
Gender differences in libido

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Human sexual desire is the most complex form of sexual motivation of all living things. Its complexity is based on its being primarily subjective and is not easily measured; it originates from three parts of the human brain, and is triggered by both internal and external cues. The libido is the primary source of sexual motivation and is focused on areas of the body that determine sexual arousal. These areas, which Freud termed the erogenous zones, include the mouth, anus, and genitals. According to motivational theory, sexual desire consists of the interaction of at least three variables: drive, motivation, and wish. Female sexual desire is a complex state comprising the interactions between cognitive, emotive, physiological, and behavioral processes. Because women's genitals are less visible than men's genitals, women often are unaware of their physical sexual response. In addition, women are rarely taught about their sexual response. Brain activation in response to arousal is similar for both men and women. However, the areas of the hypothalamus that are activated during sexual arousal are different somewhat by gender. In particular, the ventromedial hypothalamus is activated during women's sexual response, whereas the medial pre-optic area is highlighted during men's sexual response. Men's cingulate gyrus, thalamus, and amygdala also are more activated during sexual arousal. Testosterone plays an important role in sexual interest and associated sexual arousability in both sexes. The evidence points mainly to the effects of testosterone on central arousal mechanisms. Females have about ten percent of a male's level of testosterone, testosterone, not estrogen causes "heightened erotic sensitivity of the clitoris, breasts, and nipples". It maintains fullness of genital tissue, and accounts for romantic interest. Differences in sexual desire among females may be due to different levels of free testosterone, which have, - 131 - in some cases, been found to be significantly lower in people with low sex drive. Physiology of sexual arousal shows major biochemical and neurovascular similarities in men and women, apart from the obvious anatomic sexual differences. In men and women, sexual desire can anticipate arousal, be concomitant with it, or be secondary to arousal caused by direct genital stimulation. An increasing body of evidence suggests that central arousal overlaps with sexual desire from the neurobiological point of view in both sexes. Sexual desire disorders are obviously a mixture of richly varied patterns involving biological, psychological, and cultural factors such as sexual aversion, hypoactive sexual desire disorder more common in women while hyperactive sexual desire is more common in men. Extensive studies have shown that testosterone is necessary for the full-range of sexual responses and low testosterone is associated with depression in aging men. Most

individuals with hypersexuality are male, but studies that have examined both sexes report a proportion of 8% to 40% female. Studies also suggest that the behavioral patterns of females are different from males, with females having fewer sexual partners and different sexual scripts. Research has indicated that a gender difference does exist, and it has been reflected in a variety of measures, such as self-reported desired frequency of sex, desired variety of sexual acts and partners, frequency of fantasy, frequency of masturbation, number of partners, frequency of thinking about sex, and willingness to make sacrifices in other spheres to obtain sex. Men report desiring sex more frequently, with more partners, and with more variety than women do, boys report sexual arousal earlier than girls do, and older men continue to report more sexual arousal than older women do. Gender differences in masturbation are large and consistent. Women and girls are less likely to masturbate than men and boys, and some evidence indicates that males who masturbate do it more frequently than females.- 132 -

Most studies of extramarital activity find that men report more partners than women, in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, men have more frequent and more varied fantasies than women, and men report thinking about sex more often than women do. Therefore, women find it easier than men to live without sexual gratification. While sexual desire declined with age for both genders, most men retained at least occasional sexual desire, while the great majority of women articulated no sexual desire. Men more than women imagine doing something sexual to their partner, whereas women more than men imagine something sexual being done to them. Studies of male body shape concluded that women are not influenced by male body shape alone, but rather by the ability to provide them with protection and to be good fathers for their children. It seems that neither physical attractiveness nor financial status alone determine male attractiveness; females appear to stress these two factors equally. Also, menstrual cycle phase is associated with shifts in women's mate preferences, the close association between women's estradiol and testosterone preference during the luteal phase is suggestive evidence that attractiveness judgments may adjust not only to proximity to ovulation but also to signals that a woman is currently experiencing fertile menstrual cycles. Generally, heterosexual men subjectively rate stimuli depicting nude males or male-male sexual behavior as less sexually arousing or attractive than stimuli including women. In contrast, women generally rate photos of both males and females comparably attractive or arousing, type of sexual activity depicted in the stimuli is important to males and females in their response to such stimuli. In addition, eye-tracking studies find more same-sex viewing interest in women than men, in many studies men were found to look longer than women at pictures that they reported as more attractive. In addition, men have more interest in close-up images of the genitals than would females due to decreased interest in contextual information. Women more than men said that the build up that precedes sexual encounters was an important part of their sexual fantasies.- 133 -

In response to erotic films, men and women showed many areas of overlap in response to sexual stimuli, men showed more differential activation of brain areas related to sexual arousal than women, different characteristics of visual sexual stimuli, such as the sex of the actors or situational information included, may be variably effective in provoking sexual arousal in men and women. Islamic view to

gender differences in libido point out that men have higher libido than women. Most scholars refused the view that women have 10fold higher libido than men. It Can Be Concluded That:- Evidence from multiple sources indicates that men want sex more often than women in both homosexual and heterosexual relationships and at all ages and relationship stages.- Review of literature may explain why Allah ordered women to wear hijab and allowed men to have more than one wife.