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ABSTRACT

For seven consecutive semesters, questionnaires were administered to the students enrolled in Illinois Central College's human sexuality course to determine their sexual experience, practices, and orientation. The surveys also sought to assess the students' attitudes toward homosexuality, pornography, masturbation, extramarital relations, abortion, premarital sex, birth control, and the importance of sexual compatibility in marriage. The study's findings, which were based on the responses of the 205 course enrollees, were admittedly not generalizable to the total student population. The study revealed that: (1) about 5% of the males and females felt sexual attraction to persons of the same sex; (2) 75% of the males and 84% of the females had engaged in oral sex; (3) 42% of the married men and 32% of the married women had had extramarital relations; (4) 20% more females than males used a method of birth control; (5) oral contraceptives were the most popular form of birth control; and (6) 27% of the females had been pregnant while unmarried and 30% of the males had partners who had been pregnant while unmarried. The survey also revealed that men were more conservative than women with regard to homosexuality, the effects of pornography, masturbation, and abortion, while women were more conservative about the availability of pornography and extramarital relations. (JP)

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SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES
OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Illinois Central College

October, 1980

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SEXUAL BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Psychology 193, Human Sexuality, is team-taught as a continuing education course. As indicated by the accompanying syllabus, the course addresses itself such topics as: cross-cultural and historical views of human sexuality, gender role and identity, contemporary sexual behavior, anatomy and physiology, sexual response cycle, venereal disease, contraception, abortion, dysfunction and sexual variation. Except for the first semester, the course has been offered during the evening.

Over the past seven semesters, the 205 students enrolled in this course were given an anonymous questionnaire to fill out during the first class of the semester, which covered their sexual experiences and attitudes.

Data was compiled and compared for males vs. females and marries vs. singles. The sample is unlikely to approach randomness. We believe our students tend to be more sexually liberal and experienced than other students at our college.

I. Some general characteristics of our students are as follows:

- 1) Females outnumber males 2:1 and have done so consistently in all our classes.
- 2) The average age of our students is similar to the average age of community college students -- mid-twenties.
- 3) Married/single ratio - 40/60. (This is ever-married vs. never-married).
- 4) About 5% of our students -- male or female -- indicated a sexual attraction to people of the same sex. However, more than twice as many males as females have had any homosexual contact and twice as much homosexual contact as occurred among married people as compared to single.
- 5) Oral sexual behavior seems to be a widely practiced form of sexual expression.
- 6) Adultery occurred in about 42% of the married men and about 32% of the married females.

- 7) The use of birth control is about 20% higher for females vs. males and 30% higher among marrieds as compared to singles. More than one-third of the single respondents said they do not use any form of birth control, but only 10% of the sample is not sexually active.
- 8) Birth control pills are still the most popular form of contraception by far. Lagging far behind are condoms, foam and withdrawal.
- 9) More than one-third of the sample has been involved in a pregnancy outside of marriage; 2/3 of those pregnancies resulted in abortions.

II. Attitudes

Although in most individual classes, there were some noticeable differences on certain items in the married/single comparisons, these differences failed to appear when averaged for the total sample.

In the male/female comparisons, males are more conservative than females on the following items:

- 1) Questions regarding the role of homosexuals in society.
- 2) Pornography as a threat to society.
- 3) Masturbation as a normal behavior among married people.
- 4) Abortion as a special case, i.e., rape, etc.

Women are more conservative than males on these items:

- 1) The availability of pornography.
- 2) Adultery.
- 3) The importance of sexual compatibility on the success of a marriage.

In our opinion, the data is notable by its lack of discrepancy, in general, of attitudes of males vs. females and married vs. single. A random sample of a community college population would probably be more diverse in its attitudes.

