

## Disclosure of Women Self- Sexual Preferences and its Impact on Their Sexual Health in a Sample of Egyptian Partners

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### Abstract:

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**Background:** Sex life is a critical issue in maintaining good general health and motives. Disclosure of self-sexual willing greatly varies from one couple to another. **Aim:** The aim of this study was to investigate whether the link between having good sexual communication with your spouse and having good sexual pleasure in your marriage. **Method:** We developed an online questionnaire that was disseminated through social media to be self-filled as a method with complete privacy. It was written in English and translated into an Arabic form to be easily understood. This questionnaire covered sexual activity, communication, and satisfaction. **Results:** The majority of participants were between the ages of 30-39y (73.8%). In addition, the majority of them had a university degree (97.8%). Eighty-four percent of them were city dwellers, and the majority of them had been married for six to ten years (46.9%). The majority of individuals were contented with their current sexual situation (63.1 %). Eighty-six% of women who were sexually happy said that their husbands ensured they had orgasm. Sixty-four % of those who were pleased stated it was easy to talk about their sexual wants and dreams with their partners. 76.7 % of the pleased group had a confidence in their bodies. **Conclusion:** In intimate partnerships, better sexual communication is linked to more sexual pleasure. Increasing the sexual happiness of women in marriage requires encouraging them to talk openly about their sexual needs, preferences, concerns, and dreams with their partners.

**Keywords:** Sexual, Communication, Satisfaction, Married, Women

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## Introduction

When it comes to defining sexual communication, it's important to look at how much information is shared between couples during this sexual conversation and act, how good is it, and how often it occurs. Disclosing one's sexual preferences and willingness to participate in particular sexual acts is part of the sexual self-disclosure process. (1) Open sexual communication has been shown to be an important part of sexual interactions, although couples prefer to avoid direct sexual communication while in a relationship. Despite the fact that long-term relationships are certain to have ups and downs, it is very uncommon for the female partner to avoid addressing parts of the sexual connection with which they are dissatisfied for fear of their spouse becoming furious. Rather of talking about a partner's particular wants or preferences, people tend to make assumptions about a partner's preferences for foreplay and intercourse based on sexual stereotypes (i.e., what they think males typically seek). As a result, these estimates are often incorrect. (2) It is possible that doctors and academicians are overlooking a key element in treating sexual diseases, like female anorgasmia and enhancing sexual relationships by not paying attention to couples' sexual communication. In an analysis of theoretical theories for the genesis and maintenance of anorgasmia, it was found that communication impairments, a lack of trust in communication, and communication inhibitions are all linked to the disease. (3) Depending on the culture, a woman's capacity to talk openly about sexuality may be different from her ability to talk

openly about other topics, including motherhood or sexual education. It's possible that the dynamics of family origin or religion around sexual communication influence whether sexual conversation is promoted. Gender norms around sex may lead to a few assumptions about who initiates and receives pleasure from sex (4). The current work aims to find out whether there's a link between having good sexual communication with spouse and having good sexual pleasure in marriage.

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## Subjects and methods:

This cross-section study was conducted in the period from February 2020 to December 2020. The tool of this study was a self-report questionnaire written in English and translated into Arabic to ensure it is applicable among our targeted population regardless their level of education. It was distributed on 468 women on social media and was fully filled anonymously by only 401. The work started after obtaining approval of the ethical committee and department of Dermatology and Andrology at Benha Faculty of Medicine. The aim of the study and details of the questionnaire were explained to the women before participating in response to this questionnaire.

### Inclusion criteria

- Married women with regular sexual life.
- Women should be able to read, write and have access to social media to be able to fill the questionnaire.

### Exclusion criteria

- Women not currently participating in regular sexual intercourse e.g., divorced or widowed.
- Subjects refusing to cooperate.

- Pregnant or lactating women
- Presence of any medical conditions or taking any medications that may affect sexual functions.
- Presence of mental or psychiatric disorders.

