

Treatment of vaginismus commonly involves exposure to vaginal penetration by using dilators of increasing size or the women's fingers. Pelvic floor muscle exercises may be used to provide training in discrimination of vaginal muscle contraction and relaxation, and to teach voluntary control over muscle spasm.

Pharmacological treatment of sexual disorders of women is just beginning. Smooth muscle relaxants have been used in women to ameliorate sexual arousal and as a consequence hypoactive sexual desire. It appears that drugs like sildenafil produce smooth muscle relaxation and increased genital blood flow, but they have no effect on the subjective experience of sexual response. In women with subphysiological levels of testosterone—mainly in the postmenopausal—testosterone patches appear to have an effect on mood, energy, and libido.

3.2.2 Validated treatments for women's sexual dysfunctions. Reviews of treatments for sexual dysfunctions in women following the criteria for validated or evidence-based practice have been published (O'Donohue et al. 1997, Heiman and Meston 1997, Baucom et al. 1998). Heiman and Meston conclude that treatments for primary anorgasmia fulfil the criteria of 'well-established,' and secondary anorgasmia studies fall into the 'probably efficacious' group. They conclude with some reservations that vaginismus appears to be successfully treated if repeated practice with vaginal dilators is included in the treatment. Their reservations are due to a lack of controlled or treatment comparison studies of vaginismus. All authors conclude that adequate data on the treatment of sexual desire disorder, sexual arousal disorder, and dyspareunia is lacking.

Although the evidence-based practice movement deserves support, care for patients with sexual problems must be continued even without proof according to the rules of 'good clinical practice.'

4. Future Directions

Sex therapy bloomed in the 1970s and 1980s, but reviews of evidence-based treatments suggest that developments stagnated and very few new studies have been undertaken. The recent shift to biological approaches will continue, at least for a while. Viagra and testosterone patches will shortly be followed by more centrally acting drugs (e.g., dopamine agonists). The search for drugs has provoked a wide range of studies into the biological basis of sexual function. This work inspires behavioral and cognitive neuroscience studies, which may provide a framework and new tools to better understand sexual emotions and sexual motivation.

See also: Psychological Treatments, Empirically Supported; Sexuality and Gender

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Sexual Attitudes and Behavior

The focus in this article is on changes in premarital, homosexual, and extramarital sexual attitudes and behaviors as revealed in nationally representative surveys during the second half of the twentieth century. Attention will be mainly on shared sexual attitudes and behaviors in various societies. A shared attitude is a cultural orientation that pressures us to have positive or negative feelings toward some behavior, and to think about that behavior in a particular way.

1. Sexual Attitudes: Premarital Sexuality

Findings from various countries will be examined and compared but because of the large number of national surveys conducted in the USA, we will start there. The first national representative sample of adults in the USA that used a series of scientifically designed questions to measure premarital sexual attitudes was completed in 1963 (Reiss 1967). The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago was contracted to do the survey. Reiss composed 24 questions about premarital sexual relationships that

formed two unidimensional scales and several subscales (Reiss 1967, Chap. 2). The highest acceptance was to the question asking about premarital coitus for a man when engaged. Even on this question only 20 percent (30 percent of males and 10 percent of females) said they agreed that such premarital coitus was acceptable (Reiss 1967, p. 31). The date of this survey (early 1963) was strategic because it was at the start of the rapid increase in premarital sexuality that came to be known as the sexual revolution, and which soon swept the USA and much of the western world.

Two years later, in 1965, NORC fielded a national survey that contained four questions on premarital sexual attitudes. One of the questions also asked about the acceptance of premarital coitus for males when engaged. Scott (1998) reports an average acceptance rate of 28 percent, consisting of 37 percent of males and 21 percent of females in this survey. Acceptance was designated by a person checking either of the last two categories ('wrong only sometimes' and 'not wrong at all'), and disapproval was indicated by a person checking either of the first two categories ('always wrong' and 'almost always wrong'). The 20 percent acceptance rate in the 1963 national survey and the 28 percent rate in this 1965 survey lends credence to a rough estimate that at the start of the sexual revolution in premarital sex (1963–5), about one quarter of adults in the USA accepted premarital coitus while three quarters disapproved of it.

