

PSYC 222

Motivation and Emotions

Session 3 – SEXUAL MOTIVES: THE NATURE & SEXUAL PRACTICES

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SEXUAL MOTIVES: THE NATURE & SEXUAL PRACTICES

Session Overview

- Some Scientists are of the view that the motivation for sex is the most important aspect of the human race. According to them, without this drive, human species will die off the surface of the earth. In this session, we will look at why humans are motivated to have sex, the factors that influence arousal as well as some cultural and gender differences in sexuality

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- i. Identify and explain the reasons why we have sexual motives
- ii. Identify and discuss the factors that influence our sexual drive
- iii. Identify and discuss gender and cultural differences in sexuality

Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Sexual Practices
- Gender Differences in Sexual Practices
- Cultural Differences in Sexuality
- Arousal Factors
- Why Do We have Sex

Topic One

SEXUAL PRACTICES



Sexual Practices

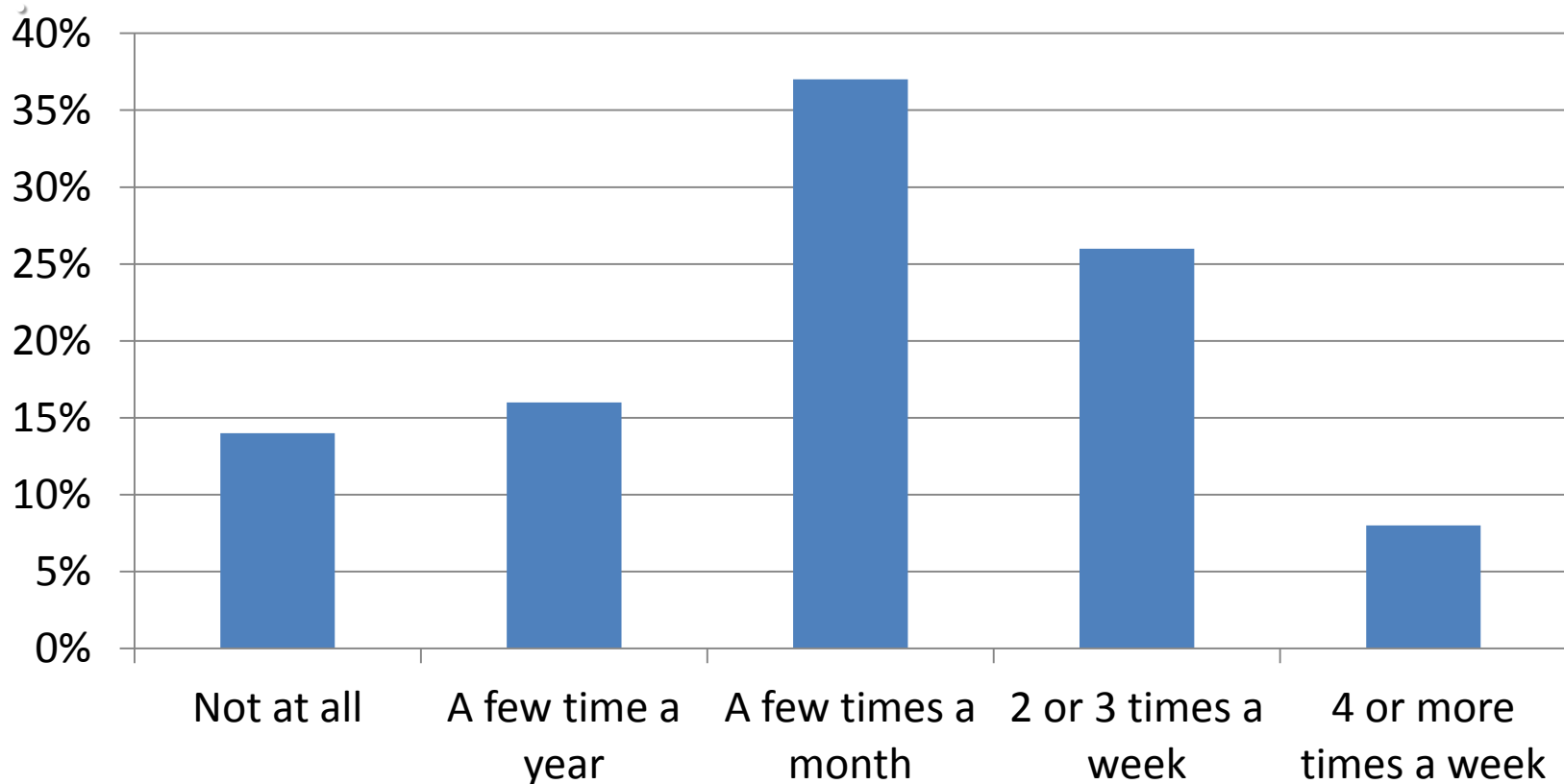
- Although sex has always been a part of humanity, serious scientific study started in the United States some 76 years ago
- A study by Alfred Kinsey in the 1940's carried out in the US about sexual behaviour revealed the following;
- 90% of all men and about 50% of all women had premarital sex.
- Nearly all men and majority of women had masturbated.
- 50% of married men and 26% of married women had extramarital affairs.
- 40% of college and educated couples had oral sex.