**The questionnaire included the following items:**

- Epidemiological data: age, education level (read and write, secondary school or university degree), residence (village city or town) and duration of marriage.
- Sexual activity: coital frequency and masturbation
- Sexual communication: if she initiates intercourse or not, method of initiation, reasons why she wouldn't initiate, if her husband makes sure she reaches orgasm, if she verbally communicates with her husband during intercourse, if she ever fakes orgasm, the reasons for faking orgasm, her response when her husband asks for intercourse in an inconvenient time, sharing fantasies and needs with husband or not and confidence in body image.
- Sexual satisfaction: satisfaction with coital frequency, wanting more or wanting less, how often she reaches orgasm, satisfaction with sex life.

**Statistical analysis**

Data were collected, revised, coded, and entered to the statistical package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) version 23. The Qualitative variables were presented as numbers and percentages. The comparison between groups with qualitative data were done by using Chi-square test and Fisher exact test instead of the Chi- square only when the expected count in any cell found less than 5. The confidence interval was set to 95% and the margin of error accepted was set to 5%. P-value was considered significant as the following:

$P \geq 0.05$ : Nonsignificant (NS),  $P < 0.05$ : Significant (S),  $P < 0.01$ : Highly significant (HS).

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**Results**

A total of 401 married female participants shared in the study. Most participants (73.8%) belong to age group 30-39 years, 97.8% of them had a university degree, 84.8% live in a city and 46.9% have been married for 6-10 years (Table 1). Most of the participants do not masturbate (73.1%) and the most common coital frequency is 2-3 times per week (42.1%) (Table 2).

Among participants 38.2% reach orgasm in less than 50% of sexual encounters, while 25.9% reach orgasm almost every time and 0.2% never or rarely reach orgasm. The majority are satisfied with the coital frequency (68.3%). Most of the participants are satisfied with their sex life (63.1%) and 67.6% are not satisfied with their sex life blame their husbands (Table 3).

Most of the participants initiate intercourse (67.6%) when they want to. The most common method of initiation is giving signs and waiting for partner to start (38.7%). Almost 60% of the participants who do not initiate sex with their spouses stated that the reason is being shy. Most of the participants said that their husbands made sure they reached orgasm (76.6%). Also, 63.1% of the participants stated that they sometimes fake orgasm. The most common reason for faking orgasm is to satisfy their partner (73.0%). Among the participants 71.3% communicate verbally with their partners during intercourse. The majority of the participants (46.6%) said that they apologized and explained their reasons when they wanted to decline intercourse. Also, most of them (55.4%) said they were comfortable discussing

their sexual desires and fantasies with their partners and 72.6% of them felt confident

about their bodies (Table 4).

**Table 1:** Demographic data of all participants.

|                                     |              | N   | %    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-----|------|
| <b>Age (years)</b>                  | <20          | 1   | 0.2  |
|                                     | 20-29        | 66  | 16.5 |
|                                     | 30-39        | 296 | 73.8 |
|                                     | 40-50        | 36  | 9.0  |
|                                     | >50          | 2   | 0.5  |
| <b>Education</b>                    | Read & write | 4   | 1.0  |
|                                     | 2ry school   | 5   | 1.2  |
|                                     | University   | 392 | 97.8 |
| <b>Residence</b>                    | City         | 340 | 84.8 |
|                                     | Town         | 26  | 6.5  |
|                                     | Village      | 35  | 8.7  |
| <b>Duration of marriage (years)</b> | <1           | 20  | 5.0  |
|                                     | 1-5          | 101 | 25.2 |
|                                     | 6-10         | 188 | 46.9 |
|                                     | 11-15        | 64  | 16.0 |
|                                     | 16-19        | 25  | 6.2  |
|                                     | ≥20          | 3   | 0.7  |

