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# The Key Characteristics of

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## Human Sexual Response

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## 19 Abstract

20 **Background:** There is currently no detailed description of male sexual response that we can  
21 use to evaluate claims of female sexual response.

22 **Aim:** To describe the key elements of male sexual response to help define an equivalent female  
23 response.

24 **Method:** A new research approach involves defining male sexual response in terms of specific  
25 psychological and physical techniques to enable comparison with the female equivalent. This  
26 paper attempts to answer the following questions:

27 What causes a person to be sexually responsive?

28 What is the role of mental arousal in sexual response?

29 What is the significance of the role of the clitoris in female orgasm?

30 What environment is conducive to sexual response?

31 What is the role of male sex drive?

32 What are the key characteristics of sexual response?

33 **Strengths and Limitations:** This approach provides a description of sexuality that reflects the  
34 reality. However, men's interest in female sexuality and women's corresponding lack of interest  
35 means that significant work is required to update current beliefs about female sexual response.

36 **Conclusion:** The key characteristics of sexual response include stimulation of consistent  
37 anatomy with orgasm ending activity that is focused on achieving it.

38 **Keywords:** sexual response, erotic stimuli, stimulation techniques.

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## 50 **Introduction**

51 **Sexual response** is a phenomenon of the central nervous system (Kinsey et al, 1948). **Sexual**  
52 **responsiveness** is an instinctive ability of the brain to respond to erotic stimuli. The more  
53 **responsive** we are, the more frequently we orgasm. Men are much more responsive than  
54 women on average (Kinsey et al, 1953). If a person is never aroused, they are unresponsive  
55 rather than dysfunctional. It is completely normal, and usual, for women to be unresponsive.

56 Responsiveness applies to post-adolescent individuals. Male infants may experience erections.  
57 But the **male arousal cycle** only becomes regular from adolescence (the age of first ejaculation)  
58 onwards. Male responsiveness involves mental arousal (evidenced by tumescence of the  
59 phallus) and orgasm (evidenced by **ejaculation** of sperm). There is no corresponding increase  
60 in female responsiveness at adolescence. At puberty, girls develop breasts (mammary glands)  
61 and monthly **ovulation** starts. These changes relate to female reproductive function.

62 Sexual response is initiated by the mind responding to erotic stimuli. Mental arousal causes  
63 tumescence (the brain increases blood flow to the genitals) and motivates us to stimulate the  
64 phallus instinctively. As a person focuses on the erotic stimuli at hand, the sexual tension builds  
65 until it is released as orgasm, which includes pelvic muscle spasms and a sense of mental  
66 satisfaction. **Orgasm techniques** consist of mental and physical stimuli that cause us to orgasm  
67 reliably. The pleasurable sensations of arousal and orgasm motivate us to repeat the activity.

68 **Instinctive behaviours** arise when we enjoy arousal from erotic stimuli regardless of any  
69 relationship. **Conscious behaviours** arise when a receiver (male or female) cooperates with  
70 intercourse in exchange for emotional, political or economic rewards. Women's emotional  
71 responses with a lover do not equate to men's erotic responses but they may motivate women  
72 to offer the regular intercourse that incentivises men to engage in supportive relationships.

## 73 **Responsiveness is vital to male reproductive function**

74 Male sexual response is vital to the survival of the species because male orgasm triggers  
75 ejaculation of sperm. Female sexual response has no impact on reproduction. A woman can be  
76 impregnated through intercourse regardless of her sexual response (arousal and orgasm).

77 Development in the womb and at adolescence does not favour female responsiveness. Initially,  
78 every embryo has an external phallus (which is why the baby's sex cannot be determined in the  
79 early weeks of pregnancy). Later the female phallus is subsumed into the body leaving only  
80 the glans visible. Given the clitoris is an internal organ, tumescence (possible evidence of  
81 mental arousal) is not easy to confirm for women. Just as a man cannot help being responsive,  
82 a woman cannot help being unresponsive. Even **a responsive woman**, who masturbates to  
83 orgasm, is only aware of her arousal when masturbating. The clitoris is only ever tumescent  
84 (not rigid like the penis) as a woman lacks the equivalent muscles that keep the penis erect.  
85 Women do not suffer 'blue balls' (due to tiring of the male muscles that maintain an erection).

