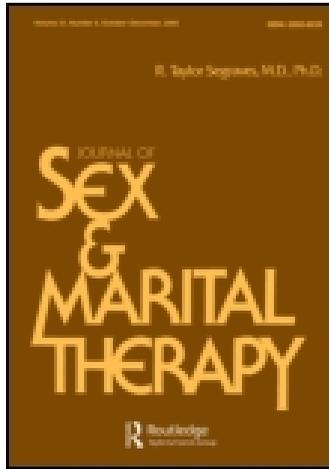


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Ethel S. Person<sup>a</sup>, Nettie Terestman<sup>a</sup>, Wayne A. Myers<sup>a</sup>, Eugene L. Goldberg<sup>a</sup> & Carol Salvadori<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University

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# Gender Differences in Sexual Behaviors and Fantasies in a College Population

ETHEL S. PERSON, NETTIE TERESTMAN, WAYNE A. MYERS,  
EUGENE L. GOLDBERG and CAROL SALVADORI

*This study presents male and female responses of 193 university students to questions about sexual experiences and fantasies. There are few significant gender differences in experiences, but many in fantasies. Males fantasized about sex more and exhibited greater interest in partner variation and in the spectrum from domination to sadism. While male sexuality is often described as aggressive/sadistic and female sexuality as passive/masochistic, most men and women in our population do not report fantasies supporting such stereotypes.*

This paper analyzes data derived from questionnaire responses of 193 university students in the years 1982–1983. We compare male and female responses to individual questions about sexual experiences and fantasies to examine the validity of widespread beliefs about gender differences in sexual behavior and fantasies. Our findings suggest specific gender similarities and differences that, in part, contradict the cultural stereotypes.

## METHOD

### *Subjects*

Subjects were 193 students in 4 classes (1 undergraduate, 3 graduate) at an urban university. Eighty percent of the subjects were between the ages

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The authors are at the Center for Psychoanalytic Training & Research, Department of Psychiatry, College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University. Address reprint requests to: Ethel S. Person, MD, Columbia University, Center for Psychoanalytic Training and research, 722 West 168 Street New York, NY 10032.

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of 20 and 26 years. Approximately 40% were female. Eighty percent were single; 90% heterosexual; 14% foreign born. Seventy-five percent listed their fathers' occupations as "professional." Religious backgrounds were: 27% Catholic, 27% Jewish, 20% Protestant, several Moslem, and 22% unaffiliated. Sixty-eight percent reported a current sexual relationship; of these, almost 70% reported this relationship as satisfying, and 20% reported a stable sexual relationship with a live-in partner. In general, this was a young, single, advantaged group, most of whom were engaged in satisfying heterosexual sexual behavior.

### *The Sexual Inventory*

The Sexual Inventory solicits information about sexual experience and fantasy. There are 67 experience and 55 fantasy items. Subjects rate each for frequency in the recent and distant past on a 4-point scale (never; not in the last 3 months; less than 5 times in the last 3 months; more than 5 times in the last 3 months). The inventory also examines the association between each individual experience/fantasy and reported orgasm. Many items were taken from an existing instrument<sup>1</sup> and numerous items were added with the aim of eliciting more material of relevance to gender difference.

We analyzed responses to each item and listed them in descending order of frequency and by quarters. We labeled Quarter 1 "popular" because these items were reported by the largest percentages of women and men. Quarter 4 was labeled "rare" because these were reported by the fewest subjects. The second and third quarters were considered the "middle" group.

The Z-test<sup>2,3</sup> was used to compare the differences between the proportions reported for men and women, item by item. Each test was evaluated with alpha (2-tailed) set at .05, which means that the probability of a type-1 error (a false positive finding) is 5% for any particular item. The probability of a type-1 error is higher for the study as a whole, which includes numerous such comparisons. Therefore, the discussion emphasizes patterns of significance of several related items.