**Table 2:** Sexual activity.

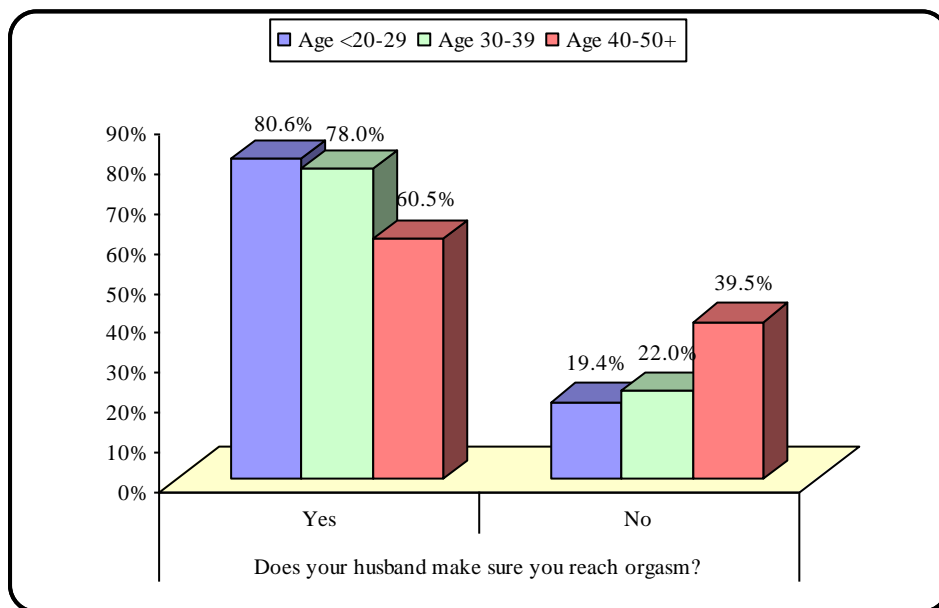
| <b>Sexual activity</b> |                 | N   | %    |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----|------|
| Do you masturbate?     | Yes             | 108 | 26.9 |
|                        | No              | 293 | 73.1 |
| Coital frequency       | Daily           | 9   | 2.2  |
|                        | 2-3 times /week | 169 | 42.1 |
|                        | Once /week      | 126 | 31.4 |
|                        | Once /month     | 59  | 14.7 |
|                        | > once / month  | 38  | 9.5  |

Among the younger age group (<20-29y), 80.6% stated that their husbands made sure they reached orgasm compared to 60.5% of the older age group (>40y). Also, 23.7%

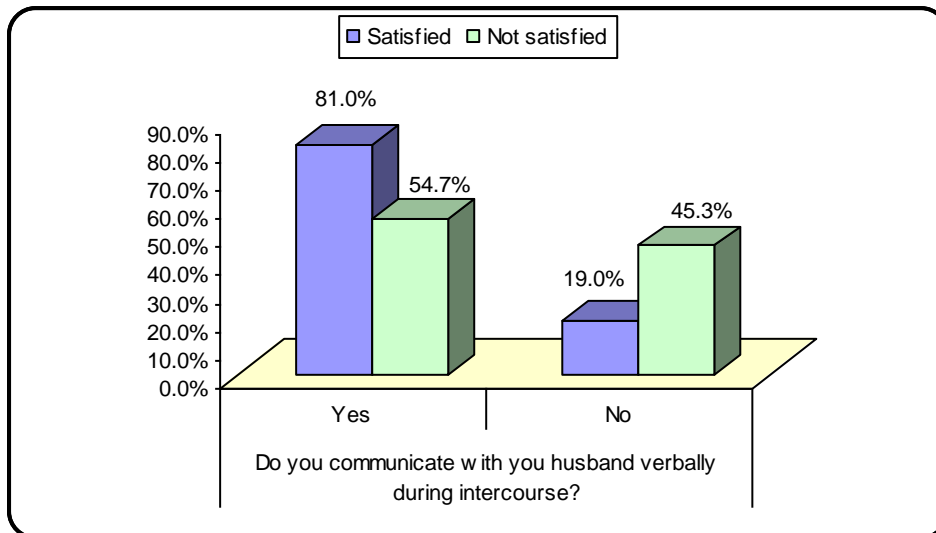
of the older age group (>40y) reported always faking orgasm while only 11.9% of the younger age group (<20-29y), always fake orgasm (Fig.1).

