

Partnership satisfaction and sexual function in hetero-, homo-, and bisexual women

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Sexual dysfunctions cause distress

- More than 50 % of women suffer from sexual difficulties, like painful intercourse or reduced desire (Lewis et al., 2010)
- Lifetime prevalence of female sexual dysfunction: 15.5%
- Sexual problems reduce quality of life, cause personal distress, and partnership conflicts

Research questions

1. Which aspects of female sexual function are associated with partnership satisfaction?
2. Do these associations differ between hetero-, homo-, and bisexual women?

Method & Instruments

Age
18 – 67 years (Ø 31)

Sexual orientation
80% (n = 1,115) heterosexual
10% (n = 137) homosexual
10% (n = 146) bisexual
2% (n = 24) other

Sample size
N = 1,422 women in steady relationships

Partnership duration
34% < 2 years
28% 2 to 5 years
19% 5 to 10 years
18% > 10 years

Setting
cross-sectional, online
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Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI; Rosen et al., 2000)

- Assesses sexual function over the last four weeks
- Six scales: desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, satisfaction and pain
- Low sexual function is associated with sexual dysfunctions

Partnership Questionnaire (PQ-s; Kliem et al. 2012)

- Assesses partnership satisfaction with 10 items over three domains (quarreling, tenderness, togetherness/communication)
- Sensitive to change in marital therapy

Results

- Homosexual women show greatest partnership satisfaction and sexual function (arousal, lubrication, orgasm, and pain)
- Bisexual women report greatest sexual desire
- FSFI domains are positively correlated with each other and with partnership satisfaction
- Sexual satisfaction is the best predictor for partnership satisfaction, regardless of sexual orientation
- The model explains 30 – 38% of the variance in each of the groups

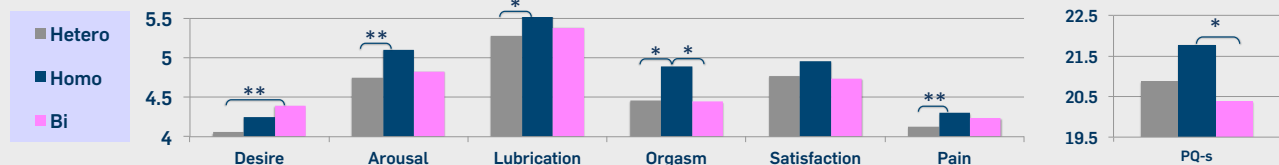


Figure 1. Levels of female sexual function (FSFI) and partnership satisfaction (PQ-s)

Table 1.

Correlations between FSFI scales and partnership satisfaction (PQ-s)

	Desire	Arousal	Lubric.	Orgasm	Satisf.	Pain	PQ-s
Desire	1						
Arousal	.60***	1					
Lubrication	.43***	.62***	1				
Orgasm	.28***	.57***	.41***	1			
Sex. satisfaction	.43***	.59***	.39***	.37***	1		
Pain	.23***	.34***	.39***	.20***	.20***	1	
Partnership satisfaction (PQ-s)	.23***	.30***	.21***	.15***	.47***	.14***	1

Table 2.

Multiple regression analysis of partnership satisfaction (PQ-s)

	Heterosexual		Homosexual		Bisexual	
	β	t (sig.)	β	t (sig.)	β	t (sig.)
Depression	-.18	-6.42***	-.17	-1.95	-.24	-2.66**
Partnership duration	-.19	-5.90***	.05	.56	-.24	-2.48*
Desire	-.01	-.35	.02	.20	.06	.61
Arousal	-.08	-1.23	.64	2.29*	-.23	-1.30
Lubrication	-.05	-1.06	-.39	-1.61	-.03	-.23
Orgasm	.00	-.05	-.28	-2.26*	.08	.69
Sexual satisfaction	.47	11.65***	.51	4.05***	.35	2.90**
Pain	.00	.12	-.11	-.92	.06	.54

Discussion

- Existing literature suggests a bidirectional association between a satisfying sexual life and relationship quality
- Interventions that focus on couple's sexual satisfaction might have positive influence on general partnership satisfaction

Key findings

1. Satisfaction with sexual life – not lubrication, pain, or number of orgasms – is strongly associated with partnership satisfaction
2. This association is comparable between hetero-, homo-, and bisexual women

Selected literature:

Lewis, R. W., Fugl-Meyer, K. S., Corona, G., Hayes, R. D., Laumann, E. O., Moreira Jr, E. D., Rellini, A. H. & Segraves, T. (2010). Original articles: Definitions/epidemiology/risk factors for sexual dysfunction. The journal of sexual medicine 7, 1598-1607.
Kliem, S., Job, A. K., Kröger, C., Bodenmann, G., Stöbel-Richter, Y., Hahlweg, K., & Brähler, E. (2012). Entwicklung und Normierung einer Kurzform des Partnerschaftsfragebogens (PFB-K) an einer repräsentativen deutschen Stichprobe [Development and standardization of the short form of the Partnership Questionnaire within a representative German sample]. Zeitschrift für Klinische Psychologie und Psychotherapie, 41(2), 81-89.
Rosen, C. Brown, J. Heiman, S. Leiblum, C. Meston, R. Shabsigh, D. Ferguson, R. D'Agostino, R. (2000). The Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI): a multidimensional self-report instrument for the assessment of female sexual function. Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 26(2), 191-208.