We classified each item as "recent" if it occurred within the last 3 months (whether more or less than 5 times) or "cumulative" if it was part of the subject's total life experience (whether or not it was also current). Clinically, it is important to know if a behavior is part of a subject's recent experience and whether it has ever occurred at all. For some subjects, it might be easier to acknowledge a past than a current event.

### *Procedure*

Subjects were administered the Sexual Inventory during regular class time while their professors were absent. Participation was voluntary. Over 90% of class members participated. Using numbers rather than names assured confidentiality.

## RESULTS

*Experience*

There was little gender difference in the content or variety of sexual experience (the mean  $\pm$  SD of different recent experiences reported by women =  $29.7 \pm 11.9$  and  $33.2 \pm 11.6$  by men). Most subjects reported more diverse experiences than fantasies, even taking account of the questionnaire bias of more experience items.

Among "recent experiences" (see Table 1) the most frequently endorsed behaviors (Quarter 1) are mainly conventional, romantic and non-genital, dealing with kissing, fondling or sex play. There is no essential gender difference.

TABLE 1  
Recent Sexual Experiences

| Experience                              | % Females | % Males | Z      | Significance |
|---|-----------|---------|--------|--------------|
| <i>Quarter 1</i>                        |           |         |        |              |
| Kissing on the lips                     | 85        | 87      | 0.3922 | n.s.         |
| Breast petting (nude)                   | 81        | 82      | 0.1752 | n.s.         |
| Kissing of sensitive areas (nongenital) | 81        | 81      | 0.0000 | n.s.         |
| Stroking/petting partner's genitals     | 79        | 80      | 0.1685 | n.s.         |
| Walking hand-in-hand                    | 79        | 78      | 0.1656 | n.s.         |
| Erotic embrace (clothed)                | 79        | 80      | 0.1685 | n.s.         |
| Genitals caressed by partner            | 78        | 77      | 0.1629 | n.s.         |
| Naked caressing and embracing           | 78        | 75      | 0.4814 | n.s.         |
| Deep kissing                            | 78        | 85      | 1.2266 | n.s.         |
| Male kissing female's nude breasts      | 76        | 82      | 1.0023 | n.s.         |
| Watching partner undress                | 73        | 75      | 0.3102 | n.s.         |
| Masturbating alone                      | 71        | 83      | 1.9402 | $p < 0.10$   |
| Having your genitals orally stimulated  | 71        | 64      | 1.0169 | n.s.         |
| Male lying prone on female (clothed)    | 70        | 72      | 0.2999 | n.s.         |
| Male petting female breasts (clothed)   | 69        | 78      | 1.3876 | n.s.         |
| Masturbating sexual partner             | 69        | 70      | 0.1478 | n.s.         |
| <i>Quarter 2</i>                        |           |         |        |              |
| Sexual intercourse                      | 68        | 68      | 0.0000 | n.s.         |
| Oral stimulation of partner's genitals  | 68        | 60      | 1.1340 | n.s.         |
| Intercourse/female superior             | 67        | 60      | 0.9893 | n.s.         |
| Intercourse/male superior               | 66        | 68      | 0.2894 | n.s.         |
| Mutual undressing                       | 60        | 71      | 1.5745 | n.s.         |
| Having partner masturbate you           | 54        | 58      | 0.5483 | n.s.         |
| Mutual petting of genitals to orgasm    | 51        | 48      | 0.4083 | n.s.         |
| Intercourse—vaginal entry from rear     | 51        | 43      | 1.0906 | n.s.         |
| Mutual oral stimulation of genitals     | 50        | 56      | 0.8180 | n.s.         |

|  |    |    |        |            |
|--|----|----|--------|------------|
| Having anal area caressed              | 50 | 36 | 1.9241 | $p < 0.10$ |
| Intercourse side by side               | 50 | 38 | 1.6449 | n.s.       |
| Intercourse—sitting position           | 41 | 32 | 1.2720 | n.s.       |
| Intercourse—unusual positions          | 41 | 34 | 0.9838 | n.s.       |
| Being seduced                          | 40 | 31 | 1.2797 | n.s.       |
| Reading/watching pornographic material | 37 | 58 | 2.8613 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Caressing partner's anal area          | 35 | 45 | 1.3889 | n.s.       |