Sexual Practices

Frequency of Sexual Activities

- Studies on the frequency of sexual activities have not yet been done in Ghana but American records show that;
- The overall average is about once a week among married couples.
- 1/3 of the people surveyed have sex twice a week or more.
- 1/3 a few times a month
- 1/3 a few times a year or not at all(Laumann et al 1994).
- This study is still relevant today.

Frequency of Sexual Activities among Married couples



Topic Two

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SEXUAL PRACTICES



Gender Differences in Sexual Practices

- According to Olives and Hyde (1993)
- Men and women differ in their sexual motivation.
- Men are known to have stronger sexual motivation.
- They arrived on this based on studies
- Men have more frequent and more intense sexual desires than women as reflected in spontaneous thoughts about sex, frequency and variety of sexual fantasies, desired frequency of sexual intercourse, desired number of partners, frequency of masturbation, liking for various sexual practices, willingness to forgo sex, initiating versus refusing sex, and making sacrifices for sex.

Gender Differences in Sexual Practices

- Men would prefer to have sex with anyone they choose than women.
- This implies that men are sexually more permissive and promiscuous than women and that men desire more sex than women

Gender Differences in Sexual Practices

Why are there these differences???

Reasons for the difference in the Sexual Practices among Men and Women

- **Evolution Principle Explanation**
- Human beings use mate selection patterns that favour the conception, birth and survival of their offspring.
- In view of this, **women are highly selective** because they must look for a **mate who possesses economic resources** and willing to use the resources for their offspring.

Reasons for the Gender Difference in Sexual Practices (Cont.)

- In contrast, the man would desire a woman who is young and physically attractive which are attributes that signal good health and reproductive fertility.
- To also minimize paternal uncertainty, they should also look for **women who are likely to be sexually faithful** rather than promiscuous.
- Hence **women seek older men who are more likely to have financial resources** and **men seek younger women who are most likely to be faithful and fertile.**

Reasons for the Gender Difference in Sexual Practices (Cont.)

- Other reasons that have been given as accounting for these gender differences are as follows:
- Androgens (e.g., testosterone)
- Although both sexes have natural supplies of testosterone in the blood, on average men's blood testosterone levels are 1000 nanograms per deciliter, while women's are only one-seventh or one-eighth of this amount, hence the difference in sexuality

Reasons for the Gender Difference in Sexual Practices (Cont.)

- The difference in size between the penis and the clitoris has also been said to be a likely reason that sexual arousal is much more apparent to a man than to a woman.
- Some researchers have also suggested that, the possibility of cultural influence on the gender difference must also be acknowledged. Clearly, social influence has been significant in suppressing female sexuality.

Topic Three

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN SEXUALITY



Cultural Differences in Sexuality

There appears to also be some differences when it comes to various cultures on the issue of sexuality

Ghana

- A carefully implemented study conducted by a women's research group showed that Ghanaian women especially those above post-menopausal ages have little to no interest for sex. The study showed an alarming trend
- That Ghanaian women after having an average of two to four children or after 40 years, become less and less interested in sex. Some, the study suggested completely switch off their libidos, and show little to no interest in sexual pleasures.

