

Female Sexual Response to Emotional Stimuli

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19 **Abstract**

20 **Background:** The influence of fictional media since the 1950s has led us to underestimate the
21 significance of the reproductive roles that determine men and women's different sexualities.

22 **Aim:** To suggest alternative, more explicit and constructive information that can be given to
23 couples, who experience a mismatch of sexual desire.

24 **Method:** A new research approach suggests that couples need more realistic expectations for
25 their sex lives. This paper attempts to answer the following questions:

26 Why is clitoral stimulation not always part of heterosexual lovemaking?

27 What motivates a woman to respond to the male desire for intercourse?

28 Why is intercourse core to heterosexual sexual relationships?

29 Why is female orgasm so much discussed while male orgasm is rarely mentioned?

30 Why is female sexual dysfunction defined relative to intercourse?

31 How can couples benefit from understanding emotional and sexual needs of the sexes?

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

35 **Conclusion:** To help with the common issue of mismatched sexual desire between the sexes,
36 couples should be advised to understand and accept the different needs of the opposite sex.

37 **Keywords:** sexual response, orgasm, intercourse, female sexual dysfunction.

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49 **Introduction**

50 From the age of seventeen, I had found that an intense focus on erotic fantasy generated the
51 mental arousal that motivated me instinctively to stimulate myself to orgasm. So when I first
52 had intercourse, aged eighteen, I was shocked by the total lack of physical sensation and mental
53 arousal. I had assumed that intercourse would provide a similar mental arousal and climax. I
54 immediately realised the deceit involved in erotic fiction as well as why only men pay for sex.

55 In our twenties and again in our thirties, my partner and I consulted therapists. They did not
56 ask about my masturbation techniques nor did they specify the mental and physical stimulation
57 women use to orgasm with a lover. There was no mention of women faking orgasm. They
58 assumed that other women orgasm with a lover. My problem was a mystery with no solution.

59 My obligation to offer my partner intercourse was also assumed but never justified. Given that
60 coitus dealt with my lover's sexual frustration, I didn't feel that I had much choice. Initially, I
61 invested in pleasuring my partner but the lack of my own arousal meant that my willingness to
62 make effort slowly declined and intercourse-to-male-orgasm became the norm.

63 Aged 35, in a final determined effort to understand my problem, I consulted a sex clinic in
64 London's Harley Street. Their clinical psychologist concluded that I am normal. There were no
65 explanations for my experience. His advice implied that orgasms rely purely on physical
66 stimulation. My duty to offer intercourse was clear, regardless of my response to it.

67 I decided to carry out my own research. But despite providing a detailed account of how I
68 achieve orgasm alone and despite many years of asking women daily (via the internet) to
69 explain how they achieve orgasm with a lover, I have found few women willing to discuss
70 orgasm techniques. Female therapists refer me to a book or to a so-called female orgasm expert.

The bias in the portrayals of sexual pleasure

Men experience a sex drive so they assume that women must be equally enthusiastic about coitus. But it is senseless to define female responsiveness in terms of intercourse, which facilitates male orgasm but impregnates a woman as the receiver of male ejaculate. Reliable contraception has allowed women to offer intercourse more readily given they can protect themselves against pregnancy and a life of childbearing. But this sexual amenability is due to women's desire to please a lover and promote emotional bonding rather than to a sex drive.

Masters and Johnson's work (1966) is popular with sexologists and the public because, based on a small sample, they assumed that women had orgasms from intercourse. They agreed that the clitoris is the source of female orgasm but suggested a theory (never proven) that the thrusting penis stimulates the clitoris indirectly. This proposed stimulation contrasts with the direct stimulation women use to masturbate as well as the direct penile stimulation men prefer.

There is good reason for a scientist to challenge female orgasm claims because of:

- (1) The misconception that women respond sexually as men do with a lover;
- (2) The significant advantages for women who claim to orgasm with a male lover;
- (3) The huge taboo over being categorised as sexually dysfunctional; and
- (4) The lack of biological precedents for female orgasm by any means.

Men may think that, by promoting intercourse as a source of female sexual pleasure, they can persuade women to offer more intercourse. Likewise women may think that by boasting about orgasm, they enhance their sexual attractiveness to men. But who is being duped here? Female orgasm claims are interpreted by men as an indication of female enthusiasm for intercourse. Yet Kinsey (1948) found that women's orgasm claims have no impact on intercourse

93 frequencies. Hite (1976) also concluded: "...women who did not orgasm with their partners
94 were just as likely to say they enjoyed sex as women who did." (p. 420)

95 **Defining female orgasm as a response to a lover**

96 Rosemary Basson challenged Masters and Johnson's model, which assumed that men and
97 women respond similarly to sexual stimuli. In common with Kinsey and Hite, she concluded
98 that women's sexual satisfaction depends on emotional rewards rather than orgasm.