*Quarter 3*

|   |    |    |        |            |
|---|----|----|--------|------------|
| Using dirty language  | 32 | 31 | 0.1465 | n.s.       |
| Seducing a sexual partner   | 31 | 39 | 1.1412 | n.s.       |
| Watching sexual partner masturbate  | 23 | 38 | 2.2168 | $p < 0.05$ |
| Having sex that lasts for hours   | 23 | 38 | 2.2168 | $p < 0.05$ |
| Being discovered making love  | 18 | 13 | 0.9400 | n.s.       |
| Dressing with erotic garments   | 16 | 7  | 1.9195 | $p < 0.10$ |
| Having partner watch you masturbate   | 14 | 16 | 0.3811 | n.s.       |
| Using artificial devices  | 14 | 6  | 1.8144 | $p < 0.10$ |
| Intercourse—different/unusual locations                                     | 13 | 17 | 0.7622 | n.s.       |
| Performing sexual acts before a mirror                                      | 11 | 18 | 1.3527 | n.s.       |
| Anal intercourse  | 10 | 6  | 1.0032 | n.s.       |
| Being forced to submit to sexual acts                                       | 6  | 1  | 1.8512 | $p < 0.10$ |
| Watching others make love   | 5  | 4  | 0.3282 | n.s.       |
| Sex with a stranger   | 5  | 6  | 0.2985 | n.s.       |
| Being tied/bound during sex activities                                      | 4  | 3  | 0.3702 | n.s.       |
| Dressing in clothes of the opposite sex                                     | 4  | 1  | 1.3074 | n.s.       |
| Being sexually degraded   | 4  | 1  | 1.3074 | n.s.       |
| Homosexual experience if heterosexual heterosexual experience if homosexual | 2  | 1  | 0.5598 | n.s.       |

*Quarter 4*

|                                       |   |   |        |            |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------|------------|
| Sex with a virgin                     | 1 | 7 | 2.0833 | $p < 0.05$ |
| Being tortured by a sexual partner    | 1 | 0 | 0.9647 | n.s.       |
| Forcing partner to submit             | 1 | 3 | 0.9720 | n.s.       |
| Sex with two or more people           | 1 | 4 | 1.3074 | n.s.       |
| Mate swapping                         | 1 | 0 | 0.9647 | n.s.       |
| Degrading sex partner                 | 1 | 1 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |
| Being whipped/beaten by partner       | 1 | 1 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |
| Torturing sexual partner              | 1 | 1 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |
| Exhibiting body in public             | 0 | 4 | 1.9440 | $p < 0.10$ |
| Being involved in sexual orgy         | 0 | 0 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |
| Watching someone make love to partner | 0 | 0 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |
| Sex with close relative               | 0 | 1 | 0.9647 | n.s.       |
| Sexual relations with animals         | 0 | 0 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |

|  |   |   |        |            |
|--|---|---|--------|------------|
| Whipping/beating partner                 | 0 | 2 | 1.3677 | n.s.       |
| Seeing pictures/film of self making love | 0 | 0 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |
| Being a prostitute                       | 0 | 0 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |
| Performing sexual acts for audience      | 0 | 3 | 1.6793 | $p < 0.10$ |

In Quarters 2 and 3, gender frequencies are essentially the same with few exceptions. Men were more likely to report "reading/watching pornographic material" as significantly greater ( $p < .01$ ). "Sex that lasts for hours" and "watching sex partner masturbate" are also reported more by men ( $p < .05$ ). Women reported no items more frequently than men.

