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Self-Perceptions of Female Sexuality Survey Instrument

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The Self-Perceptions of Female Sexuality Survey Instrument covers a wide range of beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and responses about a woman’s own sexuality and, to a lesser extent, that of her partners. The instrument was developed for the primary purpose of providing further clarification of the apparently inseparable nature of clitoral and vaginal orgasms. More specifically, the instrument ascertains whether perceived differences exist with regard to experiencing orgasm via masturbation, petting, and sexual intercourse in terms of physiological and psychological sexual satisfaction.

Description

The complete instrument consists of 123 open-ended and closed-form questions concerning sexual attitudes, sexual behavior, and the female sexual response. The following categories of items appear in the instrument:

1. Demographic variables, including age, marital status, dating status, formal education, religious preference, and religiosity.
2. Physiological and psychological sexual satisfaction variables, including early knowledge about the pleasurable sensations of the clitoris, level of sexual adjustment, perceived levels of current physiological and psychological sexual satisfaction, and desired changes in sex life.
3. Peer communication and mass media variables, including sources of information about female orgasm, sources of information about any differences between orgasmic responses, discussion with peers regarding different kinds and/or types of orgasms, and ages at various stages of opinion formation regarding perceived differences in orgasmic responses.
4. Masturbatory attitude variables, including perceived acceptance of masturbation of self, acceptance of masturbation by acquaintances, and the relationship of masturbation to marital sexual adjustment.
5. Sexual history variables, including masturbatory, petting, and sexual intercourse experience; frequency of masturbation, petting, and sexual intercourse; experience with pretending orgasm; relationships with past and current sex partners; and frequency and preference for various sexual intercourse positions for achieving orgasm.
6. Orgasmic quality variables, including perceived differences, if any, in experiencing orgasm via masturbation, petting, and sexual intercourse; the relative contribution of clitoral versus vaginal stimulation in achieving orgasm during masturbation, petting, and sexual intercourse; and the degree of physiological and psychological satisfaction associated with orgasms achieved via masturbation, petting, and sexual intercourse.

The survey instrument was first pretested with students enrolled in upper-division marriage/family and human sexuality courses. After appropriate revisions, the instrument was pretested a second time utilizing the nursing staff of a large midwestern family planning organization. After making additional changes, the instrument was then critically reviewed by 10 female professionals involved either in teaching and/or research about human sexuality and/or the delivery of community-based family planning services. The recommendations received from these reviewers were incorporated into the final version of the instrument.

The survey instrument is best suited for use with populations containing women with 2 or more years of college education and who are at least 25 years of age. The level of language sophistication found in the instrument would appear to preclude its application to populations having no college education. Furthermore, given the nature of the instrument, a woman would need to have had considerable sexual experience in order to be able to respond in a meaningful way to a substantial number of the items. It is assumed that a greater opportunity for having experienced substantial sexual activity will exist for women aged 25 years or older. To date, this survey instrument has been used for data collection from professional nurses holding at least an associate degree/diploma in nursing and from professional women in academia holding at least a baccalaureate degree.

Response Mode and Timing

Respondents are either to check the appropriate answer category or to answer the open-ended items in their own words within the space provided. Given the detailed personal information being sought regarding sexuality, the

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survey instrument should be completed in total privacy and anonymity. Thus, this instrument is ideally suited for distribution as a mail questionnaire using a business reply envelope.

Based on the pretest results and feedback received from actual respondents, an average of 45 minutes is required to complete all segments of the survey instrument.

Scoring
Although some attitudinal items do appear, it is not intended for this survey instrument to be employed as a scale that can stand alone. It is recommended, however, that all attitudinal items selected for use be arranged in a reverse/nonreverse response pattern to help ensure that respondents give sufficient concentration to the completion of the survey instrument.

Reliability
The test-retest reliability of the instrument has not been established.

Validity
Construct validity has been established by reviewing pretest data for the various measures, which suggest the same relationship between the variables associated with perceived differences in orgasm achieved during masturbation, petting, and sexual intercourse. The instrument has successfully delineated perceived differences in orgasmic responses between orgasms achieved via masturbation, petting, and sexual intercourse; the influence of multiple sex partners on sexual satisfaction; factors associated with pretending orgasm; and levels of sexual satisfaction and desired changes in the sexual lives of single professional women (see references).

