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Sexual History and Adjustment Questionnaire

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Sexual History and Adjustment Questionnaire

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This measure was developed to assess participants’ retrospective reports of (a) frequency of sleeping in the bed with parents between the ages of 0–5 and 6–11 years; (b) frequency of seeing parents, as well as others, naked between 0–5 years and 6–11 years; (c) parental attitudes toward sexuality; (d) participants’ level of comfort in discussing sexuality with parents; and (e) perceptions of parental discomfort regarding sexuality. Information on current adjustment and sexual behavior was also obtained.

Description

This instrument would be appropriate for populations of older adolescents and adults. Items 1–10 assess retrospective reports of childhood experiences with nudity and sleeping in the parental bed. Items 11–19 assess the participant’s perceptions of parental attitudes toward sex and discussion of sexuality, as well as how often there was demonstration of physical affection in the family. Items 20–29 assess the participant’s current sexual behavior and attitudes toward himself or herself. Item 30 addresses feelings of discomfort about the physical contact and affection displayed in one’s family.

Response Mode, Timing, and Scoring

Respondents are asked to indicate their response to each item by circling the number that best reflects their answer to a question using a 5-point Likert-type scale. The anchors of the scale vary by section. Investigators may be interested in individual responses, such as frequency of seeing one particular parent naked, and may wish to sum responses across ages (e.g., index for maternal nudity would be sum of response for nudity at ages 0–5 plus nudity at ages 6–11). Or investigators may wish to sum for a total parental nudity index (cf. Lewis & Janda, 1988) by summing all responses for mother and father across ages.

A similar approach is used with the items about parental attitudes. Investigators may combine items for maternal attitudes (e.g., comfort discussing sexual matters; positive vs. negative attitude), as well as similar items for paternal attitudes. Alternatively, a global measure of attitudes may be generated. In our previous research (Lewis & Janda, 1988), however, we found some differences in maternal and paternal attitudes. Thus, investigators are urged to be cautious in this regard.

In our previous research (Lewis & Janda, 1988), we examined the sexual adjustment items separately. Interested investigators might wish to combine items to generate a more global measure of adjustment.

Reliability

A number of subscales for this measure can be constructed, depending on researchers’ interests. Internal consistency was demonstrated for the following subscales using coefficient alpha:

1. Parental Nudity Subscale (Sum Items 1, 2, 3, 4): .74
2. Overall Nudity Subscale (Sum Items 1–8): .77
3. Parental Bed Subscale (Sum Items 9–10): .80
4. Maternal Attitudes Subscale (Sum Items 11, 13, 15): .77
5. Paternal Attitudes Subscale (Sum Items 12, 14, 16): .78
6. Overall Attitudes Subscale (Sum Items 11–16): .78

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No test-retest reliability has been obtained for this measure.

Validity

No formal validation of this measure has been reported. It would be appropriate to demonstrate validity by correlating subscales of this measure with established measures of sexual adjustment and perhaps global attitudes about one’s family. The items on this measure clearly demonstrate face validity. It would also be helpful to examine the degree to which a socially desirable response set might influence responses. To that end, examination of the correlation between these items and a measure of social desirability (e.g., Reynolds, 1982) would provide useful information.

References


Exhibit

Sexual History and Adjustment Questionnaire

Retrospective Reports of Childhood Experiences with Nudity and Sleeping in the Parental Bed

Please use the following scale for questions 1–10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>almost never</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>very often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. When you were between the ages of 0–5, how often do you remember seeing your mother naked?
2. When you were between the ages of 6–11, how often do you remember seeing your mother naked?
3. When you were between the ages of 0–5, how often do you remember seeing your father naked?
4. When you were between the ages of 6–11, how often do you remember seeing your father naked?
5. When you were between the ages of 0–5, how often do you remember seeing your same-sex siblings or friends naked?
6. When you were between the ages of 6–11, how often do you remember seeing your same-sex siblings or friends naked?
7. When you were between the ages of 0–5, how often do you remember seeing your opposite-sex siblings or friends naked?
8. When you were between the ages of 6–11, how often do you remember seeing your opposite-sex siblings or friends naked?
9. When you were between the ages of 0–5, how often do you remember sleeping in the same bed as your parents?
10. When you were between the ages of 6–11, how often do you remember sleeping in the same bed as your parents?

Parental Attitudes Items

Please use the following scale for questions 11–14:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extreme discomfort</td>
<td>moderate discomfort</td>
<td>neither discomfort nor discomfort</td>
<td>moderate comfort</td>
<td>extreme comfort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. In general, over the course of your childhood, please rate the degree of comfort you felt in talking about sexual matters with your mother:
12. In general, over the course of your childhood, please rate the degree of comfort you felt in talking about sexual matters with your father:
13. While you were growing up, please rate the degree of comfort you think your mother felt when talking about sexuality:
14. While you were growing up, please rate the degree of comfort you think your father felt when talking about sexuality:
15. How would you characterize your mother’s attitude toward sexuality when you were growing up?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extremely negative</td>
<td>moderately negative</td>
<td>neither positive nor negative</td>
<td>moderately positive</td>
<td>extremely positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. How would you characterize your father’s attitude toward sexuality when you were growing up?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>extremely negative</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>moderately negative</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>neither positive nor negative</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>moderately positive</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>extremely positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

17. Overall, how well do you feel that your upbringing prepared you to deal with issues of sexuality and sexual relationships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>poorly</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>adequately</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>pretty well</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>very well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

18. How often do you remember issues of sexuality being discussed in your home when you were growing up?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>almost never</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>very often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

19. In general, how often was there physical contact/affection displayed in your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>almost never</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>very often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Sexual Adjustment Items

Please use the following scale for questions 20–29:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>somewhat disagree</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>somewhat agree</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

20. I feel good about myself.
21. I experience guilt or anxiety when it comes to my sex life.
22. I am happy with my sex life.
23. I am heterosexual.
24. I have sex more often than most people of my age and situation (e.g., married versus single).
25. I tend to engage in casual sexual relationships.
26. I have experienced sexual problems.
27. I would like my sex life to be more active than it is.
28. I am very consistent in making certain that birth control is a part of my sexual encounters.
29. I am knowledgeable about sex.
30. Regarding physical contact and affection in your family how often do you remember having feelings of discomfort about this contact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>almost never</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>very often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

28. I am very consistent in making certain that birth control is a part of my sexual encounters.