The rarer practices (Quarter 4), including voyeurism, exhibitionism, sadomasochism, and the use of force, are reported infrequently (less than 10%) by both sexes. Only one experience, "sex with a virgin," is at a significantly higher level for men ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 2 indicates the incidence of these behaviors on a cumulative basis. As was true of recent experiences, men were more likely to report "reading/watching pornography" and "sex with a virgin" ( $p < .01$ ). In addition, they were more likely to report "masturbation alone," "having partner masturbate you," "mutual petting of genitals," "sex with a stranger," "sex in unusual locations," and "exhibiting body in public" ( $p < .05$ ). Women were more likely to report "intercourse, vaginal entry from rear" and "being forced to submit" ( $p < .05$ ).

TABLE 2  
Cumulative Sexual Experiences  
(Includes Only Items that are Statistically Significant  
for Gender Difference)

| Experience                           | % Females | % Males | Z      | Significance |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|--------------|
| <i>Quarter 1</i>                     |           |         |        |              |
| Masturbating alone                   | 85        | 95      | 2.2680 | $p < 0.05$   |
| <i>Quarter 2</i>                     |           |         |        |              |
| Intercourse—vaginal entry from rear  | 81        | 68      | 2.0294 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Having partner masturbate you        | 73        | 85      | 2.0046 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Mutual petting of genitals to orgasm | 70        | 83      | 2.0862 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Reading/watching pornography         | 65        | 88      | 3.6909 | $p < 0.01$   |
| <i>Quarter 3</i>                     |           |         |        |              |
| Intercourse—unusual locations        | 37        | 53      | 2.1883 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Sex with stranger                    | 18        | 33      | 2.3416 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Sex with virgin                      | 17        | 55      | 5.3866 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Being forced to submit               | 13        | 4       | 2.1958 | $p < 0.05$   |
| <i>Quarter 4</i>                     |           |         |        |              |
| Exhibiting body in public            | 8         | 21      | 2.5122 | $p < 0.05$   |

*Fantasies*

In contrast to experiences in which the reports of men and women were largely comparable, many significant gender differences appear in fantasies. Men reported more fantasies both recently and on a cumulative basis ( $p < .01$ ). For men, the mean  $\pm$  SD of recent fantasies =  $26.2 \pm 8.9$ ; range 9–55 (of a possible total of 55). For women, the comparable mean  $\pm$  SD =  $14.2 \pm 10.1$ ; range 0–49. While 10% of both sexes reported as many as 35 different fantasies, twice as many women (37% vs. 18%) reported 15 or fewer fantasies.

Table 3 lists the proportion of respondents who report having fantasized about each of the 55 discrete fantasy items within the last 3 months. Items are listed in descending order of frequency. Quarter 1 contains the most frequently cited items, which again are romantic and conventional. Four fantasy items are mentioned with equal frequency by men and women, but 8 of the 14 are mentioned more frequently by men: "touching/kissing sensuously," "oral-genital sex," "seducing partner," "intercourse in unusual positions," "sex that lasts for hours," and "watching partner undress" ( $p < .01$ ); "sex in unusual locations" and "having partner masturbate you" ( $p < .05$ ).

