

1 **Female Sexual Response**

2 **to Erotic Stimuli**

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19 **Abstract**

20 **Background:** We lack a precise explanation for how sexually responsive women are aroused
21 by erotic stimuli and the stimulation technique they use to achieve orgasm alone.

22 **Aim:** To provide an explanation for how a woman achieves orgasm through her own efforts.

23 **Method:** A new research approach provides a description of a female sexual response that is
24 comparable to male sexual response. This paper attempts to answer the following questions:

25 What role does eroticism play in sexual responsiveness?

26 In what way do women's arousal triggers differ to men's?

27 What are the key characteristics of human sexual response?

28 What is the significance of the association between the clitoris and female masturbation?

29 What stimulation techniques do responsive women use to achieve orgasm?

30 Why are female masturbation techniques ignored when defining female sexual response?

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

34 **Conclusion:** Female masturbation involves a woman identifying both physically (by
35 stimulating the clitoris) and psychologically (by using erotic fantasy) with the penetrating male.

36 **Keywords:** sexual response, clitoral stimulation, erotic fantasies, female masturbation.

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48 **Introduction**

49 Sigmund Freud invented the term ‘vaginal orgasm’, which he considered superior to the clitoral
50 orgasms from female masturbation. Even though few women comment on female sexual
51 response, I have found that sexologists show little interest in female masturbation techniques.
52 Research (Rosemary Basson, 2000) indicates that most women do not consider orgasm vital
53 for their sexual satisfaction. Because of this, I have concluded that female masturbation is rare
54 and that some women mistake emotional responses for orgasm during male lovemaking.

55 **Masturbation** involves massaging the shaft of the penis or the body of the clitoris by hand.
56 Masturbation also includes stimulation by a lover (less commonly to orgasm). Most women
57 dislike eroticism and consider masturbation a waste of time. Lack of responsiveness explains
58 why some women masturbate without achieving orgasm (Kinsey et al, 1953). Most women are
59 only sexually active by responding to male initiative. Basson found that women respond to a
60 lover due to intimacy needs. But emotional connection is irrelevant when masturbating alone.

61 In my teens, I read about female masturbation but descriptions lacked specifics. Later when I
62 had an orgasm, I was surprised by the nature of my techniques. Ignorance over female sexual
63 response is compounded by portrayals of women apparently having orgasms in erotic fiction.

64 I know that I am not alone in my experience due to Kinsey’s conclusion that female orgasm is
65 most reliably achieved from masturbation. But his finding was hugely unpopular compared
66 with the political advantages of promoting an assumed female response to intercourse. The fact
67 that his research finding was ignored is evidence that female masturbation to orgasm is rare.

68 Given the rarity of female orgasm, I am describing my masturbation techniques for the benefit
69 of scientists, to correct misconceptions about female sexual response and to document how a
70 responsive woman achieves orgasm from masturbation. My lifetime experience is that orgasm

71 occurs from self-stimulation; but never with a lover. I have spent years asking women to explain
72 how they orgasm with a lover. Given, they cannot, I am sceptical about these supposed orgasms.

73 **Orgasm depends on the brain's response to eroticism**

74 Any adult, who regularly masturbates to orgasm, must use their imagination to generate reliable
75 **mental arousal**. Men rely on erotic fantasy when masturbating (Kinsey et al, 1948) and it is
76 illogical to assume that women can achieve arousal without using equivalent erotic stimuli.

77 **Eroticism** is a concept related to genitals and penetrative sex. **Erotic stimuli** are sights and
78 sounds as well as sexual anticipation and abstract fantasies that impact the senses and the brain
79 in a way that causes physical and mental arousal. Men are aroused by **real-world triggers**
80 associated with opportunities for intercourse such as the presence of a willing sexual partner.

81 Men also experience a significant urge, **male sex drive**, to engage in intercourse. This drive is
82 reinforced once a man has experienced the adrenaline rush of penetrating a lover's body. Most
83 post-adolescent males masturbate (as a substitute for intercourse) to relieve their regular
84 arousal. Some men masturbate regularly over a lifetime for variety, as a means of enjoying
85 their arousal or because fantasies may be enjoyed better alone. Female masturbation is not a
86 substitute for intercourse. A woman masturbates to enjoy the pleasure of her sexual responses.

87 While men refer to the pleasure they enjoy from the visual turn-ons that cause their arousal,
88 pornography is censored to protect women's sensitivities. Women's brains do not respond to
89 equivalent **real-world erotic stimuli** that cause male arousal. Kinsey (1953) notes:

90 "Females do produce another, more extensive literature which is
91 called erotic, and do drawings which are called erotic; but most of
92 these deal with more general emotional situations, affectional
93 relationships, and love. These things do not bring specifically erotic
94 response from males, and we cannot discover that they bring more
95 than minimal responses from females." (p. 672)

96 Some women claim to use pornography for arousal, but just as they boast about orgasm, they
97 are defensive and angry when asked for explicit details of what causes their mental arousal.

