

Sexual Pleasure in heterosexual adults: Preliminary results of an online and qualitative study to better understand people's sexual experiences

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Objective: Sexual pleasure is a prominent aspect of human sexuality that contributes to people's well-being, making it a crucial construct to consider in clinical settings. Research on sexual pleasure has primarily used quantitative methodologies without considering the benefits of deepening this construct with qualitative studies. A recent conceptual model of sexual pleasure emphasized the importance of examining how sexual pleasure is experienced in different contexts. This study aims to explore the definitions of (solitary and partnered) sexual pleasure through qualitative analysis of adults' perspectives.

Design and Method: A total of 1853 heterosexual adults ($M_{age} = 43.65$; $SD = 25.98$) participated in this online, qualitative and cross-sectional study. Out of all participants, 1120 (60.5%) were women, 684 (36.9%) were men, 26 (1.4%) identified as non-binary, 10 (0.5%) indicated "Other", 7 (0.5%) preferred not to answer, and 6 (0.4%) chose "I don't know" as their answer. The questions "Based on your personal experience, what is solitary sexual pleasure?" and "Based on your personal experience, what is partnered sexual pleasure?" were analyzed using summative content analysis.

Results: Preliminary results demonstrated that solitary sexual pleasure was seen in a typically positive way, being a coping mechanism and an opportunity for self-exploration. However, part of the sample associates solitary sexual pleasure with shame/guilt. Partnered sexual pleasure was considered a moment of connection with the other/s person/s, focusing on the sensorial explosion and orgasm. However, within partnered activity, dissatisfaction with sexual activity was emphasized due to the practices carried out that did not meet individual preferences. Factors such as absence of orgasm/inhibition/shame/guilt are common barriers to experiencing sexual pleasure. Results will be presented after a detailed analysis.

Conclusions: Addressing social, interpersonal and individual barriers to pleasure is fundamental to promoting sexual health and well-being. After a thorough analysis, the results will be discussed in greater detail.