I. Sexual Experience

1. Sex:

2. Age: Range = 17-65 years

3. Religious Preference

Protestant

Roman Catholic

Jewish

Other

None

4. How often do you attend church services:

2 or more times weekly

once per week

1-3 times per month

rarely

never

5. Current marital status:

Single

Married

Widowed

Divorced or separated

Divorced, but remarried

	Male %	Female %	Ever Married %	Single %	Total %
	70	135	87	118	205
	$\bar{x} = 25.3$	$\bar{x} = 27.9$	$\bar{x} = 33.2$	$\bar{x} = 22.8$	$\bar{x} = 26.9$
Protestant	28	66	44	50	94
Roman Catholic	19	37	22	34	56
Jewish	1	0	1	0	1
Other	10	14	6	18	24
None	9	18	19	8	27
2 or more times weekly	2	5	5	2	7
once per week	16	40	24	32	56
1-3 times per month	9	27	12	24	36
rarely	23	52	27	48	75
never	16	12	13	15	28
Single	39	72	0	117	111
Married	21	44	65	0	65
Widowed	0	1	1	0	1
Divorced or separated	9	20	29	0	29
Divorced, but remarried	2	3	5	0	5

	Male		Female		Ever Married		Single		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
6. If you are currently single, are you:										
co-habiting (living with a sexual partner)	5		5		1		9		10	
engaged	0		2		0		2		2	
"seriously involved" with another person	15		33		13		35		48	
just dating around	18		28		9		37		46	
none of the above	8		14		0		22		22	
7. If you have been or are married, at what age did you first marry?	$\bar{x} = 21$		$\bar{x} = 19.8$		$\bar{x} = 20.4$		-		$\bar{x} = 20.4$	
8. Do you have any children?										
Yes	13		28		35		6		43	
No										
9. If you are or have been married, how long have (had) you been married?	$\bar{x} = 9$		$\bar{x} = 12.2$		$\bar{x} = 11.1$		-		$\bar{x} = 11.1$	
10. Are you primarily sexually attracted to persons of the:										
same sex (homosexual)	4	5.7	7	5.2	6	7	5	4.2	11	5.3
opposite sex (heterosexual)	66	94.3	124	94.8	78	90	112	95	190	94.7
either (bisexual)	0	0	4	2.7	3	3	1	0.8	4	2.0
11. Have you ever engaged in sexual intercourse with a person of the opposite sex?										
Yes	61	87	123	91	87	100	96	81.4	184	90
No	9	13	12	9	0	0	21	18.6	21	10
11a. If you have had intercourse, what was the age of your first experience?	$\bar{x} = 17$		$\bar{x} = 17.9$		$\bar{x} = 19.5$		16.0		$\bar{x} = 17.6$	
11b. If you have <u>never</u> had intercourse, have you ever engaged in petting to orgasm?										
Yes	2		4		0		6		6	
No	7		8		-		15		15	

	Male		% Female		Ever Married %		Single %		Total %	
12. Have you engaged in <u>any</u> sexual contact with a person of the same sex?										
Yes	19	27	16	12	22	25.3	13	11	35	17
No	51	73	119	88	65	74.7	105	89	170	83
Age of first contact (Range)	10-17		8-23		10-20		8-23		8-23	
13. Have you engaged in <u>orgasmic</u> sexual contact with a person of the same sex?										
Yes	14	20	6	17	12	13.8	8	6.8	20	9.8
No	56	80	129	83	75	86.2	110	93.2	185	90.2
Age of first contact (Range)	9-15		13-23		9-17		10-23		9-23	
14. Have you ever masturbated?										
Yes	61	87	93	69	78	90	76	65	154	75
Orgasm	60		83		74		69		143	
No	9		42		9		42		51	
14a. At what age did you first masturbate? (Range)	$\bar{x} = 11.9$		$\bar{x} = 16.5$		$\bar{x} = 13.9$		$\bar{x} = 12.6$		$\bar{x} = 14.8$	
	7-16		3-43		5-43		3-16		3-43	
14b. At present, how often do you masturbate?										
never	14		44		24		34		58	
less than once a month	8		22		20		10		30	
1-2 times a month	15		24		13		26		39	
1-2 times a week	11		13		14		10		24	
3-5 times a week	6		4		4		6		10	
more than 5 times a week	3		0		0		3		3	

Ever
Male % Female % Married % Single % Total %

15. Have you ever engaged in oral sexual behavior?

Yes

Actively (giver)

No

Passively (receiver)

53	75.7	114	84.4	80	92	88	75	167	81.5
48		92		77		84			
17	24.3	21	15.6	7	8	30	25	38	18.5
46		95		76		85			

