite many harboring such sentiments endorsing misogynist beliefs, expressing hate speech on the forum, and a meaningful portion of them admiring others who have carried out violence against women in the name of incelism.

It appears that incels vary in but are cognizant of their own misogyny, and that the higher level of embraced misogyny, the higher the likelihood of violent ideation. Participants who rated themselves as highly dangerous were also more likely to say that the forum made them feel more violent, and participants who rated themselves as highly misogynistic were more likely to say that the forum made them feel more misogynistic. Additionally, self-reported levels of dangerousness and misogyny were both highly predictive of agreement with the sentiment, “I would rape if I could get away with it.” Nevertheless, the community should not be treated as a monolith. Interventions, policies, and practices that stigmatize an entire community already suffering with social isolation, public

rejection, and sexual exclusion is hardly helpful to prevent the few that may enact violent crimes.

Conclusion

Incels' self-report that the forum offers a useful means of venting anger, creating community, and belonging, and sharing their grievance – a general mistrust of the mental health system and belief that mental health interventions and therapy are not useful – suggests that the forum might be an effective place to consider creative mental health and psychosocial interventions that came across in a positive, humanizing manner to counter hopelessness and despair. All the more important would be to involve incels or former incels in the design and development of such interventions. The survey results make clear that such efforts should target reducing the risks of harm to self and others while promoting an alternative narrative to the black pill, in which 94.9 percent of the survey respondents endorsed believing.

Appendix: Survey Materials

1. About incel-dom:

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
Do you identify as incel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does someone in real life know you are incel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever been persecuted for identifying as incel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you believe women can be incel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think the media has portrayed incels fairly?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you believe in the blackpill?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. In order for someone to claim they are incel, they *must*...

Mark only one oval per row.

	True	False
Be male	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be heterosexual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be virgin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be over a certain age (e.g., over 18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be physically unattractive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have never kissed another person for at least certain time (e.g., 6 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have not had sex in at least some time (e.g., 6 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be an outcast of society; a "sufferer"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Believe in the blackpill	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. To you, incel groups are (select all that apply):

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Movements
- ☐ Communities
- ☐ Groups sharing a life circumstance
- ☐ Self-help groups
- ☐ Groups willing to endorse violence

4. What type of romantic relationships would you like to have? Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Various casual, non-committed partners
- ☐ A short-term, casual dating relationship with one partner
- ☐ A medium-term relationship with one partner
- ☐ A long-term, committed relationship with one partner
- ☐ A medium-term relationship with multiple partners
- ☐ A long-term, committed relationship with multiple partners

5. How much do you think being in a sexual relationship would improve your quality of life?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much

6. From the point of view of another person, would you date yourself?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. Why or why not?

8. What are some positive things that you can contribute to a romantic relationship?

9. What are some things that you love about yourself?

10. Select all factors that you believe are significantly preventing you from finding a partner.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Physical appearance
- ☐ Personality (i.e., incompatibility with possible partners)
- ☐ Lifestyle (e.g., too much time indoors, no shared activities with peers)
- ☐ Status (e.g., wealth, job, perceived "power")
- ☐ Physique/fitness (i.e., weight, posture, muscle mass)
- ☐ Self-inhibition (e.g., introversion, shyness, fear of rejection, social anxiety)
- ☐ Autism
- ☐ Mental disorder (e.g., depression, personality disorder). Exclude autism.
- ☐ Location (e.g., population density, local culture, country of residence)
- ☐ Ethnicity
- ☐ Style (e.g., fashion sense, hairstyle, facial hair)
- ☐ Hair loss/balding
- ☐ Age
- ☐ Height
- ☐ Education/intelligence
- ☐ Lack of potential partners who fulfill your personal standards and expectations
- ☐ Tone of voice
- ☐ Spiritual or religious belief
- ☐ Physical disabilities (e.g., deafness, handicap)
- ☐ Substance abuse (i.e., alcoholism, drug addiction)

11. Regarding middle school and high school years (ages 12 to 17):

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
Was your school experience positive?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you have friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you shy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you ostracized?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you face rejection from girls?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you have trouble with sports?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Have you experienced bullying? (Select all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Yes, as a child (ages 12 and below)
- ☐ Yes, as a teen (ages 13 - 18)
- ☐ Yes, as an adult (ages 19 and above)
- ☐ No, never