86 Women have a passive sexual role of cooperating with penetration. Their only proactive role is  
87 that of encouraging male orgasm, which reduces the time a woman needs to invest. Given the  
88 female role involves offering an orifice for a man to ejaculate into, women can continue sexual  
89 activity almost indefinitely. Women are paid for sex more often than men are because, lacking  
90 the distraction of their own arousal, they can focus their efforts on facilitating male orgasm.  
91 Men cannot spend hours enjoying sexual activity due to their acute arousal with a lover.

92 Male sexuality has key advantages. First, male orgasm triggers ejaculation, which is vital to  
93 reproduction. Second, male sex drive initiates intimacy between adults. Typically, a woman  
94 responds to a man's sexual interest in her (because he is aroused by her body). Third, male sex  
95 drive provides a woman with the means of incentivising a man to support a family.

## 96 Only men respond to real-world erotic stimuli

97     **Erotic** implies an association with genitals or penetrative sex. **Erotic stimuli** are perceived by  
98     the senses or imagined. **Arousal triggers** can be **real-world** (stimuli such as genitals that are  
99     suggestive of penetrative sex) or **conceptual** (fantasies, erotic memories or anticipation). Male  
100    arousal can occur spontaneously due to hormones (early morning erections and wet dreams).  
101    But men are aroused foremost by visual erotic triggers (such as the presence of a partner  
102    signalling an opportunity for intercourse). Heterosexual men who live apart from women  
103    experience little arousal (Kinsey et al, 1948). Real-world triggers are highly effective for men  
104    but ineffective for women because they relate to opportunities relevant to a penetrating male.  
  
105    We do not choose what kind of erotic stimuli arouse us. An adolescent boy does not choose to  
106    be aroused by girls. It just happens, or not, with no explanation either way. Men are mentally  
107    aroused well before intercourse occurs, so a woman has the impression (from observing men)  
108    that orgasm relies solely on physical stimulation. Being physically stimulated may cause male  
109    arousal because of men's mental response to being stimulated. But even fellatio or masturbation  
110    (that do not depend on an erection) rely on a man being **mentally aroused** before his penis  
111    responds to stimulation. Given the prevalence of male orgasm, we would expect any female  
112    sexual response to have characteristics in common with the male experience.  
  
113    Heterosexual men may accept that being the receiver of male ejaculate (into the mouth or anus)  
114    would not be arousing for them. But they assume women's sexual function is to respond to  
115    men's need for intercourse (regardless of the inertness of the vagina). There is nothing erotic  
116    about being the receiver of male ejaculate. Only the role of the penetrating male is erotic, which  
117    is why the male mind responds to many more erotic stimuli than the female. Female arousal is

118 largely subconscious. A responsive woman generates mental arousal from **surreal erotic**  
119 **fantasies** by identifying (physically and psychologically) with the penetrating male.

## 120 **Responsive women orgasm by masturbating alone**

121 How can women orgasm with different inputs (emotional connection and indirect clitoral  
122 stimulation) to those men use (erotic turn-ons and direct penile stimulation)? It is not credible  
123 that different women orgasm in completely different ways nor for the same woman to orgasm  
124 in different ways on different occasions. Orgasm doesn't 'just happen'. We know how it occurs  
125 because we discover reliable orgasm techniques - both erotic turn-ons and genital stimulation.

126 Characteristics of male sexual response include: (1) Mental arousal by erotic stimuli; (2)  
127 Rhythmic massaging of the shaft of the phallus; (3) Instinctive rhythmic pelvic thrusts; and (4)  
128 A one-off sexual release resulting from mental focus and thrusting, with activity ending when  
129 orgasm is achieved. These characteristics are reflected in the techniques used by a responsive  
130 woman to masturbate to orgasm. Pelvic thrusting is common among mammals. A responsive  
131 woman instinctively adopts a position that facilitates pelvic thrusting until orgasm.