In 1970 Albert Klassen and his colleagues at the Kinsey Institute conducted the next nationally representative survey (1989). Klassen also used the NORC to conduct his survey. He used four questions and asked about the acceptability of premarital intercourse for males and females, when in love and when not in love. Reiss reported that the responses to questions about males specifying love and those specifying engagement, were less than 2 percent apart, and so the Klassen question about premarital sex for males in love can be compared to the two previous surveys. Klassen reports that 52 percent (60 percent of males and 45 percent of females) chose the two acceptant categories of 'wrong only sometimes' or 'not wrong at all' (Klassen et al. 1989, p. 389). In just seven years acceptance of coitus rose from 20 percent in 1963, 28 percent in 1965, to 52 percent in 1970. The questions used in all three national surveys seem comparable and, most importantly, the size of the difference from 1963 to 1970 is so large, that it is hard not to conclude that in those seven years, something that can be called a revolution began to evidence itself in American attitudes toward premarital coitus.

Reiss considered the increased autonomy of females and young people as the key factor in the increase of premarital sexual attitudes and developed the *Autonomy Theory* explanation of the sexual revolution around this concept (Reiss 1967, Chap. 10, Reiss and Miller 1979). In the 1960s a higher percentage of females were employed than ever before and this

meant more autonomy for them, and more autonomy for their children from parental controls and indoctrination. Females more than males were impacted by this increased autonomy and the three studies show much greater proportionate changes in female attitudes than in males. Adult males' acceptance doubled from 30 percent in 1963 to 60 percent in 1970, whereas adult females' acceptance increased 3.5-fold from 10 percent to 45 percent during the same period. The autonomy theory predicted that since female autonomy was increasing the most, female premarital permissiveness would increase the most. This is precisely what happened.

Starting in 1972 the NORC introduced the General Social Survey (GSS) to gather national data annually or biennially on adults in the USA concerning premarital sexuality and a wide range of other nonsexual attitudes and behaviors. These data afford a basis here to examine the change in premarital sexual attitudes from 1972 to 1998. Unfortunately, the GSS researchers did not ask a question modeled after that in the 1963, 1965, and 1970 surveys, which all specified gender and the presence of love or engagement. The GSS question basically taps a respondent's global response to the acceptability of premarital coitus. It asked: 'If a man and a woman have sex relations before marriage, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes or not wrong at all' (Davis and Smith 1999, p. 235). The 'always wrong' response to the GSS question is the only response that clearly excludes acceptance of coitus even for an engaged or in love male and so it will be considered as the response indicating rejection of such behavior.

The 1972 GSS survey reported that 63 percent accepted premarital coitus under some condition and 37 percent checked the 'always wrong' category. That was a significant growth from the 52 percent acceptance reported by Klassen for 1970. By 1975 the GSS surveys reported that acceptance had risen to 69 percent. The rise was small after 1975 and acceptance was 74 percent in 1998 (Davis and Smith 1999, p. 235). Looking at all the national surveys in the USA from 1963 to 1998 the evidence is that the period of most rapid change in acceptance of premarital coitus was from 1963 to 1975, with an overall increase from 20 percent to 69 percent. That is the period that we can most accurately label as a premarital sexual revolution. In all the surveys discussed the data showed that females, much more than males, increased their acceptance of premarital coitus and this led to more gender equality in attitudes towards premarital coitus. The gender comparisons in 1963 were 10 percent female acceptance to 30 percent male acceptance. By 1975 the comparisons were 65 percent female acceptance to 74 percent male acceptance.