99 "women's motivation (or willingness) to have a sexual experience
100 stems from a number of 'rewards' or 'gains' that are not strictly
101 sexual, these rewards being additional to, and often of far more
102 relevance than, the women's biological neediness or urge." (Basson,
103 2000, p. 52)

104 Basson refers to research (Cawood 1996) where only 2 out of 50 premenopausal women
105 reported sexual thoughts more often than once a week and 23 of them, reported sexual thoughts
106 less than once a month or never. While men talk of enjoying eroticism and the pleasures of
107 penetrative sex, women talk of feeling obligated. Based on her own work, Basson concluded:

108 "... the awareness of their partner's physical sexual arousal. Rather
109 than being an erotic stimulus (as it usually is for men), this can be
110 negatively perceived if women feel somehow responsible for it and
111 feel that they have some responsibility to attend to it." (Basson, 2000,
112 p57)

113 Some women consider emotional connection to be critical to sexual response. I have found that
114 women often do not understand that arousal depends on the brain's positive response to erotic
115 stimuli. They believe that being in love and sensual pleasure equate to orgasm. Consequently,
116 for them, mental and physical stimulation are irrelevant. I have been in love but these emotions,
117 romantic fantasies and sensual pleasures do not cause mental arousal. When I masturbate, there
118 is no partner, no romance and no emotional connection. To generate the mental arousal required
119 to obtain a sexual release, I must use erotic fantasy every single time. I have concluded that

120 most women's minds do not respond to erotic stimuli and so masturbation is meaningless to
121 them. Intercourse is the only sexual activity in which they ever participate.

122 **Intercourse is part of a sexual relationship with a man**

123 Male sexual response is consistent and reliable. Men, regardless of orientation, focus on
124 penetrative sex (vaginal or anal intercourse). Despite having a vagina, lesbians do not seek
125 vaginal penetration even with a dildo. Both the lack of so-called vaginal orgasms that defines
126 female sexual dysfunction and sexual desire defined in terms of penetrative sex are irrelevant
127 to lesbians. Women, regardless of orientation, focus on emotional responses and lovemaking.
128 But only heterosexual women are assumed to be aroused by a penis thrusting into the vagina.

129 The definition of female orgasm, in terms of cooperating with intercourse, obscures the
130 meaning of sexual response. Women are told that orgasm is easy so some women they assume
131 that they orgasm from intercourse with a lover but, if they are not motivated by the same
132 activity with an attractive stranger, it is the rewards of the wider relationship rather than the act
133 itself that motivates them to cooperate with coitus. The financial rewards made from promoting
134 intercourse as a female pleasure are an obstacle to improving the advice given to women.

135 There is no reason for most couples to seek help with their sex life. (1) Most women never
136 masturbate and have low expectations for orgasm, (2) male sex drive ensures that couples have
137 coitus regardless of a woman's desire for it and (3) couples rarely discuss sexual pleasuring.
138 Most women never fake orgasm because most men focus on their own enjoyment of coitus.

139 The hype over female orgasm is just part of the game men and women play. Our so-called adult
140 culture involves women indicating their willingness to offer sexual interaction (usually
141 implying penetrative sex) by supplying male turn-ons in return for the rewards men offer for

142 intercourse. Most women are unaffected by the fiction surrounding female orgasm. They are
143 oblivious to talk of sexual dysfunction, recognising that orgasm claims are just bravado.

144 **No one boasts about or discusses male orgasm**

145 Sexual response is initiated by the brain and men's minds are much more responsive than
146 women's. There are many more erotic stimuli that trigger male arousal. This makes sense
147 because sexual response is vital to male reproductive function. Male sexual response is defined
148 by the male arousal cycle from erection to ejaculation. Men enjoy: (1) **psychological rewards**:
149 a sense of domination, emotional acceptance and penetration; and (2) **physical stimulation**:
150 penetration, thrusting and ejaculation. For women, all these pleasures are equated to orgasm.

151 Male orgasm occurs commonly and reliably, especially from intercourse. Yet men do not boast
152 of their own orgasm because it limits their ability to engage in sexual activity. Sexual response
153 ends with orgasm. So orgasm ends men's enjoyment of their arousal as well as the physical and
154 erotic pleasure they enjoy from intercourse. Women's sexuality is admired because it does not
155 have this limitation. Women can offer intercourse indefinitely because there is no point at which
156 the vagina can no longer be penetrated by an erect penis. So the timing of female orgasm from
157 intercourse is not explicit. Only a faked orgasm can be timed to coincide with male ejaculation.

158 Initially, sex is a relatively small part of the companionable time a couple spends together. A
159 woman accepts a man's sexual interest in her and his post-coital gratitude as a sign of devotion.
160 But gradually a man focuses more on sex and less on investing in the wider relationship. A
161 woman concludes that she is merely a sexual outlet for a man, rather than a person with her
162 own responses and needs that she looks to a partner to satisfy. Women stop showing affection
163 because a man interprets any form of physical intimacy as a sexual invitation. Once the
164 affection dies, sex becomes a mechanical act focused on satisfying male needs that ultimately

satisfies neither party. Being in love is one reason why a woman may be amenable to offering intercourse. She may also be motivated to retain a partner, keep a family together or by money.