TABLE 3  
Recent Sexual Fantasies

| Fantasy   | % Females | % Males | Z      | Significance |
|---|-----------|---------|--------|--------------|
| <i>Quarter 1</i>  |           |         |        |              |
| Being sensuously touched                                  | 86        | 90      | 0.8375 | n.s.         |
| Naked caressing   | 84        | 93      | 1.9195 | $p < 0.10$   |
| Touching/kissing sensuously                               | 81        | 94      | 2.6746 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Walking hand in hand                                      | 62        | 58      | 0.5556 | n.s.         |
| Oral-genital sex  | 61        | 89      | 4.3998 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Being seduced   | 59        | 71      | 1.7118 | $p < 0.10$   |
| Getting married   | 54        | 55      | 0.1366 | n.s.         |
| Sex in unusual locations                                  | 51        | 68      | 2.3563 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Seducing partner  | 49        | 75      | 3.6447 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Intercourse in unusual positions                          | 49        | 71      | 3.0556 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Sex that lasts for hours                                  | 43        | 67      | 3.2824 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Gaining love of previously rejecting lover                | 42        | 49      | 0.9565 | n.s.         |
| Having partner masturbate you                             | 42        | 57      | 2.0413 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Watching partner undress                                  | 40        | 76      | 4.9629 | $p < 0.01$   |
| <i>Quarter 2</i>  |           |         |        |              |
| Sex with mysterious stranger                              | 40        | 46      | 0.8246 | n.s.         |
| Masturbating your partner                                 | 40        | 70      | 4.1030 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Melting heart of cold partner                             | 35        | 34      | 0.1431 | n.s.         |
| Being rescued from danger by one who will become my lover | 34        | 11      | 3.7476 | $p < 0.01$   |

|   |    |    |        |            |
|---|----|----|--------|------------|
| Forbidden lover in sex adventures                                   | 34 | 45 | 1.5311 | n.s.       |
| Homosexual fantasies if heterosexual/<br>heterosexual if homosexual | 29 | 16 | 2.1182 | $p < 0.05$ |
| Two or more lovers  | 27 | 52 | 3.4797 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Making love with possibility of being<br>discovered                 | 25 | 33 | 1.1996 | n.s.       |
| Watching others make love   | 21 | 29 | 1.2571 | n.s.       |
| Being involved in an orgy   | 20 | 40 | 2.9696 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Being forced to submit  | 20 | 15 | 0.8954 | n.s.       |
| Being tied up or bound during sex<br>activity                       | 20 | 15 | 0.8954 | n.s.       |
| Dressing in special costumes  | 20 | 4  | 3.3501 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Sex with a much older person  | 19 | 33 | 2.1717 | $p < 0.05$ |
| <i>Quarter 3</i>  |    |    |        |            |
| Sex with famous persons   | 17 | 36 | 2.9293 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Watching partner masturbate   | 16 | 42 | 3.8987 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Having partner watch you mastur-<br>bate                            | 16 | 21 | 0.8761 | n.s.       |
| Anal intercourse  | 14 | 38 | 3.7229 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Using dirty language  | 13 | 19 | 1.1136 | n.s.       |
| Being brought into a room against my<br>will                        | 13 | 9  | 0.8698 | n.s.       |
| Watching someone else make love to<br>your partner                  | 13 | 9  | 0.8698 | n.s.       |
| Mate swapping   | 12 | 21 | 1.6498 | $p < 0.10$ |
| Sex with a virgin   | 12 | 39 | 4.2149 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Performing sex acts before a mirror                                 | 12 | 19 | 1.3161 | n.s.       |
| Performing before an audience                                       | 12 | 7  | 1.1603 | n.s.       |
| Being sexually degraded   | 12 | 5  | 1.7079 | $p < 0.10$ |
| Sexual relations with animals                                       | 11 | 1  | 2.8651 | $p < 0.01$ |
| <i>Quarter 4</i>  |    |    |        |            |
| Fantasizing that you are of opposite<br>sex                         | 10 | 13 | 0.6398 | n.s.       |
| Exhibiting body in public   | 10 | 10 | 0.0000 | n.s.       |
| Being a prostitute  | 10 | 5  | 1.2916 | n.s.       |
| Being tortured by sex partner                                       | 9  | 5  | 1.0667 | n.s.       |
| Being whipped/beaten by partner                                     | 8  | 5  | 0.8280 | n.s.       |
| Seeing pictures of yourself having sex                              | 7  | 10 | 0.7319 | n.s.       |
| Sex with a close relative   | 7  | 11 | 0.9510 | n.s.       |
| Sex experiences with a much younger<br>partner                      | 5  | 29 | 4.3473 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Forcing partner to submit   | 5  | 31 | 4.6047 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Dressing in clothes of opposite sex                                 | 2  | 3  | 0.4358 | n.s.       |
| Whipping/beating partner  | 1  | 7  | 2.0833 | $p < 0.05$ |
| Being attracted to someone with<br>physical abnormality             | 1  | 9  | 2.4976 | $p < 0.05$ |
| Degrading sex partner   | 1  | 7  | 2.0833 | $p < 0.05$ |
| Torturing sex partner   | 0  | 6  | 2.3932 | $p < 0.05$ |