Studies in a number of European societies indicate that even after the increased acceptance of premarital coitus in the USA, many Western countries were still more acceptant than the USA. For example, using

data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) of 1994, comparing the USA to five other societies, Scott reports that only Ireland was less acceptant of premarital coitus than the USA. Germany and Sweden were much more acceptant, and even Britain and Poland were significantly more acceptant (Scott 1998, p. 833). Unlike in the USA, Scott reports increases in acceptance of premarital coitus continuing in Britain during the 1980s and 1990s.

There are other national surveys that can be studied such as the 1971 and 1992 national surveys in Finland that show similar trends to what was found in the USA (Kontula and Haavio-Mannila 1995, Chap. 12). Frequent mention of comparable changes in premarital sexual attitudes can be found in the *International Encyclopedia of Sexuality* in its accounts of 31 societies (Francoeur 1997). There are also a number of other European countries with national surveys taken in the 1980s and 1990s but lacking earlier national surveys for comparison. Nevertheless, what evidence we have on these other societies seems to support a significant increase in the acceptance of premarital coitus similar to what was happening in the USA, although not necessarily in the exact same years.

2. *Sexual Attitudes: Homosexuality*

In 1973, a question on homosexual behavior was first asked in the GSS national survey in the USA. No distinction was made between male and female homosexuality. Nineteen percent accepted homosexual behavior as 'wrong only sometimes' or 'not wrong at all.' That did not vary a great deal until the 1993 GSS survey where acceptance jumped to over 29 percent. It then rose to 34 percent in 1996 and to 36 percent in 1998 (Davis and Smith 1999). One can only speculate as to why in the early 1990s this change accelerated in the USA. Perhaps the changes in the 1980s toward greater civil rights for homosexuals encouraged the increase in acceptance of homosexual behavior itself. However changes in the intensity of feelings cannot be indicated by the simple percent distribution on the GSS question on homosexuality. Clearly, using just one question to measure a sexual attitude, while useful, does not afford us sufficient information.

There are national data on homosexuality from other countries. Inglehart, using his two World Value Surveys, compared 20 societies in 1981 and 1990 on the question of homosexuality. He reported that in all but three of the 20 (Ireland, Japan, South Africa) there was an increase in acceptance of homosexuality between 1981 and 1990 (Inglehart 1997, p. 279). In addition, the ISSP (1994) reported that Poland and Ireland were less acceptant of homosexuality than the USA, whereas Britain, West Germany, East Germany, and Sweden were more acceptant (Scott 1998, p. 833).

When we compare changes in males and females in

the USA using the GSS data we find that females changed more than males in accepting homosexuality. Homosexual attitudes have traditionally been one of the very few sexuality areas where females equal or exceed males in the acceptance of a sexual behavior. This type of male/female difference was commonly found also in Western European countries studied in the World Values Surveys. But this higher female level of acceptance of homosexuality was not typically found in Eastern European or Asian countries (Inglehart 1997).

3. *Sexual Attitudes: Extramarital Sexuality*

Extramarital sexual attitudes present a very different trend from either premarital or homosexual attitudes. The GSS data for the USA show that the acceptance of extramarital sexuality fell significantly between 1973 and 1988. Acceptance of extramarital sexuality (answering 'wrong only sometimes' and 'not wrong at all') in 1973 was 16 percent but by 1988 this had dropped to only 8 percent. Although male acceptance stayed higher than that of females, both genders showed close to a 50 percent decrease in acceptance over that period. The fear of HIV/AIDS may have played a role. Negative experiences with extramarital sexuality during the era of rapidly increasing divorce rates in the 1970s may also have contributed to this conservative trend.

This more conservative shift in extramarital attitudes was seen in only a minority of the 20 countries on which Inglehart presents data for the period 1981-90 (Inglehart 1997, p. 367). France, Northern Ireland, Sweden, Argentina, and South Africa showed the sharpest decreases in their acceptance of extramarital sexuality. Meanwhile, Mexico, Italy, Finland, and Hungary evidenced the strongest changes toward greater acceptance of extramarital sex. This finding presents a most interesting puzzle as to why some countries changed to be more restrictive while others became more acceptant of extramarital sexuality.