16. If you are or have been married, have you ever engaged in adultery?

Yes

N = 167

No

11	42.3	20	32.7	31	36	-	-		
59		115		56					

17. If you are or have been married, has your spouse ever engaged in adultery (to your knowledge)?

Yes

No

12		14		26				26	
58		121		61				179	

18. At the present time are you regularly having sex with one partner?

Yes

Same sex

No

Opposite sex

40		84		87		37		124	
1		1						2	
30		51		-		81		81	
39		83		-		-		81	

19. How often do you have sexual relations with another person?

never

less than once a month

1-3 times a month

1-2 times a week

3-5 times a week

more than 5 times a week.

10		11		2		19		21	
7		18		4		21		25	
17		23		15		25		40	
11		40		36		15		51	
14		34		22		26		48	
8		3		4		7		11	

Ever
Male % Female % Married % Single % Total %

20. Do you or your partner practice some form of birth control?

Yes

No

44	63	113	84	81	93.1	76	64.4	157	77
26	37	22	16	6	6.9	42	35.6	48	23

21. How regularly do you or your partner practice birth control?

never

sometimes

usually

almost always

always

11	23	7	27	34
5	8	3	10	13
4	4	3	5	8
6	7	5	8	13
31	77	69	68	108

22. What form(s) of birth control are you or your partner now using?

none

foam

condoms

withdrawal

rhythm

I.U.D.

pills

diaphragm

sterilization (male)

sterilization (female)

12	16	3	25	28
11	14	4	21	25
23	18	21	20	41
7	15	12	10	22
3	9	7	5	12
0	10	10	0	10
29	66	37	58	95
4	11	13	2	15
2	14	0	0	16
3	8	11	0	11

23. What form(s) of birth control have you or a partner ever used?

- none
- foam
- condoms
- withdrawal
- rhythm
- I.U.D.
- pills
- diaphragm
- sterilization (male)
- sterilization (female)

	Male	Female	Married	Single	Total
	N = 56	N = 87			
none	3	9	8	4	12
foam	19	27	25	21	46
condoms	35	54	45	44	89
withdrawal	20	33	27	26	53
rhythm	8	23	16	15	31
I.U.D.	9	18	10	17	27
pills	31	58	44	45	89
diaphragm	10	14	10	14	24
sterilization (male)	1	16	15	2	17
sterilization (female)	4	6	9	1	10

24. Have you or a sexual partner ever gotten pregnant outside of wedlock?

- Yes
- No

	Male	Female	Married	Single	Total
	N = 61	N = 106			
Yes	18	27	27	18	45
No	43	79	49	73	122

25. If you have been involved in a pregnancy outside of marriage, what was the result?

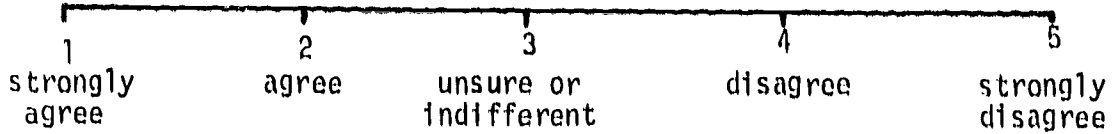
- abortion
- marriage
- adoption
- other

	Male	Female	Married	Single	Total
	N = 35	N = 69	N = 69	N = 35	
abortion	6	15	7	14	21
marriage	1	10	11	0	11
adoption	1	0	0	1	1
other	1 (single mother)	2	1	2	3 (single mother)

II. Sexual Attitudes

All questions concerning sexual attitudes were answered using the following five-point scale:

Example: Sex is fun.