Quarters 2 and 3 include different fantasies related to partner variation, exhibitionism, voyeurism and homosexuality. Approximately half of these are mentioned with equal frequency by men and women. Reported more by women are "being rescued from danger by one who will become my lover," "dressing in special costumes," and "sex relations with animals" ( $p < .01$ ); "homosexual fantasies if heterosexual/heterosexual fantasies if homosexual" ( $p < .05$ ). Reported more by men are "two or more lovers," "being involved in an orgy," "sex with famous persons," "sex with a virgin," "masturbating your partner," "watching partner masturbate," and "anal intercourse" ( $p < .01$ ); "sex with a much older person" ( $p < .05$ ). Among current rare fantasies (Quarter 4), most are endorsed by 10% or less of both sexes. Six items are reported significantly more often by males: "forcing partner to submit" and "sex experiences with a much younger partner" ( $p < .01$ ); "whipping/beating a partner," "degrading a sex partner," "torturing a sex partner," and "being attracted to someone with a physical abnormality" ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 4 reports the male/female comparison on a cumulative lifetime basis. The most commonly reported fantasies remain romantic and traditional, with 10 of 14 endorsed more by men ( $p < .01$  or  $p < .05$ ). In Quarters 2 and 3, differences ("homosexual fantasies if heterosexual/heterosexual fantasies if homosexual" and "sex with animals") disappear. In this group and in Quarter 4, male preference for variations in partners is even more striking, as are "sex with a virgin," "masturbating partner," "watching partner masturbate," and "anal intercourse." More women endorse "rescued from danger by one who will become my lover" and "dressing in special costumes" ( $p < .01$ ) and performing "sex acts before an audience" ( $p < .05$ ).

In Quarter 4, the following differences reported more frequently by men for recent fantasies are reported more frequently on a cumulative basis as well: "sex with a close relative" and "sex with someone with a physical abnormality" ( $p < .01$ ).

Most striking is the continued pattern around domination and sadism. Endorsed more frequently by men ( $p < .01$ ) are "forcing a partner," "degrading a partner," "whipping and beating," and "torturing." "Dressing in the clothes of the opposite sex" is also more frequently endorsed by men ( $p < .01$ ).

## DISCUSSION

### *Experience*

Sexual behaviors show only a modest degree of gender influence, not a surprising result. Most behavioral items refer to interpersonal, consensual acts. Since our population is predominantly heterosexual, we would anticipate a close correlation between male/female behaviors. Most frequently enacted are romantic, traditional, nongenital sexual encounters,

TABLE 4  
Cumulative Sexual Fantasies  
(Includes Only Items Statistically Significant for Gender Difference)

