

(1) What is sexual pleasure?

- Do women experience sexual pleasure in the same way that men do?
- Or is sexual pleasure fundamentally different for women?
- Some years ago I asked a doctor and sex expert (a man in his sixties)
- where I could go to find out more about women's sexuality
- He told me to go to the Family Planning Library in London
- But there was only information about contraception and childbirth
- Also of course sexual disease – it was all reproduction & responsibility
- There was no fun at all and certainly no promotion of sex play!

(2) So who provides reliable sex information?

- I asked a younger female doctor thinking she would be more up-to-date on information about how women enjoy sex and orgasm
- I was surprised when she reacted with apparent embarrassment
- I hadn't thought there was anything wrong or unusual in the question
- She told me she had no idea where I might find adult sex information
- Given all the hype today it is amazing that there is so little information
- available to help women get the most out of their sexual relationships
- I was also puzzled that a doctor should be so embarrassed about sex

(3) I realised that women tend to associate

- sexual pleasure with immorality where women provide male gratification
- Men don't have this contradiction – only women are insulted for being promiscuous or for entering into sex as a transaction
- Women also react with embarrassment at the idea of female orgasm
- As if it is a 'come on' women use to encourage male sexual attention
- One of my articles talks about lust but readers are often confused because
- They tend to associate lust with casual sex, illicit affairs and paying for sex
- But lust is sexual desire which hopefully is just as relevant to marital sex

(4) Many women are offended by porn

- so we can deduce that porn doesn't define women's sexual pleasure
- Neither do women have the same fascination with male responses
- When I stand up and talk about orgasm the men in the audience
- tell me they don't hear a word that I say they are so aroused!
- Porn is produced by men for men so naturally female arousal and
- orgasm occur easily because such scenarios act as a male turn-on
- These images are misleading not just for men but for women too

(5) In the BBC3 documentary 'Britain in Bed'

- broadcast January 2012 Tracey Cox, sex expert and former editor
- of Cosmopolitan magazine says "We've got this generation of boys
- growing up thinking that, you know, women practically faint
- at the sight of an erection, that women orgasm through penetration,
- that threesomes are normal. Nothing in porn is real.
- You need to watch porn knowing that it is all completely fabricated."

(1) Sex drive – motivation to achieve orgasm

- Sexual pleasure is associated with orgasm and the first step in enjoying orgasm is for a person to be motivated to do so
- If we look at how women invest their money and their efforts
- They probably spend as much on cosmetics, high heels and revealing clothing as men spend on sex and pornography
- A woman's sexual focus is to get a man into bed (the easy part!)
- Then she needs to keep him interested in having sex with her by responding appreciatively during sex
- If she doesn't want to lose him to someone more amenable!

(2) We are all different

- We assume we are all sexual equals but Alfred Kinsey emphasised
- the huge range in sex drive that defines 'normal' for both sexes.
- For example, some women orgasm many times a day and some men orgasm once every few weeks.
- But on average Kinsey found that men are 6 times more sexual (as measured by the incidence of orgasm) than women are.
- Male sex drive declines with age but even by the age of 60 male orgasm frequencies have not fallen to the female level.
- Women orgasm on average once every two weeks regardless of age.
- For men under 30 the average is 3 times per week.

(3) Unlike men, women do not approach sex

- just short of an orgasm, which explains why men tend to initiate sex
- but also why a woman offers a man intercourse rather than
- focusing on obtaining stimulation that might lead to her own orgasm
- Men are much more motivated by sex and orgasm than women are
- In a competitive world 'more' is always equated with 'better'.
- But there is nothing to prove that people with a high sex drive
- are any happier than those with low sex drive.

(4) A woman is impregnated regardless

- of orgasm so there is no reason for her to orgasm by any means
- In other words there is nothing either abnormal or unusual if a woman never has an orgasm either alone or with a lover
- Increasingly women today have the confidence to challenge the media portrayal of women's sexuality.
- The Australian writer, Kathy Lette suggests she prefers a man who can talk or even cook over one who is obsessed with orgasm
- The American writer, Joan Sewell, in her book 'I'd rather eat chocolate' talks confidently and positively about having a low libido

(5) In the BBC3 documentary 'Britain in Bed'

- George Michael gives his candid opinion: "The idea of 'no-strings attached' sex is very attractive to most men, gay or straight."
- In the same programme, Peter Stringfellow defends lap dancing against the objections of the female protesters outside his London night club:
- "The truth is ... this is a male form of entertainment ... for men."
- Sex is evidently a frivolous form of entertainment for (at least some) men
- But it involves a more serious emotional commitment for most women
- These basic differences between the sexes need to be reflected in sex information if we are to present couples with reality rather than fantasy

