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Sexual Awareness Questionnaire

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The Sexual Awareness Questionnaire (SAQ; Snell, Fisher, & Miller, 1991) is an objective, self-report instrument designed to measure four personality tendencies associated with sexual awareness and sexual assertiveness: (a) sexual consciousness, defined as the tendency to think and reflect about the nature of one’s sexuality; (b) sexual preoccupation, defined as the tendency to think about sex to an excessive degree; (c) sexual monitoring, defined as the tendency to be aware of the public impression which one’s sexuality makes on others; and (d) sexual assertiveness, defined as the tendency to be assertive about the sexual aspects of one’s life.

Description

The SAQ consists of 36 items arranged in a format whereby respondents indicate how characteristic of them each statement is. A 5-point Likert scale is used, with each item being scored from 0 to 4: Not at all characteristic of me (0), Slightly characteristic of me (1), Somewhat characteristic of me (2), Moderately characteristic of me (3), Very characteristic of me (4). In order to create subscale scores (discussed below), the items on each subscale are summed. Higher scores thus correspond to greater amounts of the relevant tendency.

To confirm the conceptual dimensions assumed to underlie the SAQ, the questionnaire items were subjected to a principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. Four factors accounting for 42% of the variance were interpreted. The first factor contained items that pertained to sexual consciousness (Items 1, 4, 10, 13, 22, and 25). The items on the second factor (Items 2, 5, 14, 17, 23, 26, 28, 31, and 32) referred to sexual monitoring tendencies. The third factor was composed of items assessing sexual assertive-
ness (Items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 24), and the fourth factor was concerned with sex-appeal consciousness (Items 8, 11, and 29). A second cross-validation factor analysis reported by Snell et al. (1991) also showed that the SAQ subscales were factorially consistent with the anticipated factor structure. The results of these statistical analyses provided strong preliminary evidence supporting the factor structure of the SAQ.

Response Mode and Timing
In most instances, people respond to the 36 items on the SAQ by marking their answers on separate machine-scoreable answer sheets. The scale usually requires about 15–30 minutes to complete.

Scoring
All of the SAQ items are coded so that A = 4; B = 3; C = 2; D = 1; and E = 0, except for six specific items which are reverse coded (Items 23, 31, 32, 30, 6, and 9); these items are designated with an “R” on the copy of the SAQ shown in the Exhibit. The relevant items on each subscale are first coded so that A = 0; B = 1; C = 2; D = 3; and E = 4. Next, the items on each subscale are summed, so that higher scores correspond to greater amounts of each respective psychological tendency. Scores on the sexual-consciousness subscale can range from 0 to 24; sexual-monitoring scores can range from 0 to 32; sexual-assertiveness scores can range from 0 to 36; and scores on the sex-appeal consciousness subscale can range from 0 to 12.

Reliability
The internal consistency of the four subscales on the SAQ was determined by calculating Cronbach alpha coefficients, using participants from two separate samples (Sample I consisted of 265 females, 117 males, and 4 gender unspecified; Sample II consisted of 265 females, 117 males, and 4 gender unspecified) drawn from lower division psychology courses at a small midwestern university (Snell et al., 1991). The average age of Sample I was 24.1, with a range of 17 to 60; the average age of Sample II was also 24.1, SD = 6.87. Results indicated that all four subscales had clearly acceptable levels of reliability (Snell et al., 1991). In Sample I the alphas were: for sexual consciousness, alpha = .83 for males and .86 for females; for sexual monitoring, alpha = .80 for males and .82 for females; for sex-appeal consciousness, alpha = .89 for males and .92 for females; and for sexual assertiveness, alpha = .83 for males and .81 for females. For Sample II, the internal consistency of the sexual-consciousness subscale was .85 for males and .88 for females; for sexual monitoring, .81 for males and .82 for females; for sex-appeal consciousness, .92 for males and .92 for females; and for sexual assertiveness, .80 for males and .85 for females.

Validity
Evidence for the validity of the SAQ comes from a variety of findings. Snell et al. (1991) provided evidence supporting the convergent and discriminant validity of the SAQ. All four SAQ subscales tended to be negatively related to measures of sex-anxiety and sex-guilt for both males and females, and sexual-consciousness was directly related to erotophilic feelings. Other findings indicated that women’s and men’s responses to the four SAQ subscales were related in a predictable fashion to their sexual attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors. Other findings indicated that men reported greater sexual assertiveness than did women, with no gender differences found for sexual consciousness, sexual monitoring, or sex-appeal consciousness. Snell (1994) revealed that sexual assertiveness in both males and females was predictive of greater contraceptive use, but only among males was sexual consciousness and sexual monitoring found to predict more favorable attitudes toward condom use. In addition, for both females and males, sexual consciousness, sexual monitoring, and sexual assertiveness were positively associated with a greater variety and a more extensive history of sexual experiences.

References

Exhibit

**Sexual Awareness Questionnaire**

*Instructions:* The items listed below refer to the sexual aspects of people’s lives. Please read each item carefully and decide to what extent it is characteristic of you. Give each item a rating of how much it applies to you by using the following scale:

- A = Not at all characteristic of me.
- B = Slightly characteristic of me.
- C = Somewhat characteristic of me.
D = Moderately characteristic of me.
E = Very characteristic of me.

1. I am very aware of my sexual feelings.
2. I wonder whether others think I'm sexy.
3. I'm assertive about the sexual aspects of my life.
4. I'm very aware of my sexual motivations.
5. I'm concerned about the sexual appearance of my body.
6. I'm not very direct about voicing my sexual desires. (R)
7. I'm always trying to understand my sexual feelings.
8. I know immediately when others consider me sexy.
9. I am somewhat passive about expressing my sexual desires. (R)
10. I'm very alert to changes in my sexual desires.
11. I am quick to sense whether others think I'm sexy.
12. I do not hesitate to ask for what I want in a sexual relationship.
13. I am very aware of my sexual tendencies.
14. I usually worry about making a good sexual impression on others.
15. I'm the type of person who insists on having my sexual needs met.
16. I think about my sexual motivations more than most people do.
17. I'm concerned about what other people think of my sex appeal.
18. When it comes to sex, I usually ask for what I want.
19. I reflect about my sexual desires a lot.
20. I never seem to know when I'm turnover other.
21. If I were sexually interested in someone, I'd let that person know.
22. I'm very aware of the way my mind works when I'm sexually aroused.
23. I rarely think about my sex appeal. (R)
24. If I were to have sex with someone, I'd tell my partner what I like.
25. I know what turns me on sexually.
26. I don't care what others think of my sexuality.
27. I don't let others tell me how to run my sex life.
28. I rarely think about the sexual aspects of my life.
29. I know when others think I'm sexy.
30. If I were to have sex with someone, I'd let my partner take the initiative. (R)
31. I don't think about my sexuality very much. (R)
32. Other people’s opinions of my sexuality don’t matter very much to me. (R)
33. I would ask about sexually-transmitted diseases before having sex with someone.
34. I don't consider myself a very sexual person.
35. When I'm with others, I want to look sexy.
36. If I wanted to practice “safe sex” with someone, I would insist on doing so.