132 "the techniques of masturbation usually offer the female the most  
133 specific and quickest means for achieving orgasm. For this reason  
134 masturbation has provided the most clearly interpretable data which  
135 we have on the anatomy and the physiology of the female's sexual  
136 responses and orgasm." (Kinsey et al, 1953, p. 132)

137 When a man is aroused but intercourse is not available, he may experience significant sexual  
138 frustration. But men don't consider their reliance on penetration and, consequently, on a lover  
139 as a limitation because of the optimal turn-on and sexual release they enjoy from intercourse.  
140 A man is aroused mentally and physically by penetration. Men's sex drive makes them  
141 dependent on sociable sexual activity. Women do not have this dependency.

142 Even a responsive woman cannot orgasm from intercourse because she cannot assume the  
143 correct position that allows the pelvic thrusting needed for orgasm. Vaginal penetration  
144 prevents her from stimulating the internal clitoral organ correctly. The presence of a partner  
145 prevents her achieving the focus on fantasy necessary to generate her mental arousal from zero.

## 146 **Even responsive women do not orgasm with a lover**

147 It is assumed that women respond to a variety of direct and indirect stimulation. All this  
148 stimulation is supplied by her partner because most women dislike touching genitals (even their  
149 own), which they consider to be ugly and smelly. Typically, a man must insert his penis to  
150 initiate intercourse. When talking about penetrative sex (vaginal and anal intercourse) as well  
151 as fellatio, we can differentiate between the roles of **penetrating male** and **receiver** (male or  
152 female). For the receiver, the anatomy varies according to the orifice the penetrator ejaculates  
153 into. If women were having orgasms, the anatomy involved and the stimulation technique  
154 would be consistent and women would understand the role of turn-ons in sexual response.

155 “Female sexuality has been seen essentially as a response to male  
156 sexuality and intercourse. There has rarely been any  
157 acknowledgement that female sexuality might have a complex nature  
158 of its own which would be more than just the logical counterpart to  
159 (what we think of as) male sexuality.” (Hite, 1976, p. 11)

160 Characteristics proposed elsewhere for female sexual response include (1) Arousal arising from  
161 emotional responses; (2) The clitoral glans being rhythmically pulled by the thrusting penis or  
162 the penis thumping the clitoris through the walls of the vagina; (3) A woman lying inert while  
163 a man thrusts; and (4) Orgasm not affecting a woman’s ability to continue sexual activity.

164 Orgasm is a spontaneous release that coincides with the peak of our arousal. But a woman  
165 cannot control the length of time that the stimulation of intercourse lasts for (the time between  
166 male erection and ejaculation). The best way to demonstrate that a receiver cannot orgasm from

167 intercourse is to talk about mechanics. If a man orgasms first, the stimulation presumed to cause  
168 female orgasm ceases. If a woman were to orgasm first, she would want the stimulation to  
169 cease. Only a faked orgasm can be timed to coincide with a lover's orgasm.

## 170 **Only men have a sex drive to engage in intercourse**

171 Throughout nature, the male is the proactive agent in reproduction. But male arousal (erection)  
172 and orgasm (ejaculation) alone cannot ensure that reproduction occurs. A man must also be  
173 motivated to ejaculate into a vagina. Men enjoy the mental and physical pleasure of intercourse  
174 but they are also acutely conscious of a need to use intercourse to complete their arousal cycle.  
175 Male orgasm is the result of penetration and thrusting activity and ends men's erotic pleasure.

176 **Sex drive** is a significant **biological male urge** to engage in intercourse. Sex drive depends on  
177 sexual psychology unique to a male (a person born with a penis). Gay men have an equivalent  
178 drive to penetrate a partner. Rosemary Basson (2000) said: "To some degree, men experience  
179 their desire as independent of context - often choosing to use the word 'drive'." (p. 52)

180 **Male sex drive** ensures that consistent male anatomy is stimulated. A responsive woman also  
181 stimulates consistent anatomy when masturbating. Different female anatomy is involved with  
182 a male lover because a man stimulates anatomy that arouses him. Women are not motivated to  
183 obtain stimulation with a lover due to their lack of mental arousal. Mammals use the doggy  
184 position (rear entry) for mating. This position (man standing behind the woman) provides a  
185 male visual turn-on but emphasises women's subjugated role as the receiver of male ejaculate.