(1) How the BODY is involved in orgasm

- My research looks at the physical stimulation involved in orgasm
- I compare men and women's use of physical stimulation techniques
- There is zero debate over the male anatomy involved in male orgasm
- But which part of her body does a woman stimulate for orgasm?
- The debate over the anatomy involved in female orgasm indicates the lack of understanding over how and when women orgasm.
- Anyone who knows how to orgasm knows what anatomy to stimulate

(2) 'Responding' to intercourse

- Men use sex as a means of obtaining emotional acceptance (approval)
- Naturally they hope that women can enjoy intercourse as much as they do
- Equally a man appreciates a lover who provides him with turn-ons
- Such as assisting with his fantasy of arousing a woman through intercourse
- Unfortunately no one can evolve sexual responses just to please a lover
- we only evolve characteristics we need for survival and for reproduction.
- It is only with men that women are assumed to want vaginal stimulation
- During masturbation or with another woman, women focus on the clitoris

(3) Why is female arousal so mysterious?

- Any woman who masturbates (to orgasm that is) knows
- that the CLITORIS is the source of her orgasm.
- So why doesn't clitoral stimulation work as easily with a lover?
- The confusion arises because women are not spontaneously aroused
- So they don't approach sex with the genital focus that men have
- Kinsey found that only 20% of women masturbate regularly
- but masturbation is too taboo among women to be this common

(4) No magic button!

- Shere Hite's work confirmed Kinsey's finding that women orgasm most reliably when masturbating
- but she noted that clitoral stimulation was less effective with a lover
- Although 82% of women in Hite's sample said they masturbated
- only 44% could orgasm using manual stimulation of the clitoris with a lover
- and only 42% could orgasm through oral sex
- So clitoral stimulation does not by itself guarantee orgasm!

(5) Heterosexual bias in favour of the vagina

- Andrea Burri carried out research at King's College in London.
- She asked over 3,000 women to confirm the G-spot
- The study concluded that the G-spot did not exist
- The findings appeared in the Journal of Sexual Medicine (2010)
- yet they have had little impact compared with the flawed original.
- Burri comments "... the mysterious G-spot ... I found it irresponsible to claim the existence of an entity that has never been proven, using in some cases a cohort of just 30 women worldwide." (2011)

(1) How the MIND is involved in orgasm

- My research looks at the erotic turn-ons involved in orgasm
- I compare how men and women achieve psychological arousal
- There is little debate over what turns men on - the list is endless!
- Men are turned on, not only by sex, but also in anticipation of sex.
- They are aroused by objects associated with sex (e.g. women's underwear) and they enjoy visual portrayals of sex.
- But what turn-ons motivate women to want sex? And what is it about sex and a lover that arouses a woman to orgasm?

(2) Arousal is a psychological phenomenon

- We often refer to the physical signs or evidence of arousal such as:
- Increases in lubrication in anticipation of sexual activity or
- Increases in blood flow to the erectile organ (penis/clitoris)
- But sexual arousal is fundamentally a mental state
- that arises when the mind responds POSITIVELY
- to PSYCHOLOGICAL stimuli of an erotic or sexual nature.
- We get turned on because some aspect of sexual activity appeals
- And we like the idea of engaging in similar sexual activity

(3) The sensual and emotional aspects of sex

- may cause a woman to be more amenable but romance (affectionate companionship) and passion (male sex drive) cannot cause orgasm
- Even therapists quite seriously tell me that they get aroused by looking into their lover's eyes or by the sound of his voice.
- This is why women cannot understand how anyone enjoys eroticism
- Many women focus on these sensual and emotional aspects of sex. They assume that orgasm arises 'naturally' as part of their sexual relationship.
- Of course there is nothing wrong with this but it leads to confusion for women who know how to masturbate themselves to orgasm
- Anyone who knows how to orgasm knows how they get turned on

(4) Orgasm relies on explicitly erotic concepts

- Personally I need to focus on something very explicit such as male genitals, male sexual psychology (a man's focus on his erection & his desire for penetration) and male responses (orgasm & ejaculation)
- Masturbation alone allows a woman when alone to focus on the taboo aspects of sex that she finds arousing enough to reach orgasm
- This contrasts with the distractions of heterosexual lovemaking where a woman needs to 'respond' as a lover during intercourse.
- Anyone who appreciates erotic turn-ons tends to think of sexual pleasure in terms of what happens in the mind more than to the body

(5) Fantasies and libido go together

- In her book 'Hot Sex' Tracey Cox says:
- "The more you fantasise, the higher your libido. ... it's pretty well established that the more you think about sex, the more you want it.
- That makes fantasies the cheapest, most effective sex aid around."
- It is clear that not every woman has fantasies but others do!
- In her book 'My Secret Garden' Nancy Friday highlights how some women (but evidently not all) enjoy fantasies involving adult themes
- I have found that fantasies do not work in the same way with a lover