**Table 3:** Sexual satisfaction.

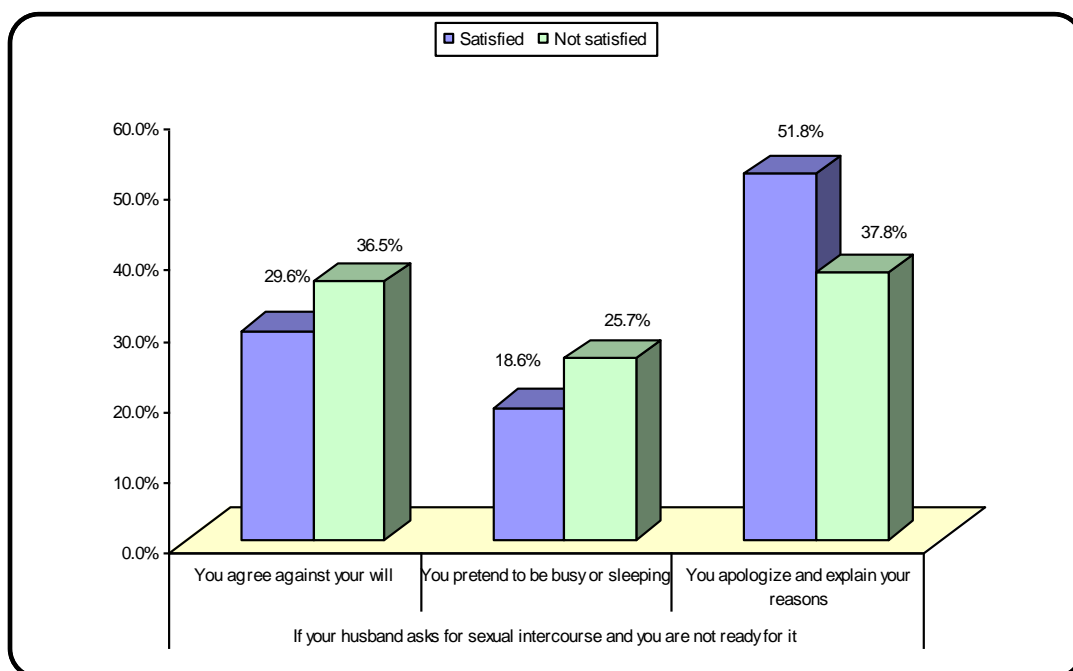
| Sexual satisfaction  |                        | n   | %    |
|--|------------------------|-----|------|
| <b>How often do you reach orgasm?</b>                        | Almost always          | 104 | 25.9 |
|  | In > 50% of the times  | 143 | 35.7 |
|  | In <50% of the times   | 153 | 38.2 |
|  | Rarely or almost never | 1   | 0.2  |
| <b>Are you satisfied with this coital frequency?</b>         | Yes                    | 274 | 68.3 |
|  | No                     | 127 | 31.7 |
| <b>Are you satisfied with you sex life?</b>                  | Yes                    | 253 | 63.1 |
|  | No                     | 148 | 36.9 |
| <b>If the answer is No Do you blame your husband for it?</b> | Yes                    | 100 | 67.6 |
|  | No                     | 48  | 32.4 |



**Fig. (1):** Husband making sure that partner reaches orgasm among participants of different age groups.



**Fig. (2):** Relation between overall satisfaction with sex life and verbal communication during intercourse. Sexual satisfaction is more with verbal communication during intercourse (81%) (Chi-square test 31.572,  $p=0.000$ ).