186 The missionary position (woman on her back with man on top) is the default for lovemaking.  
187 A man has control of his own stimulation and thrusting whilst minimal effort is required from  
188 a woman. However, the position makes her lack of response evident to her lover. While men  
189 focus on the erotic rewards of intercourse, women enjoy the emotional rewards of upper body

190 lovemaking (kissing and caressing) as an emotional bonding activity in long-term relationships  
191 (due to the lack of physical and erotic stimulation provided by intercourse for the receiver).  
  
192 Women do not have a sex drive. No one can have a drive to be penetrated by a penis or other  
193 object. Neither can we have a drive for another person to do something to us. Basson (2000)  
194 said: “compared to men whose responses are influenced more by testosterone, women have a  
195 lower biological urge to be sexual for release of sexual tension” (p. 52). Successful  
196 reproduction depends not only on intercourse but also on a woman raising a family. A woman’s  
197 lack of response with a lover and her lack of sex drive allows her more objectivity in choosing  
198 the circumstances in which she is impregnated. She optimises her reproductive success by  
199 choosing a mate likely to support her over the decades needed to raise a child to maturity.

## 200 **The key characteristics of human sexual response**

201 Men might think it incredible that many women stimulate themselves without ever reaching  
202 orgasm (Kinsey et al, 1953) and yet men, who are familiar with the nature of responsiveness,  
203 stimulate women, who never orgasm, for decades. Similarly, men may accept that women talk  
204 of lovemaking and describe their arousal in terms of emotional factors, yet men know that  
205 arousal depends on erotic stimuli and that a relationship has nothing to do with sexual response.  
  
206 The mental and physical stimulation that cause orgasm must continue up to orgasm but  
207 preferably not beyond, for several reasons. First, if the goal of the activity was orgasm; we have  
208 achieved our goal. Second, the fantasy or other mental stimulus is no longer effective because  
209 the resulting arousal has been released. Third, the increased blood flow that caused tumescence  
210 of the phallus has also been released and continued stimulation is no longer comfortable or  
211 relevant. For these reasons, a rest period is required before a person attempts another orgasm.

212 I propose that the following key elements define sexual response (the arousal cycle from initial  
213 mental arousal to the final sexual release) with sexual responsiveness being a **prerequisite**:  
214 (1) **Sexual responsiveness:** The brain of a responsive individual responds positively to erotic  
215 stimuli by sending blood to the erectile organ, motivating them to stimulate the phallus.  
216 (2) **Mental arousal:** Psychological arousal builds when the brain responds to erotic stimuli (a  
217 person, an object or a fantasy). Male arousal is spontaneous; female arousal must be generated.  
218 (3) **Consistent anatomy.** The blood flow within the phallus is massaged in combination with  
219 rhythmic thrusting while a person enjoys arousal from the physical and mental stimulation.  
220 (4) **Orgasm ends the activity.** The accumulated mental and physical arousal is released as  
221 pleasurable pelvic contractions. The quality of orgasm varies. Ideally, we feel relaxed and sated.

222 **Conclusion**

223 (1) A **detailed description of male sexual response** (involving erotic stimuli as well as  
224 consistent anatomy and stimulation technique) helps identify a female equivalent.

225 (2) **Responsiveness is the first requirement for a person to achieve orgasm**, which is a  
226 reliable and repeatable response of the mind and body regardless of sex and orientation.

227 (3) **Orgasm ends the ability to engage in sexual activity**, with a rest period required before  
228 an adult can achieve a further orgasm.

229 (4) There is **no logic to assuming that female sexual response occurs commonly or**  
230 **frequently** because it plays no role in women's reproductive function.

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