Female sexual dysfunction versus sexual consent laws

In Victorian times, if women were unenthusiastic about intercourse, they were called frigid (to reflect the male perception of a woman, who rejects intercourse, as unloving or cold). Today only the terminology differs. A man can impregnate a different woman every time he engages in intercourse. But a woman can only be impregnated once every nine months. Rather than being dysfunctional, these are normal women who do not respond sexually as men do.

Sex advice should not blame anyone or categorise them as dysfunctional. We should encourage women to share and learn from their experiences rather than tell them to conform to what society expects of them. Lack of female orgasm can NEVER be dysfunctional because:

- (1) female orgasm has no reproductive or sexual function;
- (2) women do not have a need for intercourse or for orgasm; and
- (3) some men's desire for erotic feedback is easily satisfied by faking.

"A great many husbands wish their coitus were more frequent, and believe it would be if their wives were more interested." (Kinsey et al, 1948, p. 571) For as long as there have been laws, men have enjoyed the legal right to obtain intercourse from their wives. A man could not be charged with raping his wife. It is only relatively recently that women's lower interest in intercourse has been respected. In the UK, even married women now have the legal right to decline their husband's desire for intercourse (Sexual Offences Act 2003). But attitudes change more slowly than laws. Society still perceives a women's traditional role as one of cooperating with her husband's desire for intercourse. Leslie Margolin (2022) noted that today sexologists and therapists, even when they are female, assume that men's desired intercourse frequencies

188 should naturally take precedence over the frequencies most women would prefer. “Sexual
189 decisions, in the final analysis must be personal.” (Masters, Johnson & Kolodny, 1995, p. 412)

190 **Improving information for women and their lovers**

191 Promoting female orgasms makes money but it is also harmful. Believing that intercourse
192 delivers female orgasms can undermine men’s confidence in their own sexual performance
193 resulting in erectile dysfunction. Women may feel sexually inadequate when they never
194 experience the orgasms that other women are boasting about. It is suggested that these
195 emotional insecurities in the population can be treated. Relationship counsellors should address
196 the unrealistic expectations set by erotic fiction and give couples more constructive advice.

197 Men, especially when young, experience a strong drive to engage in intercourse. So a man
198 tends to initiate and drive intercourse, while missionary style intercourse allows a woman to
199 cooperate passively with male lovemaking. Problems arise when the romantic and erotic
200 passion fades. Couples need to understand that long-term relationships involve compromise.

201 Men approach sex hoping for erotic pleasure. A woman should try to hide her lower interest
202 and not detract from the erotic context of intercourse that a man enjoys. There is no need for
203 orgasm claims. Affectionate stroking and kissing communicate amenability. Nor does she have
204 to fake orgasm. She can move with her partner’s rhythm or caress him during lovemaking.

205 Women approach sex hoping to feel appreciated. Men need to demonstrate affection without
206 expecting sex every time. They should invest in being the charming companion. A man should
207 respect a woman’s need to talk by being willing to listen while hiding his lower interest. Sharing
208 his own thoughts or feelings occasionally shows respect for a woman’s need to build trust.

209 To understand the dynamics of a sexual relationship, therapists need to consider (1) if a couple
210 engages in foreplay, how much of this activity is appreciated by each partner; (2) the frequency

211 of intercourse a man expects; and (3) the willingness of each partner to respond to the sexual
212 preferences of the other. Heterosexual men think it natural that women should be sexually
213 desirable to men. They seldom acknowledge that sexual desire works both ways. A man should
214 try to present himself attractively and be socially amenable (by investing in the relationship).

215 A couple could vary the venue for coitus and alternate quickies with longer sessions involving
216 sex play. Foreplay adds variety but it also increases the time and effort a woman must invest.
217 It may help to make a wish list for both lovers (Kramer & Dunaway, 1994). Heterosexual
218 couples can be reassured that their experience is part of a wide range of being sexually normal.

219 **Conclusion**

220 (1) **Unrealistic expectations** have been set, but given men do not consider orgasm a vital aspect
221 of male satisfaction, there is no reason to believe that orgasm defines female satisfaction.

222 (2) Despite having **neither explanations nor solutions** for women's lack of response with a
223 lover, therapists imply that women should accept intercourse regardless of their response to it.

224 (3) Even a married woman (in the UK at least) is **no longer legally obliged to offer**
225 **intercourse**, yet society still expects her to fulfil her duty by satisfying male sexual needs.

226 (4) **Heterosexual couples need realistic information** to help them understand the
227 consequences of men and women's very different sexual and emotional needs.

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