13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
I would like to maximize my looks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to have plastic surgery for aesthetic reasons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like help with my social skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Which of the following do you engage in to cope with being incel?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Media entertainment (e.g., videogames, television)
- ☐ Alcohol
- ☐ Drugs (either recreational or prescribed)
- ☐ Online incel forums (e.g., incels.co)
- ☐ Other social media or news sites
- ☐ Avoiding thinking about the issue (such as denial)
- ☐ Gambling
- ☐ Exercise/Sports
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Pornography
- ☐ Violent behavior
- ☐ Paid sex
- ☐ Spending time with friends

15. How often do you leave your home?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Practically never
- ☐ A few times a month
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ Practically daily

16. Select how intensely you experience the following states:

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
Depression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Autism-spectrum traits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post-traumatic stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anxiety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self Harm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol and/or drug abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suicidal thoughts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Have you ever tried therapy?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

18. If you have tried therapy, how did it make you feel?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Worse about myself

☐ Better about myself

☐ No change

19. If you haven't tried therapy, why haven't you?

20. Select all of the following for which you have a formal diagnosis (by a psychologist, psychiatrist, or other doctor):

Check all that apply.

☐ Depression

☐ Bipolar Disorder

☐ Autism Spectrum Disorder

☐ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

☐ Anxiety

☐ Suicidality

☐ Alcohol Use Disorder

☐ Substance Use Disorder

21. How much do you feel mental health professionals have blamed you, over the many societal aspects over which you have no control over?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very much					

22. In your opinion, women in general:

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Always
Are selfish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are self-centered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are hateful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are never satisfied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are always looking for something better to come along	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are not loyal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are manipulative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Like to be dominated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Like to be mistreated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Only care about appearance when considering male partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Only care about money when considering male partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Only care about status when considering male partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Rate how important each trait is to men when considering dating a woman:

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
Appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Height	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Race	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnicity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion/Spirituality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pick-up lines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of humor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Body language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eye contact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Politeness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paying when going out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Rate how important each trait is to women when considering dating a man

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
Appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Height	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Race	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnicity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion/Spirituality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pick-up lines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of humor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Body language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eye contact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Politeness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paying when going out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. How much do you agree with some popular opinions that incels are violent and dangerous?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Totally agree

26. To what extent do you agree with the terrorism designation of incels in Canada?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very much

27. How dangerous do you believe yourself to be, specifically as a result of being incel?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very dangerous

28. Which of the following happened to you after the Canadian terrorism designation of incels?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Avoided and/or posted less on the incels.co forum
☐ Self-censored when airing anger about women
☐ Became fearful that I might be tracked and or targeted by authorities

29. Have you read Elliot Rodger's manifesto?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

30. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
I admire Elliot Rodger for his Santa Barbara attack.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I admire Alek Minassian for his Toronto attack.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I admire Chris Harper Messer for his Portland attack.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes entertain thoughts of violence toward others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would rape if I could get away with it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. When did you first find out about incels?

32. How long ago did you first identify as incel?

33. About yourself:

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
Do you have friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are you happy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are you addicted to any drug? (e.g., alcohol, pills, marijuana, hard drugs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you want children someday? (either naturally or via adoption)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you considered traveling to another country to find love or sex?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. When did you join incels.co?

35. How much time do you spend on incels.co DAILY, on average?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes
- ☐ 30 minutes to 1 hour
- ☐ 1 to 2 hours
- ☐ 3 to 4 hours
- ☐ 5 to 6 hours
- ☐ Over 6 hours

36. How often do you post on the forum DAILY, on average?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ I don't post.
- ☐ 1 to 5 posts
- ☐ 6 to 20 posts
- ☐ Over 20 posts

37. Has the forum helped you...?

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
Make friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel less lonely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel a sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel understood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel more positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have freedom of speech	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn about the blackpill	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. Has the forum made you feel...?

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
Negative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Angry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hopeless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Violent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Like self-harming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anxious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Misogynistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Depressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suicidal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Like you're in an echo chamber	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. Reading the following content on the forum, I feel.. (Select all that apply)

Check all that apply.

	Empowered	Entertained	Amused	Bad	Sad	Ashamed	Hopeless	Apat
Shitposting content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blackpill content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violent content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Misogynist content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

40. Do you visit other forums besides incels.co? If so, please list them and say what you like about them (e.g., quality of discussion, memes, members, moderators, rules).