	N = 61	N = 105	N = 76	N = 90	N = 166
	Male	Female	Married	Single	Total
1. Homosexuality is a sin. (4 classes)	2.6	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.2
2. Homosexuals are a threat to society.	3.5	4.1	3.7	3.2	3.8
3. Homosexuality is an illness.	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.1
4. Homosexuality is simply an alternative sexual life style. (4 classes)	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.6
5. Homosexual couples should be allowed to raise children.	3.6	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.2
6. Homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children.	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.4
7. Pornography is a threat to society.	4.0	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.5
8. Pornographic materials (books, movies, etc.) should be easily available to adults who wish to buy it.	2.0	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.5

	Male	Female	Married	Single	Total
9. Pornographic materials are harmful to children.	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7
10. Pornography is arousing <u>only</u> to men.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
11. Pornography is arousing <u>only</u> to men with a sexual problem.	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5
12. Women are usually unaffected by pornographic materials.	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2
13. Masturbation is a normal, healthy behavior in adults.	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.4
14. Masturbation is a sign of immaturity in adults. (4 classes)	4.2	4.2	4.3	3.8	4.2
15. Married people who masturbate must have a problem in their sex life.	2.5	4.0	4.1	3.7	3.6
16. Adultery is always wrong.	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0
17. Adultery in husbands is acceptable, but only in certain circumstances.	3.5	4.0	3.7	3.4	3.8
18. Adultery in wives is acceptable but only in certain circumstances.	3.5	4.1	3.8	3.6	3.8
19. Adultery is harmless to a marriage. (4 classes)	3.8	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.1
20. Abortion should be an option available to all pregnant women.	2.7	2.5	3.2	2.9	2.6

	Male	Female	Married	Single	Total
21. Abortion is never acceptable.	3.7	3.9	4.0	4.1	3.8
22. Abortion is acceptable, but only in special circumstances (rape, in order to save the mother's life, etc.)	2.8	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.1
23. Premarital sex is OK. (4 classes)	2.0	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.1
24. Premarital sex is fine, but only if you really care about your partner. (4 classes)	2.9	2.7	3.0	2.1	2.8
25. Having sex before marriage with your would-be spouse is good for the relationship later on.	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.8
26. "Nice" people don't have oral sex.	4.7	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.4
27. Artificial birth control is wrong.	4.2	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.4
28. Birth control information and devices should be more easily accessible to young people.	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.9
29. Considering the world population situation, it is immoral for a couple <u>not</u> to limit their family size. (4 classes)	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.4
30. Most marital problems will take care of themselves if a couple has a good sexual relationship.	3.4	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.8

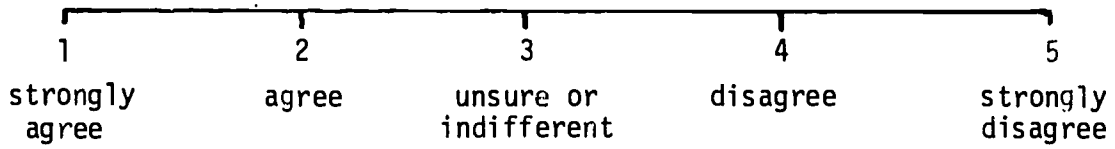
31. Most sexual problems will take care of themselves if a couple has a good marriage.

	Male	Female	Married	Single	Total
	3.2	3.2	3.5	3.1	3.2
	3.5	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.8

32. If two people really love each other, then sex will automatically be mutually satisfying.

1 2 3 4 5
 strongly agree unsure or disagree strongly
 agree indifferent disagree disagree

	Male	Female
1. Homosexuality is a sin.	2.6	3.4
2. Homosexuals are a threat to society.	3.5	4.1
5. Homosexual couples should be allowed to raise children.	3.6	2.9
7. Pornography is a threat to society.	4.0	3.4
8. Pornographic materials (books, movies, etc.) should be easily available to adults who wish to buy it.	2.0	
15. Married people who masturbate must have a problem in their sex life.	2.5	4.0
17. Adultery in husbands is acceptable, but only in certain circumstances.	3.5	4.0
18. Adultery in wives is acceptable but only in certain circumstances.	3.5	4.0
19. Adultery is harmless to a marriage.	3.8	4.3
22. Abortion is acceptable, but only in special circumstances (rape, in order to save the mother's life, etc.)	2.8	3.4
30. Most marital problems will take care of themselves if a couple has a good sexual relationship.	3.4	4.0



	Married	Single
1. Homosexuals are a threat to society.	3.7	3.2
14. Masturbation is a sign of immaturity in adults. (4 classes)	4.3	3.8

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