Adding more to this puzzle is the finding by Inglehart that from 1981 to 1990, 16 (of 19) countries increased their belief that a child needs two parents to be happy (1997, p. 287). Thus, there was clearly more agreement in most of these countries on the importance of the two-parent family than on extramarital sexuality. It must be that in some countries, extramarital sexuality was not seen as a challenge to the stability of the two-parent family. There is a need here to also study the various types of extramarital coital relationships to distinguish the impact on stable relationships of having a casual vs. a love affair and/or a consensual vs. a nonconsensual affair (Reiss 1986, Chap. 3). These sexual complexities are but one of the many sexual conundrums waiting to be deciphered by more detailed research that can clarify and elaborate the survey research data presented here.

4. Relation of Sexual Behaviors and Sexual Attitudes

The relation of sexual behavior to the attitude changes we have noted can be explored in several national studies in the USA. The 1982 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) interviewed females 15 to 44 years old. These 15–44 year old females were asked about their first coitus, and from this we can obtain retrospective reports for those in this sample who were teenagers in the early 1960s. Hopkins reports that the average percent nonvirginal for 15–19 year old females in 1962 was 13 percent and this rose to 30 percent by 1971 (Hopkins 1997). Zelnik and Kantner (1980) undertook three nationally representative samples of teenage females in the USA during the 1970s. They report that the percentage of 15–19 year old females who had experienced coitus rose from 30 percent in 1971 to 43 percent in 1976, and finally to 50 percent in 1979 (Zelnik and Kantner 1980). The 50 percent rate dropped to 45 percent in 1982 and rose back to about 50 percent in 1988 and has stayed close to that level since then (Singh and Darroch 1999, Reiss 1997, Chap. 3). There were many other changes in teenage sexual relationships, such as improved contraception, that cannot be discussed here. Finally, it should be noted that premarital coital behavior, just like premarital attitudes, changed much more for females than for males (Laumann et al. 1994).

When we compare these behavioral changes with the attitudinal changes discussed above, it is apparent that the large increase in the acceptance of premarital coitus starting in the 1960s was very much in line with the contemporaneous increases in teenage coital behavior. Using the GSS surveys allows one to compare attitudes with behavior in all three areas of premarital, homosexual, and extramarital for specific years. These data show a relatively close relationship between attitudes and behaviors in all three areas. For example, among those who said premarital sex is 'always wrong' 32 percent had premarital coitus in the last year, while among those who said premarital coitus was 'not wrong at all,' 86 percent had premarital coitus in the last year (Smith 1994, p. 89). The comparable figures for homosexuality are 1 percent vs. 15 percent, and for extramarital sex 2 percent vs. 18 percent. These are very large differences and they support the interactive relationship of attitudes and behavior in our sexual lives which others have commented upon (Reiss 1967 Chap. 7, Klassen et al. 1989, p. 253).

Many of the same countries that were noted for increases in sexual attitudes since the 1960s also have national data supporting changes in sexual behavior, particularly in premarital sexuality (Inglehart 1997). A large national survey in England presents data supporting a very close association of attitudes and behaviors in premarital, homosexual, and extramarital sexuality (Johnson et al. 1994, p. 245). Also, in the area of homosexuality, Laumann reports similarities in his

1992 American data concerning homosexuality with data from other national surveys (Laumann et al. 1994). Finally, Francouer's encyclopedic work written by experts from 31 societies also supports a close connection between attitude changes and behavior changes in many of the countries studied (Francouer 1997). The puzzle concerning how, and in what temporal sequences attitudes and behavior influence each other is one that requires careful research and theoretical attention.

