Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures

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Sexual Inhibition/Sexual Excitation Scales—Short Form

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Exhibit 2

**Sexual Opinion Survey—Short Form**

1. Almost all sexually explicit material is nauseating.
   - I strongly agree
   - I strongly disagree

2. Masturbation can be an exciting experience.

3. It would be emotionally upsetting to me to see someone exposing themselves publicly.

4. The thought of engaging in unusual sex practices is highly arousing.

5. The thought of having long-term sexual relations with more than one sex partner is not disgusting to me.

Note. Score as follows: Score responses from 1 = I strongly agree to 7 = I strongly disagree; then reverse code items 1 and 3; then add all responses. Scores can range from 5 (most erotophilic) to 35 (most erotophobic). To reflect current usage, the terms pornography and pornographic from the original scale have been replaced with erotic or sexually explicit material.

a The scale is repeated after each item.

Exhibit 3

**Comfort With Sexuality Matters for Very Young Adolescent Girls**

Please respond to each item as honestly as you can. There are no right and wrong answers, and your answers will be completely anonymous.

1. It is not OK for a person to have more than one sex partner during their lifetime.
   - I strongly disagree
   - I strongly agree

2. It is OK for a person to masturbate if it makes him/her feel good.

3. It is OK for two men to have sex with each other or two women to have sex with each other.

4. It is not OK for people to have sexual intercourse unless they are in a committed relationship.

5. It is OK to enjoy being sexually aroused (turned on) by a sexy story, picture, or movie.

6. Oral sex is disgusting to me.

Note. Score as follows: First, score responses from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 7 (I strongly agree); second, reverse code Items 1, 4, and 6; third, average all 6 items. Scores range from 1 (least comfortable) to 7 (most comfortable). Missing data can be ignored provided participants complete at least half of the items.

a The scale is repeated after each item.

b Our initial sample of Grade 7 girls generally did not know what “oral sex” was. The term was defined briefly by the project manager.

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**Sexual Inhibition/Sexual Excitation Scales—Short Form**

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The central assumption of the dual control model (Bancroft & Janssen, 2000) is that sexual arousal and response result from a balance between inhibitory and excitatory mechanisms of the central nervous system. The Sexual Inhibition/Sexual Excitation Scales (SIS/SES; Janssen, Vorst, Finn, & Bancroft, 2002) consist of 45 items and feature one sexual excitation factor (SES) and two inhibition-related factors: one relevant to the threat of performance failure (SIS1) and one relevant to the threat of performance consequences (SIS2). The SIS/SES has been found to be relevant to the
prediction of various aspects of sexual response and behavior (for a review, see Bancroft, Graham, Janssen, & Sanders, 2009). Several studies have reported gender differences in SIS/SES scores. Women tend to score higher on sexual inhibition and lower on sexual excitation compared with men, and not all SIS/SES items may be equally relevant to men’s and women’s arousal (Carpenter, Janssen, Graham, Vorst, & Wicherts, 2008). The SIS/SES—Short Form (SIS/SES-SF) was designed by selecting items that represent the three-factor structure equally well for women and men.

**Description**

Data were provided by 2,045 Indiana University undergraduates (1,067 women and 978 men; mean age = 19.8) who completed the 45-item SIS/SES. A series of factor analyses using LISREL revealed a three-factor solution with equal factor loadings for men and women, involving 19 SIS/SES items. Several SIS/SES items showed differences in measurement characteristics between females and males, as evidenced by differences in item intercepts and residual variances. Therefore, only items that were fully “measurement invariant” for men and women were selected. This procedure yielded a 14-item solution that highlights SIS/SES themes of shared relevance to men and women. Shared SES themes included sexual arousal stemming from social interactions (vs. less relational activities like sexual fantasy or erotica). SIS1 themes for both women and men included distraction, focus on sexual performance, and past problems with arousal. SIS1 themes of greater relevance to men (excluded from the SIS/SES-SF) included concerns about pleasing partners sexually. For both men and women, SIS2 themes included risk of getting caught or contracting an STD. In contrast, concerns about pregnancy/pain were more relevant to women and are not represented on the SIS/SES-SF. Men scored higher on SES (M = 17.1, SD = 2.8), lower on SIS1 (M = 8.2, SD = 1.9), and lower on SIS2 (M = 10.5, SD = 2.1) than women (M = 15.0, SD = 2.8; M = 8.7, SD = 1.8; M = 12.0, SD = 2.3, respectively; for all, p < .001). Correlations between the 45-item SIS/SES and the 14-item Short Form were identical for men and women for SES (r = .90), SIS1 (r = .80) and SIS2 (r = .80).