Cultural Differences in Sexuality

Generally, Ghanaians are less expressive about sex and sexuality

Study by Asampong et al.,

- Another study by Asampong and his colleagues also indicated that there are significant barriers to parents – adolescents sexual communication

Cultural Differences in Sexuality

Inis Beag

- People from this community are among the most naive and sexually repressive societies in the world.
- The islanders abhor nudity. It is believed that adults wash only the parts of the body that extend beyond their clothing.
- Even marital partners keep underclothes on during sexual activity.
- Premarital sex is essentially unknown, as is female orgasm. The husband invariably initiates sex, foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the buttocks, and the male-on-top position is the only position used. The male has orgasm quickly and immediately falls asleep.

Cultural Differences in Sexuality

- Men believe that intercourse is hard on their health and will not engage in sex the night before an energy-demanding task.
- Sex education is virtually nonexistent.
- Parents merely trust that, after marriage, nature will take its course

Cultural Differences in Sexuality

Mehinaku

- The culture of this community is highly eroticized, and there is an openness with children about sexual matters.
- For example, children typically know the names of their parents' many extramarital lovers.
- Men openly compete with each other for women's sexual favors, often by bringing small gifts such as fish.
- At the same time, however, there is a high degree of gender segregation. If a woman enters a "man's" house and views what is forbidden, she may be taken to the woods and gang-raped.
- Women are believed to have a much lower sex drive, there seems to be little recognition of female orgasm, and menstruation is understood to be dangerous.

Cultural Differences in Sexuality

Mangaia (Cook Islands) Pacific Ocean

- The Mangaian boy hears of masturbation at about 7 and begins the practice at age 8 or 9. At age 13, he undergoes the super-incision ritual (a slit is made on the top of the penis, along its entire length) and the expert who performs the surgery gives him explicit sexual instruction. About two weeks after the operation, the boy has intercourse with an experienced woman who provides him with practice in various acts and positions. She specifically trains him in restraint so that he can have simultaneous orgasms with his partner.
- The young girl receives similar expert instruction and will typically have three or four successive boyfriends between the ages of 13 and 20.

Cultural Differences in Sexuality

- Manganian parents encourage their daughters to have sexual experiences with several men so that they can find a marriage partner who is congenial.
- Boys aggressively seek out girls, typically having coitus every night. The average boy may have 10 or more girlfriends before marriage.
- At around age 18, the Mangaians typically have sex most nights of the week with about three orgasms per night. All women apparently learn to experience orgasm. Bringing his partner to orgasm is one of the man's primary sources of pleasure.

Some Shocking Sexual Traditions around the world

- The semen – drinking tribe (Papua, New Guinea)
- The Trobrianders (6-8 for girls, 10 – 12 for boys)
- A community where brothers share a wife (Himalayas)
- The tribe where men steal each other's wives (Wodaabe tribe, Niger)

Topic Four

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE AROUSAL



Arousal Factors

- According to Masters and Johnson (1966), the human sexual behaviour occurs in two major stages:
- Non-tactile Stage
- Tactile Stage

- Factors that influence sexual arousal can be categorized under the following:



Factors that influence Sexual Arousal

- **Sexual hormones** – These include estrogen and testosterone which combine with the hypothalamus to help the body to function well during sex. Men who are castrated lose their sexual drive.
- **External stimuli** – External stimuli can trigger sexual arousal in both sexes. These include the dressing and the appearance of the other person and other erotic stimuli like perfumes.
- **Imagined Stimuli**-The mind is said to be the most significant sex organ and most people fantasize about sex in order to have sexual arousal.



Factors that influence Sexual Arousal

- **Sexual orientation**
- This refers to one's degree of emotional and erotic attraction to members of the same gender or opposite gender. They are basically two forms of sexual orientations
- Heterosexuals are romantically and erotically attracted to members of the opposite gender, for example, a man getting attracted to a female or vice versa.