References


Exhibit

Self-Perceptions of Female Sexuality

1. How would you rate your current level of sexual adjustment? (Very much adjusted—Very unadjusted; 6 point)
2. At what age did you first become aware of possible pleasurable sensations of the clitoris? (PLEASE SPECIFY)
3. It is necessary for a female to achieve an orgasm in a majority of the instances when she experiences masturbation, petting (mutual masturbation), and/or sexual intercourse in order to be classified as sexually adjusted. (Strongly agree—Strongly disagree; 4 point)
4. Do you feel that most of your female friends believe that a female must experience an orgasm in order to be sexually adjusted? (Yes/No)
5. What has been your most important source of information about the female orgasm? (15 options)
6. Have you ever consciously considered the possibility that orgasms reached through masturbation while alone and/or sexual intercourse might be different? (Yes/No)
7. Have you ever read any material about different kinds and/or types of orgasms? (Yes/No)
8. If ever read materials about different kinds and/or types of orgasms: From the material that you have read, what conclusions, if any, did the authors reach regarding different kinds and/or types of orgasm?
9. Have you ever discussed with a friend, relative, and/or acquaintance whether different kinds and/or types of orgasms exist for the female during sexual intercourse and/or masturbation while alone? (Yes/No)
10. If ever discussed different kinds and/or types of orgasm:
   With whom have you ever discussed different kinds and/or types of orgasm? (15 categories)
11. If ever discussed different kinds and/or types of orgasm:
   At what age did you first discuss different kinds and/or types of orgasm with another person?
12. In your opinion, do different kinds and/or types of orgasm exist for the human female? (Yes/No/Uncertain)
13. If yes, or uncertain that different kinds and/or types of orgasm exist:
   Would you please describe in your own words, the different kinds and/or types of orgasm that can be achieved through masturbation while alone, petting, and/or sexual intercourse.
14. Have you ever masturbated while alone? (Yes/No)
15. Have you ever achieved an orgasm? (Yes/No /Uncertain)
16. Have you ever experienced sexual intercourse? (Yes/No)
17. If ever had orgasm:
   How did you first experience orgasm?
       _____ 1. Masturbation while alone
       _____ 2. Petting (Mutual masturbation)
       _____ 3. Sexual intercourse
       _____ 4. Other _______________
18. If ever had orgasm:
   At what age did you experience your first orgasm?
19. If ever had orgasm:
   Under which of the following circumstances have you ever experienced an orgasm? (Check all applicable categories; 32 options)
20. If ever had orgasm through masturbating while alone:
   At what age did you experience your first orgasm through masturbating while alone?
21. If ever had orgasm through petting:
   At what age did you experience your first orgasm through petting?
22. If ever had orgasm through sexual intercourse:
   At what age did you experience your first orgasm through sexual intercourse?
23. If ever masturbated while alone:
   How old were you the first time that you masturbated while alone?
24. If ever masturbated while alone:
   How often do you experience an orgasm through masturbating while alone? (Always-Never; 5 options)
25. If ever masturbated while alone:
   How many orgasms do you usually experience during a single episode of masturbating alone?
26. If masturbated while alone within the past two years:
   During the past two years, about how many times per week, month, or year have you averaged masturbating while alone?
   (Choose only one category and do not use range of times or check the category)
       _____ 1. Times per week
       _____ 2. Times per month
       _____ 3. Times per year
27. If ever had orgasm while masturbating alone:
   In what specific area of your genital region do you most feel the sensation of orgasm occurring during masturbating while alone?
28. If ever petted:
   How would you rate your physiological reaction from petting while alone? (Intense satisfaction-No satisfaction; 5 options)
29. If ever petted:
   How would you rate your psychological reaction from petting while alone? (No satisfaction-Intense satisfaction; 5 options)
30. If ever petted:
   How often do you experience an orgasm while petting? (Always-Never; 5 options)
31. If ever had orgasm during petting:
   How many orgasms do you usually experience during a single episode of petting?
32. If ever had orgasm during petting:
   In what specific area of your genital region do you most feel the sensation of orgasm occurring during petting?
33. If ever had orgasm:
   Do you experience a physiological need in yourself to have an orgasm prior to any sexual arousal and/or sexual activity? (Never-Always; 5 options)
34. If ever had orgasm:
   Do you experience a physiological need in yourself to have more than one orgasm while engaging in masturbating while alone, petting, and/or sexual intercourse? (Never-Always; 5 options)
35. If ever had orgasm:
   Do you experience a psychological need in yourself to have an orgasm prior to any sexual arousal and/or sexual activity? (Never-Always; 5 options)
36. If ever had orgasm:
   Do you experience a psychological need in yourself to have more than one orgasm while engaging in masturbating while alone, petting, and/or sexual intercourse? (Never-Always; 5 options)
37. If ever experienced more than one orgasm during a single sexual experience, including masturbating while alone:
   Do successive orgasms during a single sexual experience become stronger or weaker? (10 options)
38. If ever had sexual intercourse:
   At what age did you first experience sexual intercourse?
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39. If had sexual intercourse within the past two years:
   During the past two years, about how many times per week, month, or year have you averaged having sexual intercourse?
   (Choose only one category and do not use a range of times or check the category)
   _____ 1. Times per week   _____ 2. Times per month   _____ 3. Times per year