**Response Mode and Timing**

The SIS/SES-SF consists of 14 items rated on a 4-point scale (1 = Strongly Agree to 4 = Strongly Disagree). Completion of the questionnaire takes approximately 5 minutes. General instructions are provided (see Exhibit).

**Scoring**

To score the SIS/SES-SF: first, recode all items so that 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree (i.e., 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, 4 = 1). Then, add responses to Items 1, 3, 8, 10, 11, and 14 for SES; add responses to Items 4, 9, 12, and 13 for SIS1; and add responses to Items 2, 5, 6, and 7 for SIS2. This scheme will result in scores ranging from 6 to 24 for SES, and 4 to 16 for SIS1 and SIS2. Missing data can be handled by substituting the mean score for remaining items from that subscale, but discarding incomplete data is preferable.

**Reliability**

A subset of our participants (50 men and 51 women) completed the SIS/SES on two occasions, at an average interim of 32 days for women and 48 days for men. After removal of three outliers, for women the test-retest reliability of the SIS/SES-SF was r = .61 for SES, r = .61 for SIS1, and r = .63 for SIS2. For men, test-retest reliability of the Short Form was r = .75 for SES, r = .66 for SIS1, and r = .65 for SIS2.

**Validity**

A subset of participants (141 women and 532 men) completed Neuroticism and Extraversion/Introversion Scales of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975), the Harm Avoidance Scale of the Minnesota Personality Questionnaire (Tellegen & Waller, 1994), the Social Desirability Scale (Hays, Hayashi, & Stewart, 1989), the Behavioral Inhibition/Behavioral Activation Scales (Carver & White, 1994), the Sexual Opinion Survey (Fisher, Byrne, White, & Kelley, 1988), and the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). These data suggest that convergent and discriminant validity of the SIS/SES-SF resembles that of the 45-item measure (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>SIS1</th>
<th>SIS2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Desirability Scale (SDSR-5)</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Inhibition/Activation Scales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIS</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAS—Reward Responsiveness</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.35*</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAS—Drive</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAS—Fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion Subscale (EPQ)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harm Avoidance Subscale (MPQ)</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Opinion Survey (SOS)</td>
<td>.52*</td>
<td>.39*</td>
<td>-.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI)</td>
<td>.36*</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>-.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01; Holm’s sequential Bonferroni procedure (Holm, 1979).
Other Information

In addition to the SIS/SES-SF, two measures assessing dual control model processes have been reported, including the original SIS/SES (validated in men by Janssen et al., 2002, and in women by Carpenter et al., 2008) and the SESII-W (validated in women by Graham, Sanders, & Milhausen, 2006). Although gender differences exist in factors that influence sexual excitation and inhibition, many central themes are clearly shared. The SIS/SES-SF focuses on items with similar psychometric properties in women and men. When a measure of broader scope may be preferred, the 45-item version of the SIS/SES and the 36-item SESII-W remain good alternatives.