Factors that influence Sexual Arousal

- Homosexuals are attracted to persons of same gender. For example, a male is attracted to a male, normally called gay and a female attracted to a female, normally called a lesbian.
- Bisexual
- This is often rare but a type of sexuality where the individual is attracted to people same and opposite gender



What determines ones' sexual orientation

According to Marmor (1985), a combination of the following factors determine one's sexual orientation:

- Hereditary (Genetic)

There appears to be some evidence that people inherit the predisposition to have a certain sexual orientation. Bailey and Pillard's (1991) identical twin study supports this

- Biological

The size of certain parts of the brain (eg., neurons in the hypothalamus) have been implicated as determining a person's sexual orientation. Homosexuals believed to have half the size of what is present in heterosexuals or sometimes completely absent (LeVay, 1991)

What determines ones' sexual orientation

It is also believed that, the nerves connecting the two hemispheres of the brain is larger in homosexuals (Allen & Gorski,1991)

- Learning

Learning has been suggested to contribute to a person's sexual orientation. If one has certain experiences, eg., rape, it might make them fearful of one gender and attracted to the other. The environment in which one grows can also have an influence

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What determines ones' sexual orientation

- Culture
- Although culture does not directly determine a person's sexual orientation, the culture can either allow the expression of a certain type of sexual orientation or not

What determines one's sexual orientation?

Why homosexuals are considered normal (Seligman, 1994)

- 1. Personality test of homosexuals and heterosexuals show no differences in their personalities.
- 2. Sexual orientation is not related to one's ability to function in society and work constructively.
- 3. Homosexuals can stop their sexual orientation at will whereas those who are abnormal cannot give up their habits at will and would therefore need therapy to give up their unwanted behaviours.

What Determines Ones' Sexual Orientation?

- In view of this, the APA recognized that homosexuality is not a form of mental disorder and discontinued the classification of it as disorder in the 1970s.
- There are scales to measure one's sexual orientation
- **Kinsey scale**
- **Klein Sexual Orientation Grid**
- **The Sell Assessment of Sexual Orientation**

What is Sexually Arousing to Humans

- There appears to be a learned component when it comes to what is sexually arousing
- Humans are believed to have sexual scripts which to a greater extent determines what is arousing for them
- Sexual scripts refer to one's mental representation or schemata of how an interpersonal sexual episode should be enacted (Gagnon, 1974, 1977; Simon & Gagnon, 1986)
- Sexual scripts arise from beliefs and attitudes due to the following
 - Information children are exposed to
 - Rewards and punishment received
 - Imitation and modeling

Topic Five

WHY DO WE HAVE SEX



Why do we have sex?

- Humans are believed to have sex because:
- We are programmed to do so
- Our brains are designed to motivate us toward that behavior for survival
- In addition, people's motivations generally fall into four main categories, according to Meston and Buss (2007)

Physical reasons:

- Stress Reduction (“I was frustrated and needed relief.”)
- Pleasure (“It feels good.”)
- Physical Desirability (“The person had an attractive body.”)
- Experience Seeking (“I was curious about sex.”)

Why do we have sex?

Goal-based reasons

- Goal Attainment
- To make a baby,
- Resources (“I wanted to get a job.”)
- Social Status (“I wanted to be popular.”)
- Revenge (“I wanted to get back at my partner for having cheated on me.”)
- Utilitarian (“I thought it would help me fall asleep.”)

Emotional reasons:

Love, commitment, or gratitude

- Love and Commitment (“I wanted to feel connected to the person.”)
- Expression (“I wanted to welcome someone home.”)

Why do we have sex?

Insecurity reasons

- Self-Esteem Boost (“I wanted to feel powerful.”)
- Duty/Pressure (“I felt like I owed it to the person.”)
- Mate Guarding (“I wanted to keep my partner from straying.”)

- Generally speaking, men seek sex because they like how it feels. Women, although they very well may also derive pleasure from the act, are generally more interested in the relationship enhancement that sex offers. Researchers describe these differences as body-centered versus person-centered sex.

Reasons why people have sex

- Boosting mood and relieving depression
- Duty
- Enhancement of power
- Enhancement of self-concept
- Experiencing the power of one's partner
- Feeling loved by your partner
- Fostering jealousy
- Improving reputation or social status
- Making money
- Making babies

Reasons why people have sex

- Need for affection
- Nurturance
- Partner novelty
- Peer pressure or pressure from partner
- Pleasure
- Reducing sex drive
- Revenge
- Sexual curiosity
- Showing love to your partner
- Spiritual transcendence



Predictors of Sexual Restraint

High Intelligence

- Teen with high rather than average intelligence often delay sex (Halpern et al., 2000)

Religious engagement

- Actively religious teens and adults more often reserve sex for marital commitment (Rostosky et al., 2004)

Father Presence

- Father absence has been linked to sexual activity before age 16 and teen pregnancy

Participation in service learning programs

Thank You