41. Do you consider your situation as incel to be temporary or permanent?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Temporary
☐ Permanent

42. What romantic and sexual experiences have you had? (Select all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ I have kissed someone
☐ I have had non-paid sex
☐ I have had paid sex (i.e., sex with a prostitute)
☐ I have had a romantic relationship
☐ I have been engaged or married
☐ I have rejected someone had sexual/romantic intentions towards me
☐ None of the above

43. What is your height?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 6'4" and over (1.93m and over)
☐ 6'0" - 6'3" (1.83m - 1.91m)
☐ 5'8" - 5'11" (1.73m - 1.80m)
☐ 5'4" - 5'7" (1.63m - 1.70m)
☐ 5'0" - 5'3" (1.52m - 1.60m)
☐ 4'11" and under (1.50m and under)

44. In terms of weight, how would you compare yourself to others?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Normal
☐ Underweight
☐ Overweight

45. Do you have physical conditions that you feel impair your interactions with other people? (e.g., lazy eye, deformities, severe skin lesions)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

46. Have you experienced significant hair loss or balding?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

47. How would you rate yourself on an attractiveness scale from 1 to 10?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very unattractive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very attractive

48. The blackpill is:

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
Objective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
True	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comforting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Liberating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Refreshing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Depressing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Worrying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

49. How strongly do you consider yourself to be a misanthropist? (i.e., dislike or hatred of the human race)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
					Very strongly

50. How strongly do you consider yourself to be a misogynist? (i.e., dislike or hatred of women)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
					Very strongly

51. How much do you agree with the following statements?

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very much
Equality between men and women has not been good for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western society is more favorable to women than men	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Women in general can always get sex.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Men in general can always get sex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personality is important in starting a relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Looks are important in starting a relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feminism is responsible for the state of relationships today	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

52. How old are you?

53. Are you male or female?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Male

☐ Female

54. What is your primary ethnicity?

Mark only one oval.

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Black

☐ Hispanic

☐ Middle Eastern

☐ Indian

☐ Asian

☐ Mixed/other/not sure

55. What region of the world are you from?

Mark only one oval.

☐ North America

☐ Central or South America

☐ Eastern Europe

☐ Western Europe

☐ Asia

☐ Africa

☐ Oceania

56. What is your main religious belief?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Atheism

☐ Agnosticism

☐ Christianity

☐ Hinduism/Buddhism/Taoism

☐ Judaism

☐ Islam

☐ Other

57. Which of the following best describes your political views?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Progressive

☐ Liberal

☐ Left-of-Center

☐ Centrist

☐ Right-of-Center

☐ Conservative

☐ Ultra-Conservative

☐ Libertarian

☐ Alt-Right

☐ Other: _____

58. By whom were you raised?

Mark only one oval.

☐ My mother raised me alone

☐ My father raised me alone

☐ Both of my parents raised me

☐ Someone else besides my parents raised me

59. If someone other than your parents raised you, who was that?

60. With whom do you currently live? Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Siblings
- ☐ Extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins)
- ☐ Friends/roommates
- ☐ Significant other
- ☐ No one

61. What is your sexual orientation?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other

62. Do you currently work or study?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Work
- ☐ Study
- ☐ Both
- ☐ Neither (NEET)

63. What is your highest level of education?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalent
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ 2-year college/university degree
- ☐ 4-year college/university degree
- ☐ Some graduate school
- ☐ Graduate degree

64. If you work, what is your line of work?

65. Which of the following best describes your socioeconomic status?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Working class
- ☐ Lower-middle class
- ☐ Middle class
- ☐ Upper-middle class
- ☐ Upper class

66. What is your income level?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than \$10,000
☐ \$10,000-\$29,000
☐ \$30,000-\$49,000
☐ \$50,000-\$69,000
☐ \$70,000-\$89,000
☐ \$90,000-\$99,000
☐ \$100,000-\$150,000
☐ More than \$150,000

67. Are you at your current age economically and/or academically fulfilled?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

68. If you want to participate for a prize (there are five: two of 100 dollars, two of 50 dollars, and one game of your choice), then leave some way to contact you below:

69. Any other feedback? Write here anything you want to tell us:

Endnotes

¹ Jean M. Twenge, Ryne A. Sherman, and Brooke E. Wells, "Changes in American Adults' Sexual Behavior and Attitudes, 1972–2012," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 44, no. 8 (2015): 2273–2285, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-015-0540-2>.

