

16 April 2008

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Sexual Excitation and Inhibition in Men: Debunked Myths

Men are much more diverse than thought

The man is regarded as a sex machine pumping everything it can reach. A new research made at the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction at Indiana University, and published in the journal "Archives of Sexual Behavior," reveals that men's sexual desire and arousal occur in a different and much more varied manner than previously believed. The subjects revealed how their sex life was intertwined with experience, erections, desire, scent, relationships, and a woman's intelligence. "We have a lot of assumptions about how men think and feel and behave sexually. We use all kinds of methods to measure men's sexual responses; in addition, we use questionnaires and surveys to ask about sexual behaviors," said Erick Janssen, associate scientist at the Kinsey Institute. The polls included groups of 50 men assigned to three categories based on their age (18-24 years, 25-45 years, 46 and older). Depression and the risk of being caught having sex were powerful inhibiting factors for some men, while for others these factors boosted their desire and arousal. The research revealed that an erection does not necessarily mean sexual arousal in men; most subjects experienced erections in the absence of arousal or interest. Many subjects hardly differentiated between sexual desire and sexual arousal, a tricky finding as many previous researches and clinicians use(d) these terms in questionnaires. Lower quality erection in older men impacted their sexual acting, some changing interest in the partner and her sexual enjoyment. Older men also proved to be more selective in finding sexual partners. A woman's sexual experience impacted men differently according to their age: younger men rather avoided them for fear of disappointing actuations, while older men looked for experienced women. The team has been investigating for over a decade a theoretical model of dual control of the sexual response caused by excitation and inhibition. Distinct and relatively independent sexual excitation and sexual inhibition centers seem to exist within the central nervous system and their balance play can change in various situations, delivering different sexual responses. This model could explain issues like sexual dysfunction and sexual risk taking. The new research will lead to extremely effective questionnaires for the dual control model. "One of the main conclusions of the focus group study is that, just like women, men are different. Sex researchers tend to focus a lot on differences between men and women, while not giving as much attention to the differences that exist among men, and women," said Janssen.