References


Exhibit

SIS/SES Questionnaire—Short Form

Instructions: In this questionnaire you will find statements about how you might react to various sexual situations, activities, or behaviors. Obviously, how you react will often depend on the circumstances, but we are interested in what would be the most likely reaction for you. Please read each statement carefully and decide how you would be most likely to react. Then circle the number that corresponds with your answer. Please try to respond to every statement. Sometimes you may feel that none of the responses seems completely accurate. Sometimes you may read a statement that you feel is “not applicable.” In these cases, please circle the response you would choose if it were applicable to you. In many statements you will find words describing reactions such as “sexually aroused,” or sometimes just “aroused.” With these words we mean to describe “feelings of sexual excitement,” feeling “sexually stimulated,” “horny,” “hot,” or “turned on.” Don’t think too long before answering. Please give your first reaction. Try not to skip any questions. Try to be as honest as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When a sexually attractive stranger accidentally touches me, I easily become aroused.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If I am having sex in a secluded, outdoor place and I think that someone is nearby, I am not likely to get very aroused.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When I talk to someone on the telephone who has a sexy voice, I become sexually aroused.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I cannot get aroused unless I focus exclusively on sexual stimulation.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. If I am masturbating on my own and I realize that someone is likely to come into the room at any moment, I will lose my erection/my sexual arousal.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. If I realize there is a risk of catching a sexually transmitted disease, I am unlikely to stay sexually aroused.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If I can be seen by others while having sex, I am unlikely to stay sexually aroused.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When I think of a very attractive person, I easily become sexually aroused.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Once I have an erection, I want to start intercourse right away before I lose my erection/Once I am sexually aroused, I want to start intercourse right away before I lose my arousal.</td>
<td>A &lt;br&gt; B &lt;br&gt; C &lt;br&gt; D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Sexual Excitation/Sexual Inhibition Inventory for Women (SESII-W) is designed to assess the propensity for sexual excitation (SE) and sexual inhibition (SI) in women.

Description

The theoretical model underlying the SESII-W is the dual control model (Bancroft, 1999; Bancroft, Graham, Janssen, & Sanders, 2009; Bancroft & Janssen, 2000). This model proposes that there are separate, relatively independent excitatory and inhibitory systems and that the occurrence of sexual arousal depends on the relative activation of SE and SI. A basic assumption of the model is that individuals vary in their propensity for both SE and SI.

Although a questionnaire had been developed to assess the propensity for SE and SI in men (the Sexual Inhibition/Sexual Excitation Scales (SIS/SES; Janssen, Vorst, Finn, & Bancroft, 2002), we questioned whether it was equally suited for women (Graham, Sanders, Milhausen, & McBride, 2004). For this reason, we obtained qualitative data from nine focus groups involving women of varying ages, racial/ethnic background, and sexual orientation to explore the concepts of SE and SI, and of the factors that influence sexual arousal (Graham et al., 2004). These qualitative data informed the item development of this measure, the SESII-W.

The original SESII-W contained 115 items. Initial validation involved a sample of 655 women (Graham, Sanders, & Milhausen, 2006) recruited using two methods: postal recruitment of a random sample of students and staff working at a large midwestern university (n = 226) and e-mail and listserv postings about the study (n = 429). Factor analysis identified eight factors comprising a total of 36 items, and two higher-order factors, one related to SE and one to SI. The three lower-order factors related to inhibition were Relationship Importance (reflecting the need for sex to occur within a specific relationship context); Arousal Contingency (the potential for arousal to be easily inhibited or disrupted by situational factors); and Concerns About Sexual Function (the tendency for worries about sexual functioning to negatively affect arousal). The factors related to excitation were Sexual Arousability (the tendency to become sexually aroused in a variety of situations); Partner Characteristics (the tendency for a partner’s personality or behavior to enhance arousal); Sexual Power Dynamics (the tendency to become sexually aroused by force or domination in a trusting sexual situation); Smell (the tendency for olfactory cues to enhance arousal); and Setting—Unusual or Unconcealed (the tendency for arousal to be increased by the possibility of being seen or heard having sex or having sex in a novel situation).

Close to normal distributions have been found for women’s scores on the higher-order SE and SI factors (Graham et al., 2006), lending support to the idea that variation in excitation and inhibition proneness is normal, and that the mid-part of the range represents adaptive levels of inhibition.

The questionnaire was designed to be appropriate for use with women of different sexual orientation and varying degrees of sexual experience, and can be completed by women who are not in a current sexual relationship.

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