| Fantasy  | Females | Males | Z      | Significance |
|--|---------|-------|--------|--------------|
| <i>Quarter 1</i>   |         |       |        |              |
| Being sensuously touched                                     | 87      | 96    | 2.1958 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Naked caressing  | 87      | 97    | 2.5080 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Touching/kissing sensuously                                  | 84      | 99    | 3.6597 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Being seduced  | 69      | 84    | 2.4071 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Oral-genital sex   | 68      | 96    | 4.9589 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Sex in unusual locations                                     | 67      | 84    | 2.6895 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Intercourse in unusual positions                             | 65      | 88    | 3.6909 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Seducing partner   | 62      | 83    | 3.2001 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Sex that lasts for hours                                     | 57      | 78    | 3.0507 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Watching partner undress                                     | 57      | 86    | 4.3711 | $p < 0.01$   |
| <i>Quarter 2</i>   |         |       |        |              |
| Having partner masturbate you                                | 52      | 70    | 2.5110 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Two or more lovers   | 52      | 78    | 3.7090 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Being rescued from danger by<br>one who will become my lover | 51      | 23    | 3.9460 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Sex with mysterious stranger                                 | 48      | 63    | 2.3416 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Masturbating your partner                                    | 46      | 80    | 4.7916 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Sex with famous persons                                      | 38      | 62    | 3.2660 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Watching partner masturbate                                  | 35      | 60    | 3.4063 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Being involved in an orgy                                    | 31      | 67    | 4.900  | $p < 0.01$   |
| Watching others make love                                    | 30      | 50    | 2.7778 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Sex with much older person                                   | 30      | 57    | 3.7057 | $p < 0.01$   |
| <i>Quarter 3</i>   |         |       |        |              |
| Dressing in special costumes                                 | 27      | 12    | 2.5760 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Performing sex acts before an<br>audience                    | 23      | 11    | 2.1732 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Sex with a virgin  | 22      | 71    | 6.6845 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Sex with much younger partner                                | 21      | 53    | 4.5097 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Anal intercourse   | 20      | 52    | 4.5361 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Mate Swapping  | 19      | 37    | 2.7277 | $p < 0.01$   |
| <i>Quarter 4</i>   |         |       |        |              |
| Sex with a close relative                                    | 13      | 25    | 2.0813 | $p < 0.05$   |
| Forcing partner to submit                                    | 9       | 24    | 5.3960 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Being attracted to someone<br>with physical abnormality      | 5       | 19    | 2.9314 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Dressing in clothes of opposite sex                          | 2       | 14    | 3.0096 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Whipping/beating partner                                     | 1       | 20    | 4.2132 | $p < 0.01$   |
| Degrading sex partner  | 1       | 15    | 3.5113 | $p < 0.04$   |
| Torturing sex partner  | 0       | 12    | 3.4381 | $p < 0.01$   |

closely followed by sexual intercourse and its variations (changes in position, etc.).

For men, masturbation by self or by partner, watching pornography, mutual genital petting, and intercourse in unusual locations emerge with greater frequency. The male predilection for masturbation may imply a greater propensity for initiatory behavior (different from sex drive which we define as including both initiatory *and* consummatory behavior<sup>4</sup>). The greater male involvement in pornography has been well known since Kinsey's 1948 study.<sup>5</sup> "Exhibiting the body in public" by males may represent a cultural machismo (phallic narcissism) or a counterphobic reaction to underlying castration anxiety. "Sex with a virgin," reported more by men, may be derivative of a male impulse to dominance. "Being forced to submit" is an index of women's physical and cultural vulnerability. Both differences are consistent with current studies which report a tendency toward aggression and violence among men and vulnerability among women.<sup>6-8</sup>

### *Fantasy*

More differences between men and women emerge in reports of fantasies, a not unanticipated finding, since fantasies, which are independent of partner consensus, reveal individual desires.

Confirming other studies,<sup>9-11</sup> we found that men fantasize more. They fantasized as much as women about romantic, tender themes, as much about being women as women fantasized about being men, as much about being seduced as seducing. The overall greater male preoccupation with sexual fantasy may be evidence of greater initiatory behavior in men or of greater initiatory inhibition in women.

Whereas only one behavior in the 3-month period and two behaviors cumulatively were experienced differently at the level of probability ( $p < .01$ ), 18 fantasies (3-month period) and 26 fantasies (cumalatively) evoked a different gender response ( $p < .01$ ).