**Fig. (3):** Relation between honesty in rejecting intercourse when not desired and overall satisfaction with sex life. More sexual satisfaction when women apologize being not ready for practicing intercourse 51.8% (Chi-square test 7.470,  $p=0.02$ ).

In our study, 75.9% of those who are satisfied with their sex life stated that they initiated sexual intercourse when they wanted to compared to only 24.1% of those who are not satisfied with their sex lives. The relation is highly statistically

significant. Among satisfied group who do not initiate sex, 73.8% stated that the reason was due to being shy, while among the dissatisfied group 46.6% stated the reason is being shy and 33.3% said that fear of rejection by the husband was the

reason. Among the satisfied group 86.2% stated their husbands made sure they reached orgasm vs. 60.1% of the dissatisfied group. Results are highly significant. In the satisfied group, 81% said they communicated verbally with their husbands during intercourse vs. 54.7% of the dissatisfied group (Fig. 2). Among the satisfied group, 40.32% stated they never faked orgasm, 55.34% said they sometimes did and only 4.35% said they always faked orgasm. Meanwhile, among the dissatisfied group 6.76% stated they never faked orgasm, 76.35% stated they sometimes do and 16.89% said they always faked orgasm. In the satisfied group, 51.8% stated that when they were

not ready for intercourse, they were honest and explained their reasons, 29.6% agreed against their will and 18.6% pretended to be busy or sleeping. While among the dissatisfied group 37.8% explained their reasons, 36.5% agreed against their will and 25.7% pretended to be busy or (Fig. 3), (Table 5). Among the satisfied group, 64.4% said they felt comfortable discussing their sexual needs and fantasies vs. 39.9% among the dissatisfied group. Results are highly significant. Also, 76.7% of the satisfied group felt confident about their bodies in front of their husband with statistical significance compared to 65.5% among the dissatisfied group (Table 5).

**Table 4:** Sexual communication

|   |  | N   | %    |
|---|--|-----|------|
| <b>Do you ask/initiate sexual intercourse with your husband when you want to?</b>                           | Yes  | 271 | 67.6 |
|   | No   | 130 | 32.4 |
| <b>Does your husband make sure you reach orgasm?</b>  | Yes  | 307 | 76.6 |
|   | No   | 94  | 23.4 |
| <b>Do you communicate with your husband verbally during intercourse?</b>                                    | Yes  | 286 | 71.3 |
|   | No   | 115 | 28.7 |
|   | Never  | 112 | 27.9 |
| <b>Do you ever fake orgasm?</b>   | Sometimes  | 253 | 63.1 |
|   | Always   | 36  | 9.0  |
| <b>If your husband asks for sexual intercourse and you are not ready for it</b>                             | You agree against your will                        | 129 | 32.2 |
|   | You pretend to be busy or sleeping                 | 85  | 21.2 |
|   | You apologize and explain your reasons             | 187 | 46.6 |
| <b>How comfortable do you feel about discussing your sexual needs/fantasies/problems with your husband?</b> | I can talk to him about anything                   | 222 | 55.4 |
|   | I don't feel comfortable talking about it with him | 179 | 44.6 |
| <b>Do you feel confident about your body in front of your husband?</b>                                      | Yes  | 291 | 72.6 |
|   | No   | 110 | 27.4 |