98 **The need to focus on the erotic stimuli at hand**

99 Even responsive women do not respond to the **real-world triggers** or **visual turn-ons** that
100 arouse men. A woman must generate her mental arousal consciously. When a woman is
101 responsive, her brain responds positively to conceptual erotic stimuli (such as erotic fiction). A
102 woman uses **surreal erotic fantasy** by identifying with the role of the penetrating male. This
103 arousal mechanism is indirect because a woman, as a receiver in real life, must imagine what
104 a man experiences. A responsive woman identifies simultaneously with the receiver (as an
105 object of sexual desire) and with a man's arousal on penetrating and ejaculating into a lover's
106 body. A woman's fantasies do not relate to any man she knows or to her sexual relationship.

107 Female arousal is much less intense than the male equivalent. The first stage involves selecting
108 an explicit scenario (either imagined or drawn from a book) that culminates in penetration. This
109 initial stage involves assessing whether arousal is possible. A woman rocks her hips gently side
110 to side while her index and middle fingers of both hands rest on the pubic bone. I explore
111 various scenarios in my head, until I feel my clitoral glans responding to the thrill of mental
112 arousal. I focus my mind on the male gratification obtained from penetration and ejaculation.

113 When masturbating, I am often conscious of vaginal lubrication, especially once orgasm is
114 achieved but there is no associated erotic pleasure. Vaginal lubrication may also occur with a
115 partner in anticipation of sexual activity but is not evidence of mental arousal. Vaginal fisting
116 (a lover uses fingers to stretch the entrance of the vagina) and anal intercourse (both
117 accompanied by a partner's featherlight touch on the clitoral glans) may produce a physical
118 climax that, without the possibility of using fantasy for arousal, falls short of a sexual release.

119 The social nature of sex is completely different to being alone. This has nothing to do with
120 inhibition. Female masturbation allows a woman to enjoy her responsiveness without risk of
121 pregnancy. Also, when alone she is not distracted by men's higher responsiveness or by their
122 biological drive to obtain intercourse. Masturbation is a rewarding personal pleasure because
123 of the imagined erotic scenarios, which come from our own mind and cause our arousal.

124 **The position used to emulate rhythmic thrusting**

125 Unless I am masturbating, I am never conscious of mental arousal or any need for sexual
126 release. Sometimes I masturbate just to check that I can achieve orgasm. Typically, I will
127 masturbate before sleeping or on waking. The circumstances, conducive to female sexual
128 response, are extremely limited. The environment that makes it possible to get aroused includes
129 a woman being alone (without risk of interruption) and lying on her front with her eyes closed
130 (or reading descriptions of explicit penetrative scenarios) with her hands placed either side of
131 her vulva. This comfort position facilitates manual stimulation of the internal clitoral organ.

132 Sexual response depends on the brain's response to eroticism, which motivates a responsive
133 person to engage in **instinctive behaviours**, such as thrusting. These subconsciously motivated
134 behaviours include heavy breathing, increased heart rate, groaning and humping. Female
135 masturbation involves a responsive woman using instinctive thrusting behaviour reminiscent
136 of the penetrating male. This contrasts with the **conscious behaviours** a woman may use when,
137 for example, she invites a man to thrust into her vagina (by displaying her genitals). The
138 influence of pornography probably explains the research finding that most women say that they
139 masturbate when lying on their back (Hite, 1976). These women are not having orgasms.

140 I have tried masturbating on my back but it doesn't work. Female masturbation is comforting
141 rather than overtly sexual. The position is crucial. With my eyes closed, I am in a world of my
142 own imagination. The erotic associations are psychological and the rhythm of stimulation is

143 slower than the male equivalent. Achieving mental arousal is core to masturbation. The
144 conscious decision to focus intently on erotic fantasy is purely a mechanism for enjoying
145 orgasm. Without it, orgasm is impossible. I give up on the attempt with no sense of frustration.
146 Masturbatory activity appeals on a sporadic basis, when orgasm can be reliably achieved.

147 **The anatomy involved in female sexual response**

148 If I had not known about the clitoris and its location, I would not have had a name for the
149 anatomy I stimulate. No one needs to tell boys of the pleasure of stimulating their penis. But
150 the clitoris is an internal organ and given female arousal is largely subconscious, even a
151 responsive woman is unaware of the clitoris most of the time. The clitoral organ can be
152 tumescent but it lacks the muscles at the base of the penis that trap blood and cause an erection.

153 Researchers focus on physical stimulation. Women's mental arousal is either assumed or
154 overlooked. The term 'clitoral stimulation' is commonly used to refer to stimulation of the
155 glans. Rachel Pauls (2015) confirms: "Histological studies have demonstrated that the glans
156 has many more small nerves than the other clitoral components, supporting its role in sensation.
157 Furthermore, it bears the smallest proportion of erectile tissue among the structures of the
158 clitoris" (p. 378). This lack of erectile tissue explains why stimulation of the glans does not
159 cause orgasm. The erectile tissue (corpus and corpora cavernosa) is within the body of the clitoris.