40. If ever had sexual intercourse:
   With how many different partners have you ever had sexual intercourse?

41. If ever had sexual intercourse:
   During sexual intercourse, at what point does your most recent male sex partner usually achieve his first orgasm? (6 options)

42. If ever had sexual intercourse:
   Would you please indicate the most frequent position that you utilize for sexual intercourse. You are to rank the sexual intercourse positions with regard to frequency of occurrence with 1-most often, 2-second most often, and 3-third most often only. (12 options)

43. If ever had sexual intercourse:
   How often do you experience an orgasm during sexual intercourse? (Always-Never; 5 options)

44. If rarely or never have orgasm during sexual intercourse:
   Why do you believe that you experience difficulty in achieving orgasm during sexual intercourse?

45. If ever had orgasm during sexual intercourse:
   How many orgasms do you usually experience during a single vaginal penetration while having sexual intercourse?

46. If ever had orgasm during sexual intercourse:
   After having experienced orgasm during sexual intercourse, what is the typical extent of your physiological reaction? (Intense satisfaction-No satisfaction; 5 options)

47. If ever had orgasm during sexual intercourse:
   After having experienced orgasm during sexual intercourse, what is the typical extent of your psychological reaction? (Intense satisfaction-No satisfaction; 5 options)

48. If ever masturbated to orgasm while alone and had sexual intercourse:
   Do you prefer to masturbate to orgasm while alone rather than having sexual intercourse? (Always-Never; 5 options)

49. If ever had orgasm:
   Would you please indicate the most frequent techniques that you use to achieve orgasm?
   You are to rank the following techniques with regard to frequency of occurrence with 1-most often, 2-second most often, and 3-third most often only. (32 options)

50. If ever masturbated while alone, petted, had sexual intercourse, and experienced orgasm:
   Do you experience a difference between an orgasm reached during masturbating while alone, during petting, and during sexual intercourse with vaginal penetration? (Yes/No)

51. If yes, differences exist between orgasm achieved during masturbation while alone, petting, and sexual intercourse:
   In your own words, please describe the difference between orgasms achieved during masturbation while alone, petting, and sexual intercourse with vaginal penetration

52. If ever had orgasm during sexual intercourse:
   In what specific area of your genital region do you most feel the sensation of orgasm occurring during sexual intercourse with vaginal penetration?

53. If ever had orgasm during sexual intercourse:
   What is the relative contribution of clitoral versus vaginal stimulation in helping you to achieve orgasm during sexual intercourse? (7 options)

54. If ever had orgasm during masturbation:
   What is the relative contribution of clitoral versus vaginal stimulation in helping you to achieve orgasm during masturbating while alone? (7 options)

55. If ever had orgasm during petting:
   What is the relative contribution of clitoral versus vaginal stimulation in helping you to achieve orgasm during petting? (7 options)

56. Which of the following changes, if any, would you like to have in your current sex life? (44 options)

57. How would you rate your overall personal physiological level of sexual satisfaction? (Very much satisfied-Very much dissatisfied; 6 options)

58. How would you rate your overall personal psychological level of sexual satisfaction? (Very much satisfied-Very much dissatisfied; 6 options)

*In the interest of brevity, only select items specifically related to the orgasmic response have been included in this exhibit. Additional demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral items/variables that are critical to appropriate analyses and understanding of the perceived differences have been omitted due to space limitations.*