**Table 5:** Relationship between sexual satisfaction and sexual communication

|   |  | Are you satisfied with your sex life? |             | Test value | P-value   |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
|   |  | Yes n(%)                              | No n(%)     |            |           |
| Do you ask/initiate sexual intercourse with your husband when you want to?                            | Yes  | 192 (75.9)                            | 79 (53.4)   | 21.597     | 0.000(HS) |
|   | No   | 61 (24.1)                             | 69 (46.6)   |            |           |
| If yes, how do you initiate?  | Ask verbally   | 67 (34.9)                             | 28 (35.4)   | 0.291      | 0.865(NS) |
|   | Give him signs and wait for him to start                                 | 73 (38.0)                             | 32 (40.5)   |            |           |
|   | Dress in a certain way to seduce him                                     | 52 (27.1)                             | 19 (24.1)   |            |           |
|   | Your husband doesn't like you to ask for sexual intercourse              | 4 (6.6)                               | 5 (7.2)     |            |           |
| If no, please clarify the reason  | You are shy  | 45 (73.8)                             | 32 (46.4)   | 12.426     | 0.006(HS) |
|   | You think it is inappropriate for a female to ask for sexual intercourse | 6 (9.8)                               | 9 (13.0)    |            |           |
|   | You are afraid of being rejected by your husband                         | 6 (9.8)                               | 23 (33.3)   |            |           |
| Does your husband make sure you reach orgasm?   | Yes  | 218 (86.2)                            | 89 (60.1)   | 35.256     | 0.000(HS) |
|   | No   | 35 (13.8)                             | 59 (39.9)   |            |           |
| Do you communicate with husband verbally during intercourse?  | Yes  | 205 (81.0)                            | 81 (54.7)   | 31.572     | 0.000(HS) |
|   | No   | 48 (19.0)                             | 67 (45.3)   |            |           |
| Do you ever fake orgasm?  | Never  | 102 (40.32)                           | 10 (6.76)   | 60.555     | 0.000(HS) |
|   | Sometimes  | 140 (55.34)                           | 113 (76.35) |            |           |
|   | Always   | 11 (4.35)                             | 25 (16.89)  |            |           |
| If yes, then why?   | To end the sexual intercourse quickly                                    | 28 (15.7)                             | 32 (28.8)   | 7.947      | 0.019(S)  |
|   | To satisfy your partner  | 140 (78.7)                            | 71 (64.0)   |            |           |
| If your husband asks for sexual intercourse and you are not ready for it                              | Because intercourse is painful for you                                   | 10 (5.6)                              | 8 (7.2)     | 7.470      | 0.024(S)  |
|   | You agree against your will  | 75 (29.6)                             | 54 (36.5)   |            |           |
|   | You pretend to be busy or sleeping                                       | 47 (18.6)                             | 38 (25.7)   |            |           |
| How comfortable do you feel about discussing your sexual needs/fantasies/ problems with your husband? | You apologize and explain your reasons                                   | 131 (51.8)                            | 56 (37.8)   | 22.795     | 0.000(HS) |
|   | I can talk to him about anything   | 163 (64.4)                            | 59 (39.9)   |            |           |
| Do you feel confident about your body in front of your husband?                                       | I don't feel comfortable talking about it with him                       | 90 (35.6)                             | 89 (60.1)   | 5.820      | 0.016(S)  |
|   | Yes  | 194 (76.7)                            | 97 (65.5)   |            |           |
|   | No   | 59 (23.3)                             | 51 (34.5)   |            |           |

P-value &gt;0.05: Nonsignificant (NS); P-value &lt;0.05: Significant(S); P-value &lt; 0.01: highly significant (HS)

\*: Chi-square test



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## **Discussion**

Actually, frequency of sexual intercourse quantitatively reflects couple's sexual interactions. However, sexual communication can be considered a better representative of love and intimacy during sexual relationship. (5, 6) The importance of communication during a sexual act has been largely ignored in the scientific literature. Reciprocal disclosure of both partners is linked to greater feeling of intimacy in the couple and more sexual satisfaction. (7, 8)

Husbands are known to initiate sexual activity more often than wives. Therefore, this study assessed the role of women in initiation of sex and how this can affect their sexual life. However, findings tend to vary depending on whether the focus is on sexual or on non-sexual communication. (9) In general, communication between sexual partners has been found to be important to sexual satisfaction. (10) Others have reported the specific importance of communication about sex, in particular sexual needs and desires, for sexual satisfaction. (11,12) Conversely, indirectness of communication about sexual intimacy has been associated with lower sexual satisfaction. (13)