In the 3-month frame, 15 of 18 fantasies were endorsed more by men, 3 by women. The 15 fantasies preferentially endorsed by men fall into a small number of categories, including partner variation ("involvement in orgies," "sex with a famous person," "sex with a virgin," "sex with a much younger partner," "sex with an older partner," "sex with two or more lovers"); domination ("forcing partners to submit" and "anal intercourse") and active, initiatory fantasies ("watching the partner undress," "masturbating your partner," "seducing parnter," and "touching, kissing sensuously").

Men show more interest in "oral-genital sex" and "sex in unusual positions," which may be understood as a desire to stretch the boundaries of conventional sexual conduct, with heightened danger as a source of sexual arousal. "Sex that lasts for hours" might be related to a greater sex interest or a greater need to control the object or to assert sexual potency.

The three fantasies preferentially endorsed by women are: "being res-

cued from danger by one who will become my lover," "dressing in special costumes," and "sexual relations with animals." "Being rescued" is a romantic fantasy, but may be a derivative of an unconscious masochistic fantasy. "Sex with an animal" can be interpreted either as female-dominant, self-degrading or a defense against intimacy. "Special costumes" may be the female counterpart of the males' "public exhibition of body," that is, narcissistic exhibitionism.<sup>12</sup>

Our data support the notion that men fantasize, as well as enact, more initiatory events, with a much greater interest in partner variation. The extent to which the differences are biological or psychological is unknown.<sup>13,14</sup> Men may wish to defy societal norms, at least in fantasy, whereas women are selectively subject to more conformist pressures.

Our most significant finding refutes the belief that male sexuality is innately aggressive/sadistic and female sexuality innately passive/masochistic. Some individuals do conform to the stereotypes but most do not. The fantasy of "forcing sexual partner to submit" was reported by almost one-third of our male subjects over the 3-month period, but two-thirds of the sample did not endorse it. Unlike some earlier studies,<sup>15,16</sup> we found no equivalent wishes for submission or masochism in women.

Among cumulative fantasies, 26 of 55 items show a significant gender difference ( $p < .01$ ). Our data offer little support to the contention that women are masochistic, but reveal fantasies of domination and sadism in a significant minority of men. The fantasy of "forcing a sexual partner to submit" is now reported by 44% of the men. A smaller number reported sadistic fantasies: whipping, 20%; degrading, 15%; torturing, 12%.

Both sexes report the same level of masochistic fantasies: "being sexually tortured by a partner" (10% women, 11% men); "being whipped" (15% women, 14% men); "being brought into a room against one's will" (20% women, 16% men); "being tied up or bound during sex activities" (30% women, 31% men) and "being forced to submit" (31% women, 27% men). The one item that may suggest a female tendency to passivity or masochism is the fantasy of "being rescued from danger by one who will become my lover."

It is less apt to describe female sexuality as submissive/masochistic than to describe male sexuality as aggressive/sadistic, though we would be reluctant to make even this latter statement as an overall description of male sexuality. While 44% of men reported a fantasy of wishing to dominate, 56% did not. Yet the number who report sadistic fantasies is, of course, a sizeable minority. Fourteen percent of men report fantasies of "dressing in clothes of the opposite sex," revealing some feminine identification for a sizeable minority. The "attraction to someone with a physical abnormality," reported by 19% of men, is suggestive evidence for the psychoanalytic hypothesis that some men are counterphobically attracted to a "castrate."

Our sample is restricted to a college age population. In older groups, we anticipate a greater variety of behaviors, as individuals gain experience in converting wishful fantasy to reality. We would also anticipate some

diminution in the range of fantasy because of the achievement of a more satisfactory sexual life. Men's fantasies of domination might decline with age, as the result of the consolidation of strong masculine identities. Hence, it is important to collect data on fantasy differences over the course of the life cycle.

Our data may prove valuable for unanticipated reasons, as we administered our questionnaire just prior to the widespread consciousness and fear about AIDS. It will be instructive to repeat this study as one index of the effect of fear on sexual behaviors and fantasies.

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