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Confessions of a sex addict a shopaholic

"I NEVER considered myself a sex addict, as it was consensual sex. The women were not forced to be there and I never hid the fact that I was married. Now I know I was just looking for excuses," says Larry (not real name), 47.

Larry says his first one-night stand turned into a habit and obsession.

"I was on a business trip to Indonesia when it all started. I met a sweet and demure girl in a nightclub and after a couple of drinks, we both got comfortable. That was my first affair."

After coming back from his trip, Larry says, he realised that he didn't want to stop.

"My wife never really questioned my whereabouts, so it was easy to get away with adultery. I used the excuse of going out with friends, knowing she would not come along.

"After about three other women, I wanted more adventure. I had group sessions while on business trips.

"I could have got caught many times, but I had some friends who would provide alibis.

"The obsession heightened and I wanted even more. One night, I found myself in the red-light district of Kuala Lumpur looking for a prostitute."

After that experience, Larry says, he feared

he had AIDS.

"Maybe it was the guilt, I'm not sure. I stopped, promising myself never to have another affair.

"But that only lasted two years. When a new intern turned up at the office, my addiction continued."

It's been more than five years since his first affair and Larry is still "looking around".

Confessions of a nicotine addict

"I STARTED smoking when I was 20, at college. Most of my friends were smokers and I did not want to be left out," says Angelina, now in her late 30s.

"I can't stop, even though I have tried several times. The best was several months but I relapsed during a particularly stressful period in my life.

"I work in an environment that is highly-demanding and fast-paced and it's not possible to go without a stick."

She smokes about a pack a day.

"The increasing prices have not stopped me, neither have the gruesome pictures on the packs.

"I will only stop when I want to. And I don't want to. Not yet."

Confessions of

"I AM single, so I can usually buy whatever I want," says Dennis, 46, who runs his own business.

"I love branded goods, especially shirts and shoes.

"I usually can't walk past a shop without going in and getting some items.

"I can't help myself. I feel so good after making a purchase,

like I'm walking on air. That feeling dissipates quite fast, and then I will need to get something else.

"I realised it was a problem last year when I overspent on two branded shirts. I didn't even really need them. Both were white and had the same cut. My business was not doing well. I could not pay the minimum amount on my three credit cards, so they were suspended.

"I lived on the goodwill of friends. One of them, who had to give me some money to take a taxi home one day, sat me down and told me this could not go on.

"I thank her for giving me that verbal slap. I am trying to live within my means these days — I eat simple meals and have not shopped for months. I am slowly repaying my debt. I also sold off those two shirts and got some money back."