Of those polled in the present study, 71.3% said they exchanged verbal cues with their partners while having sex. The findings of the current study are comparable to those mentioned by other authors, who showed that (a) more communication during sex leads to higher pleasure than without sexual communication and (b) contentment with sexual communication predicts sexual satisfaction. (14) Sexual communication has also been found to be predictive of general relationship

satisfaction. (15,16) In a study exploring the link between sexual and non-sexual communication and marital satisfaction using observational methods, (9) negative behaviors during sexual conversations were associated with lower relationship satisfaction. Research has also found positive associations between sexual communication and orgasm frequency in women and higher sexual and relationship satisfaction in both men and women. (17) In the present study, among the pleased, 29.6% indicated they would agree against their will to participate in unwelcome sexual behavior, compared to 36.5% of the unsatisfied group who said they would consent against their will as another way to gauge communication. Consensual undesired sex or compliant sexual conduct (18) refers to sexual behavior is freely and voluntarily engaged in regardless the consequences. There was more of a disparity between the two groups of those who claim they voluntarily participate in unwanted sexual behavior, even though the findings are statistically significant, nevertheless.

If a relationship doesn't work out, women tend to put the blame on themselves. Some women may think that giving their spouse with the sexual closeness they want is the greatest way to keep their relationship strong. There were almost twice as many women (32%) as males (17%) who participated in unwanted petting or intercourse because they were worried their partner would end the relationship if they refused. (18) Females may be more prone than males to engage in inappropriate sexual behavior because they may believe that males have a greater sexual desire. Many individuals think that it is religiously prohibited for a woman to

say no to her husband's sexual desires, thus this may have a religious component. The sexually happy individuals stated they would communicate honestly with their spouses by rejecting and expressing their reasons for doing so, whereas the unsatisfied participants said they would lie and claim to be busy or sleeping instead.

Researchers described sexual assertiveness as the capacity to refuse unwelcome sexual relationships and to have a sexual engagement that provides joy to one's sexual life. There's evidence to indicate that women with higher sexual self-confidence have more satisfying relationships and are better equipped to cope with sexual dysfunction. Sexual communication requires a certain level of assertiveness. (19) Having the ability to communicate one's sexual desires and wants is an important part of sexual assertiveness; therefore, we also asked: 74 % of the individuals who were happy said they felt comfortable sharing their sexual dreams and wants with their spouses, compared to 39.9 % of the unsatisfied group who said they felt uncomfortable discussing their demands.

Sexual assertiveness is reported to have a strong positive correlation with good emotions about one's partner. (20) There is a strong connection between marital distraction, dysfunctional sexual attitudes, and sexual aggressiveness among married women. When it came to sexual assertiveness, researchers discovered an unfavorable correlation between the two variables. When asked how confident women felt about their bodies in front of their spouses, 76.7% of the happy individuals stated they felt confident, compared to 65.5% of the unsatisfied participants. (21) The findings are in line with previous research.

Sexual esteem and sexual assertiveness all suffer when a person has a negative body image or unhappiness with a particular body area during sexual engagement. Scientists studied 154 adult women aged 18 to 49 years old for information on their sexual pleasure, self-image, and sexual functioning, and the findings were illuminating (22). It turns out that even when sexual functioning remains constant, women who have higher self-confidence in their bodies and have fewer distractions related to their bodies have more sexual satisfaction than women who have frequent distractions and struggle with their bodies' images, according to multiple regression analyses. (23)

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## Conclusion

In intimate partnerships, better sexual communication is linked to better sexual pleasure. Women should be encouraged to discuss their sexuality, such as sexual desires, preferences, fears, and fantasies, with their spouses in order to obtain greater sexual satisfaction and, as a result, greater relationship satisfaction.

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