² Taisto Witt, "If I Cannot Have It, I Will Do Everything I Can to Destroy It.' The Canonization of Elliot Rodger: 'Incel' Masculinities, Secular Sainthood, and Justifications of Ideological Violence," *Social Identities* 26, no. 5 (2020): 675–689, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2020.1787132>.

³ Ben Collins and Brandy Zadrozny, "After Toronto Attack, Online Misogynists Praise Suspect as 'New Saint'," *NBC News* 2, April 25, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/after-torontoattack-online-misogynists-praise-suspect-new-saint-n868821>.

⁴ Leyland Cecco, "Canada Police Say Machete Killing Was "Incel" Terror Attack," *The Guardian*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/19/toronto-attack-incel-terrorism-canada-police>.

⁵ Carolyn M. Byerly, "Incels Online Reframing Sexual violence," *The Communication Review* 23, no. 4 (2020): 290–308, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2020.1829305>; Sylvia Jaki et al., "Online Hatred of Women in the Incels.me Forum: Linguistic Analysis and Automatic Detection," *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 7, no. 2 (2019): 240–268, <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.00026.jak>; Katrine Rummelhoff, "Incels and Misogyny; What's So Appealing About Hatred?" (Master's thesis, University of Twente, 2020), 1–101.; Allegra Passman, "The Cociosexuality and Well-being of Incels" (Bachelor's thesis, University of Twente, 2020), 1–47.; Helena Elisabeth Bieselt, "Personality of Incels and Its Extent as Predictor of Involvement and Activity in the Incel Community" (Bachelor's thesis, University of Twente, 2020), 1–38.; Aylin Ünes, "Mating Preferences of Women as Perceived by Incels" (Bachelor's thesis, University of Twente, 2020), 1–27.; Johannes Stickel, "What Incels Can Tell Us About Misogyny: Evaluating Sexual Frustration and Pornography Usage as Potential Factors for Misogyny" (Master's thesis, University of Twente, 2020), 1–38.

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- ⁶ Rummelhoff, "Incels and Misogyny"; Passmann, "The Cociosexuality and Well-being of Incels"; Bieselt, "Personality of Incels"; Ünes, "Mating Preferences of Women as Perceived by Incels"; Stickel, "What Incels Can Tell Us About Misogyny."
- ⁷ Debbie Ging, "Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere," *Men and Masculinities* 22, no. 4 (2019): 638-657, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17706401>; Michael Kimmel, *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era* (Hachette UK, 2017); Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware, "Incels: America's Newest Domestic Terrorism Threat," *Lawfare Blog*, January 12, 2020, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/incels-americas-newest-domestic-terrorism-threat>; Jaki et al., "Online Hatred of Women in the Incels.me Forum."
- ⁸ Ging, "Alphas, Betas, and Incels"; Kimmel, *Angry White Men*.
- ⁹ Jaki et al., "Online Hatred of Women in the Incels.me Forum."
- ¹⁰ Hoffman and Ware, "Incels."
- ¹¹ Jaki, et al., "Online Hatred of Women in the Incels.me Forum."
- ¹² Passmann, "The Cociosexuality and Well-being of Incels."
- ¹³ Bieselt, "Personality of Incels."
- ¹⁴ Ünes, "Mating Preferences of Women as Perceived by Incels."
- ¹⁵ Stickel, "What Incels Can Tell Us About Misogyny."
- ¹⁶ Rummelhoff, "Incels and Misogyny."
- ¹⁷ Byerly, "Incels Online Reframing Sexual Violence."
- ¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "U.S. Census Bureau Releases New Educational Attainment Data," March 30, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/educational-attainment.html>.
- ¹⁹ Moonshot C. V. E., *Incels: A Guide to Symbols and Terminology*, (Moonshot C.V.E., 2020).
- ²⁰ Moonshot C. V. E., *Incels*.
- ²¹ Sarah R. Edwards, Kathryn A. Bradshaw, and Verlin B. Hinsz, "Denying Rape but Endorsing Forceful Intercourse: Exploring Differences Among Responders," *Violence and Gender* 1, no. 4 (2014): 188-193, <https://doi.org/10.1089/vio.2014.0022>.