5. Conclusions

The representative national surveys examined leads to several important conclusions about sexual attitudes and behaviors in the post Kinsey era. It seems clear that there has been a sexual revolution in the area of premarital sexuality in the USA and in a large number of other Western countries. This is evidenced in both attitudes and behaviors and more strongly on the part of females than males. There has also been a more moderate increase in the acceptance of homosexuality. Finally, it was found that the acceptance of extramarital sexuality has actually decreased in the USA and elsewhere while increasing in a few other countries.

There is a dearth of theories regarding why such sexual changes have occurred. The autonomy theory argues that the key variable in premarital sexual attitude change is the rise in autonomy (Reiss 1967, Reiss and Miller 1979). Such a change is also part of increased social acceptance of gender equality and of premarital sexuality, particularly in a gender equal relationship. The extensive examination by Hopkins of national data in the USA to test the autonomy theory's ability to explain premarital sexuality trends from 1960–90, strongly supports the increases in female gender equality as a key determinant of changes in autonomy, which in turn produced changes in premarital sexual attitudes and behaviors (Hopkins 1997, Chap. 6).

6. Future Directions

Reiss has delineated the nature of a new sexual ethic that he finds is increasingly popular in many countries in the Western world. He calls this new ethic, *HER Sexual Pluralism*, meaning that the moral yardstick in a sexual relationship is now the degree of *Honesty, Equality, and Responsibility* present. The older norms that judged people by whether they had performed a specific sexual behavior, have increasingly been replaced by focusing on the HER relationship parameters (Reiss 1997, Chaps. 1 and 10). This new ethic fits with the increased acceptance of premarital and homosexual sexuality, for the HER ethic does not use

marriage as the Rubicon of good and bad sexuality. The drop in the acceptance of extramarital sexuality in many countries may reflect the difficulty in carrying out two HER relationships simultaneously. HER sexual pluralism is well integrated with the more gender equal type of evolving Western society and is predicted to become the dominant sexual ethic of the twenty-first century.

One other theoretical explanation of sexual trends comes from Inglehart (1997). He postulates that as capitalist societies become more affluent and increasing numbers of their citizens feel secure, there has occurred a rise in 'non materialist' values. These new values stress well being and quality of life, over accumulation of more economic wealth. Inglehart argues that as part of this major emphasis on quality of life, we are witnessing a liberation and pluralization of sexual values, particularly in the premarital and homosexual areas. Inglehart's thesis is quite compatible with the autonomy theory because both theories are placing the birth of the changes in sexuality as a key part of the development of a new type of society; a society that is more autonomous and more concerned with the quality of life, than with economic survival. The fact that young people in these societies evidence these sexuality trends more than older people lends further support to the future growth of these changes. There appears to be a change in our basic social institutions in much of the world, and with that, a change in sexual relationships is occurring in line with the emerging HER sexual pluralism ethic.

Many aspects of sexual attitudes and behaviors could not be discussed in this article. Even the surveys in the three areas examined illustrate the need for a more detailed examination of the many nuances of sexuality in each area. In addition, sexual science requires better coverage of peoples outside the Western World (Barry and Schlegel 1980, Reiss 1986). We can make progress by combining qualitative and quantitative methods in our work and linking those many disciplines that study sexuality. One way that significant progress can be encouraged is by the establishment of a multidisciplinary Ph.D. degree in sexual science, and in the Spring of 1999 the Kinsey Institute started work to produce just such a degree program (Reiss 1999). This program will be immensely helpful in expanding sexual science's ability to explain our sexual lives. Theory is explanation, and science without theory is just bookkeeping. In all science we need to know why something is the way we find it, not just describe what is found. With the growth of our scientific explanations we will be better able to contain the myriad of sexual problems that plague sexual relationships worldwide.

See also: Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth; Gay/Lesbian Movements; Prostitution; Rape and Sexual Coercion; Rationality and Feminist Thought; Reg-

ulation: Sexual Behavior; Reproductive Rights in Affluent Nations; Sexual Behavior and Maternal Functions, Neurobiology of; Sexual Behavior: Sociological Perspective; Sexual Orientation: Historical and Social Construction; Sexuality and Gender

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