
ORIGINAL RESEARCH—COUPLES

Sexual Satisfaction, Sexual Compatibility, and Relationship Adjustment in Couples: The Role of Sexual Behaviors, Orgasm, and Men's Discernment of Women's Intercourse Orgasm

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. Research indicated that (i) vaginal orgasm consistency is associated with indices of psychological, intimate relationship, and physiological functioning, and (ii) masturbation is adversely associated with some such measures.

Aim. The aim of this study was to examine the association of various dyadic and masturbation behavior frequencies and percentage of female orgasms during these activities with: (i) measures of dyadic adjustment; (ii) sexual satisfaction; and (iii) compatibility perceived by both partners.

Methods. In a sample of 85 Czech long-term couples (aged 20–40; mean relationship length 5.4 years), both partners provided details of recent sexual behaviors and completed sexual satisfaction, Spanier dyadic adjustment, and Hurlbert sexual compatibility measures. Multiple regression analyses were used.

Main Outcome Measure. The association of sexual behaviors with dyadic adjustment, sexual compatibility, and satisfaction was analyzed.

Results. In multivariate analyses, women's dyadic adjustment is independently predicted by greater vaginal orgasm consistency and lower frequency of women's masturbation. For both sexes, sexual compatibility was independently predicted by higher frequency of penile–vaginal intercourse and greater vaginal orgasm consistency. Women's sexual satisfaction score was significantly predicted by greater vaginal orgasm consistency, frequency of partner genital stimulation, and negatively with masturbation. Men's sexual satisfaction score was significantly predicted by greater intercourse frequency and any vaginal orgasm of their female partners. Concordance of partner vaginal orgasm consistency estimates was associated with greater dyadic adjustment.

Conclusions. The findings suggest that specifically penile–vaginal intercourse frequency and vaginal orgasm consistency are associated with indices of greater intimate relationship adjustment, satisfaction, and compatibility of both partners, and that women's masturbation is independently inversely associated with measures of dyadic and personal function. Results are discussed in light of previous research and an evolutionary theory of vaginal orgasm. **Klapilov K, Brody S, Krejov L, Husarov B, and Binter J. Sexual satisfaction, sexual compatibility, and relationship adjustment in couples: The role of sexual behaviors, orgasm, and men's discernment of women's intercourse orgasm. J Sex Med 2015;12:667–675.**

Key Words. Sexual Satisfaction; Vaginal Orgasm; Masturbation; Sexual Compatibility; Dyadic Adjustment; Relationship Satisfaction; Sexual Intercourse

Introduction

Understanding the factors, including various sexual behaviors, that are associated positively and negatively with sexual satisfaction, sexual compatibility, and relationship adjustment in couples is of obvious importance for sexual medicine and for couples therapy. In various international studies (including both large nationally representative surveys as well as convenience samples), satisfaction with one's sex life (and in some studies, satisfaction with intimate relationships, life in general, and personal mental health) was robustly positively associated with greater frequency of penile–vaginal intercourse (PVI), and in some studies, inversely associated with masturbation frequency [1–6]. Masturbation was inversely associated with sexual satisfaction and function [7–10].

Similar results were obtained for studies of orgasm triggers: orgasm triggered directly by PVI *per se* (in the case of women, this is termed vaginal orgasm) was associated positively with satisfaction measures and other indices of favorable psychological and psychophysiological function [1,3,6,10–19]. For example, postorgasmic prolactin increases after intercourse are strongly associated with women's assessment of orgasm quality and women's subsequent sexual satisfaction [20], and for both sexes, the postorgasmic prolactin increases following PVI orgasm are severalfold greater than following masturbation [21].

Although echographic studies have found that there might be some activation of the clitoral root during intercourse, it is important to note that vaginal orgasm consistency (VOC) is associated with greater sexual arousability from deep vaginal stimulation but not with sexual arousability from the clitoris or even from the shallow region of the vagina [22]. More importantly, different peripheral nerves are activated by vaginal–cervical stimulation as compared with clitoral stimulation, and this is reflected in activation of different regions of the brain [23,24]. In addition to clinical and neurophysiological issues relevant to sexual behavior differences in satisfaction and relationship function, there are implications for evolutionary theory. It has been proposed [25,26] that presence and frequency of orgasms triggered by sexual intercourse *per se* are more rewarding than other orgasm triggers because of increasing the likelihood of repeat engagement in the one potentially reproductive sexual activity with the same male partner, and thus contributes to the quality of long-term pair

bonding between men and women. Moreover, women's orgasm triggered directly by coitus is considered to be an indicator of fitness (i.e., a phenotypic trait that enhances an individual's ability to propagate his or her genes, including traits that optimize the reproductive fitness of offspring) of both partners [25–27].

Previous studies relied on reports of individuals, but the present study augments the existing research by examining both members of stable heterosexual couples with regard to sexual behaviors (including orgasm triggers) and their associations with sexual satisfaction, sexual compatibility, and dyadic adjustment. In addition, the predictors of concordance of VOC estimates from the partners will also be examined (because of the hypotheses that in better relationships, there will not only be greater PVI frequency and greater vaginal orgasm likelihood, but also that the man will be more aware of, and responsive to, his partner's real vaginal orgasm). Ages of both partners and relationship length will also be examined as possible correlates of the outcomes of interest noted above.

Materials and Methods

The sample consisted of 86 long-term cohabiting couples who participated in the semi-longitudinal Intimate Behavior in Cohabiting Couples Project during the years 2005–2008. All couples were together more than 2 years, were living together more than 1 year, had no children, were aged 18–40 years, and were Czech citizens living in Prague at the time of study. Twenty couples were married (for a detailed description of recruitment criteria and research procedure, see Havlicek et al. [28]). The choice of recruitment criteria (e.g., minimum length of relationship, no children, no sexual dysfunctions or reproductive impairments) reflects our efforts to reduce the influence of important intervening or confounding variables that could lead to data noise. For example, the variable of living with a sexual partner has been found to be an important issue in examining associations between cardiovascular autonomic tone and intercourse frequency [29], and even in clinical trials of pharmacological interventions to increase intercourse frequency [30]. Both partners completed (separately, in private, in Czech language) the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) [31] (reliability = 0.96) and the Hurlbert Index of Sexual Compatibility (HISC) [32] (reliability = 0.844), and

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