160 The clitoris is taboo because of the obvious male connotations. The sexual anatomy a
161 responsive woman stimulates, the clitoris, is the female equivalent of the penis. Likewise,
162 Alfred Kinsey noted that some women's masturbation techniques emulate the copulating male.
163 This is counterintuitive because we assume that women always adopt the sexual role of the
164 receiver of intercourse regardless of their knowledge of how orgasm is achieved. A responsive
165 woman engages in instinctive thrusting behaviour due to the mental arousal (which she is

166 otherwise never conscious of) that motivates her to stimulate the internal clitoral organ. This
167 stimulation technique is applied instinctively (not copied or learned) and is always the same.

168 **The stimulation technique that causes orgasm**

169 Responsive women's masturbation techniques, including their use of erotic fantasy and their
170 precise clitoral stimulation technique, have not been documented. So, it is assumed that almost
171 any physical stimulation may be sufficient to explain female orgasm claims alone and with a
172 lover. I have spent many years asking women daily about orgasm via the internet. Only a
173 handful have given any explicit details of their orgasm techniques. These typically reflect what
174 we see in pornography, which is a display of the female genitalia aimed at arousing men.

175 Initially, I use my fingers to massage over the public bone (vulva), pushing the glans into the
176 body cavity. As I become totally absorbed in my fantasy, my physical and psychological arousal
177 increases in intensity. When I feel this increase in arousal, I push the fingers of both hands
178 firmly and rhythmically (like kneading) down below the public bone into the soft spongy
179 tissue either side of the labia (both sides of the vaginal entrance). At the same time, I clench
180 my buttocks, in a squeeze technique, to maximise the pressure on the clitoral organ. Within a
181 matter of seconds, the sensations of orgasm quickly peak and the sexual tension is released.

182 While masturbating, a responsive woman's body temperature, heartbeat and breathing increase.
183 At orgasm, she focuses on the imagined pleasure of the male when ejaculating. Groaning forms
184 part of her involuntary expression of sexual release and satisfaction. The key motivation to
185 masturbate is enjoying a satisfying sexual release rather than the arousal that makes it possible.
186 The aftermath of orgasm is mildly pleasant as the muscles throb. She feels sated and relaxed.
187 Hite (1976) asked: "If women know how to have orgasms, why don't they use this knowledge
188 during sex with men?" (p. 432) Women are not aroused with a lover, so physical stimulation is

189 ineffective. When masturbating, the internal organ is stimulated by (1) **external pressure** from
190 in front using the fingers of both hands to press down into the spongy tissue either side of the
191 labia and (2) **internal pressure** from behind by clenching the buttocks. Neither type of
192 stimulation is possible when a penis is thrusting into the vagina. But regardless of the
193 stimulation, there is no orgasm without mental arousal. The sociable environment with a lover,
194 makes an intense focus on fantasy impossible to achieve and rules out the use of fantasy.

195 **Female masturbation to orgasm must be rare**

196 Sexual pleasure is typically associated with intercourse rather than with masturbation. This
197 may explain why some women define sexual pleasure in terms of emotional rewards with a
198 lover rather than responsiveness. “At its core, we define ... sexual pleasure as the experience
199 of positive affect (‘feeling good’) during sexual activities. ...” (Werner et al, 2023, p. 314) But
200 sexual pleasure is much more than just feeling good; sexual response is emotionally significant.

201 Some women suggest that emotional stimuli cause female orgasm with a lover. But I have been
202 in love. Mental arousal, as a response to eroticism, is different. It involves a sense of mental
203 excitement and a corresponding pleasurable response in the pelvic region. When women talk
204 of orgasm, they often refer to pelvic contractions. The spasms of orgasm are pleasurable. But
205 there is also a release of sexual emotions, when stimulation brings our mental arousal to a peak.

206 We can deduce that female orgasm is rare in the population because most women:

- 207 • Show little interest in any form of eroticism or fantasies;
- 208 • Show little interest in the clitoris; and
- 209 • Do not talk of sexual pleasure or the difference between intercourse and masturbation.

210 Female genital mutilation (FGM) is carried out by women and forms part of the spectrum of
211 enhancement of attractiveness, self-harming and display that women undergo to please men.
212 No man would encourage mutilation if women responded to clitoral stimulation with a lover.
213 Women assume that they should orgasm from lovemaking. Men accept this assumption because
214 it accords with their experience: that intercourse is more rewarding than masturbation. Yet
215 some women know how they orgasm (by masturbating) and many others know when they don't
216 orgasm (with a lover). A responsive woman accepts that her sex life and sexual response are
217 separate activities. Despite the research supporting this experience, women's orgasm claims
218 with a lover are promoted in line with erotic fiction and male fantasies about female response.

219 **Conclusion**

220 (1) When assessing accounts of female sexual response, researchers must **establish that a**
221 **woman is responsive** (that her mind responds positively to conceptual erotic stimuli).

222 (2) Sexologists need to **obtain explicit details of women's orgasm techniques** to assess
223 whether these are likely to cause mental arousal and sexual release.

224 (3) **Female masturbation is taboo** due to the male connotations of the phallus as well as the
225 use of erotic fantasy and genital stimulation, which are associated with male sexuality.

226 (4) **A responsive woman uses erotic fantasies** to orgasm by identifying psychologically with
227 the penetrator and combining clitoral stimulation with instinctive thrusting.

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