(1) Despite the intense interest in orgasm

- especially with a lover, we assume that everyone else has it all figured out
- Women are assumed to orgasm during sex but the key researchers into female sexuality, Alfred Kinsey and Shere Hite, did not confirm this:
- Only 50% of women said they could orgasm **sometimes** during intercourse
- Naturally any woman with this experience is considered sexually 'normal'
- They also they found that 50% of women **never** orgasm from intercourse
- Despite the numbers of women involved they are labelled 'dysfunctional'
- The result of this categorisation is to intimidate women into silence

(2) Looking at Alfred Kinsey's findings

- Alfred Kinsey interviewed over 5,000 women in the 1950's
- He found that only some women (around 40% of his sample) said
- They could orgasm sometimes (approx. 75% of the time) with a lover
- Orgasm was more reliable through masturbation (95% success rate)
- but also more easily achieved, in 4 minutes, compared with
- 10 to 20 minutes or longer during sexual activity with a partner

(3) Looking at Shere Hite findings

- Shere Hite circulated anonymous questionnaires in the 1970's
- She received over 1,800 replies analysed as follows:
- Orgasm regularly from intercourse 30%
- Need additional clitoral stimulation 19%
- Orgasm rarely from intercourse 22%
- Never orgasm from intercourse 29%

So half of her sample said they never or rarely orgasm from intercourse

(4) Despite the pressure on women

- to describe their sexual experiences as 'orgasmic' most women tend to be unsure about orgasm especially with a lover
- So research into female orgasm always attracts women who masturbate because they are most confident about how to orgasm
- Women who claim to orgasm with a lover are no more sexually active than other women neither do they behave sexually as men do
- Women continue to talk about 'meaningless sex'
- They are apparently unaware that there is no such thing for men

(5) Lack of orgasm is not a dysfunction

- Sexual ego means that few sources challenge our unrealistic expectations by explaining that orgasm is not an everyday occurrence for women
- The Swiss researcher Andrea Burri talks about the increase in what is called 'female sexual dysfunction' (FSD) – she says:
- "One of the diagnostic criteria for FSD is feeling distressed. But what causes the distress?
- Is it the condition itself, or is it what you think is expected of you and in turn, what you start expecting of yourself.
- The way sex is portrayed in the media and in films often provides us with a base of comparison that is not always realistic for the individual”

(1) Issues that arise over the longer term

- Let's talk about some of the issues that challenge
- our enjoyment of sexual pleasure over decades together.
- Couples need to accept that relationships involve some 'give and take'
- We tend to avoid making effort that is not for our own direct benefit
- A woman is much more likely to supporting a man's ambition for an active sex life when she feels loved and appreciated by her partner
- Realistic information about the different rewards men and women get from sex helps couples maintain an active sex life over the long term

(2) Sex is easy in the early days and years

- Once the romantic passion dwindles many couples find they need to invest in their sexual relationship
- Embarrassment over acknowledging a mismatch in sex drives means that couples who seek help feel abnormal
- They are simply brave enough to confront an almost inevitable issue in heterosexual relationships
- Kinsey remarked how amazing it is that couples ever find a solution
- In her book 'The sex diaries' the Australian therapist Bettina Aarndt
- documents the difficulties many Australian couples have later in life

(3) Taking the focus off orgasm

- Men's desire to stimulate a woman through thrusting causes them to focus on female orgasm.
- But women are clearly not motivated by orgasm as men are.
- It seems unlikely that many women masturbate given how few comment on the very obvious difference between masturbation and intercourse
- Even so women who do masturbate only do so once every 3 to 4 weeks
- Men enjoy sexual pleasure due to the balance of EFFORT versus REWARD
- Not only are men aroused much more easily than women are but the rewards of sex are also much more vital to men's emotional well-being

(4) Exploring sex play

- Some women fake orgasm to please a male lover but this 'solution'
- doesn't help couples get the most out of sex over the longer term
- The man assumes that he is satisfying his partner so he never accepts
- the need to offer some sensual sex play before taking his orgasm
- I suggest that couples explore sexual activities beyond intercourse
- to bring some variety to their sex play over the longer term.
- Men also need to appreciate the value of the wider relationship
- Including companionship, affection and respect to women

(5) Women's need for emotional intimacy

- John Gray is author of 'Men are from Mars Women are from Venus'
- In his book 'Mars & Venus in the Bedroom' (1995) he states:
- "Biologically and hormonally, men are MUCH MORE driven to be sexual than women are."
- He recognises that women look for rewards in the wider relationship
- But men have to be subtle and patience about expecting a payback
- He explains: "This does not mean that every time I do the dishes, she is supposed to have sex with me."
- That would not be romance. That would be a business deal."