



# ISSM Webinar Series

**Joint ISSM-JSM Webinar on “SEX & COVID-19: THE STATE OF THE SCIENCE”**



# ISSM Webinar Series

## Sexual Behavior in Men during COVID-19

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1

Waters L, Rockstroh JK.

HIV Med. 2020 Jun 16. doi: 10.1111/hiv.12913. Online ahead of print.

PMID: 32544304

The unprecedented global scale of COVID-19 globally has triggered a race to discover interventions to reduce associated morbidity and mortality and rapid release of research findings prior to any degree of critical review. ...Here we summarise the evidence for antir ...

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# The impact of Pandemic on Sexual Behaviour

- Social distancing
- Psychological distress and negative mood
- Fear of contagion



Is the pandemic really changing the sexual behaviour?



## Changes in Sexual Behaviors of Young Women and Men During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak: A Convenience Sample From the Epidemic Area

**270 men and 189 women** who completed an online survey

### **Outcomes:**

Changes in the number of sexual partners, sexual desire, frequency of sexual behavior, sexual satisfaction, and risky sexual behaviors (behaviors (defined as inconsistent condom use, “casual” sexual partnerships, or multiple sexual partnerships)

Symptoms were assessed for “during the COVID-19 outbreak.”



	Total (n = 459)	Male (n = 270)	Female (n = 189)
<b>Living with parents</b>			
Yes	331 (0.72)	185 (0.69)	146 (0.77)
No	128 (0.28)	85 (0.31)	43 (0.23)
<b>Number of sexual partners</b>			
Increase	27 (0.06)	13 (0.05)	14 (0.07) <sup>a</sup>
Unchanged	230 (0.50)	112 (0.41)	118 (0.62)
Reduce	202 (0.44)	145 (0.53)	57 (0.30)
<b>Sexual desire</b>			
Increase	64 (0.14)	48 (0.18)	16 (0.08) <sup>b</sup>
Unchanged	261 (0.57)	149 (0.55)	132 (0.70)
Reduce	114 (0.25)	73 (0.27)	41 (0.22)
<b>Sexual frequency</b>			
Increase	92 (0.20)	48 (0.17)	44 (0.23)
Unchanged	199 (0.43)	114 (0.42)	85 (0.45)
Reduce	168 (0.37)	108 (0.40)	60 (0.32)
<b>Sexual satisfaction</b>			
Increase	67 (0.15)	29 (0.11)	38 (0.20) <sup>c</sup>
Unchanged	232 (0.51)	155 (0.57)	77 (0.41)
Reduce	160 (0.35)	86 (0.32)	74 (0.39)

**PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS?**

**SOCIAL DISTANCING**

**Risky sexual behaviours:** defined as inconsistent condom use, “casual” sexual partnerships, or multiple sexual partnerships)

Risky sexual behaviors				
There is not	368 (0.80)	200 (0.74)	168 (0.89)	
Increase	5 (0.01)	3 (0.01)	2 (0.01)	
Unchanged	16 (0.03)	13 (0.05)	3 (0.02)	
Reduce	70 (0.15)	54 (0.20)	16 (0.08)	

### CONCLUSION

To our knowledge, this may be the first study on sexual behavior during the COVID-19 outbreak. The current results show that overall sexual activity, frequency, and risky behaviors declined significantly among young men and women during this unique time. Therefore, as an aspect of overall health, sexual health suffered impacts during the COVID-19 pandemic and that this represents one potential area to be recognized and addressed by sexual health experts.







## COVID-19 Social Distancing and Sexual Activity in a Sample of the British Public

**868 individuals from UK (30% male)**

### **Outcome**

Sexual activity was measured using the following question: **“On average after self-isolating how many times have you engaged in sexual activity weekly?”**

#### *Rates of included patients according to days of self-isolation*

- 0-5 → 25.5%;
- 6-10 → 45.2%;
- 11 → 29.3%

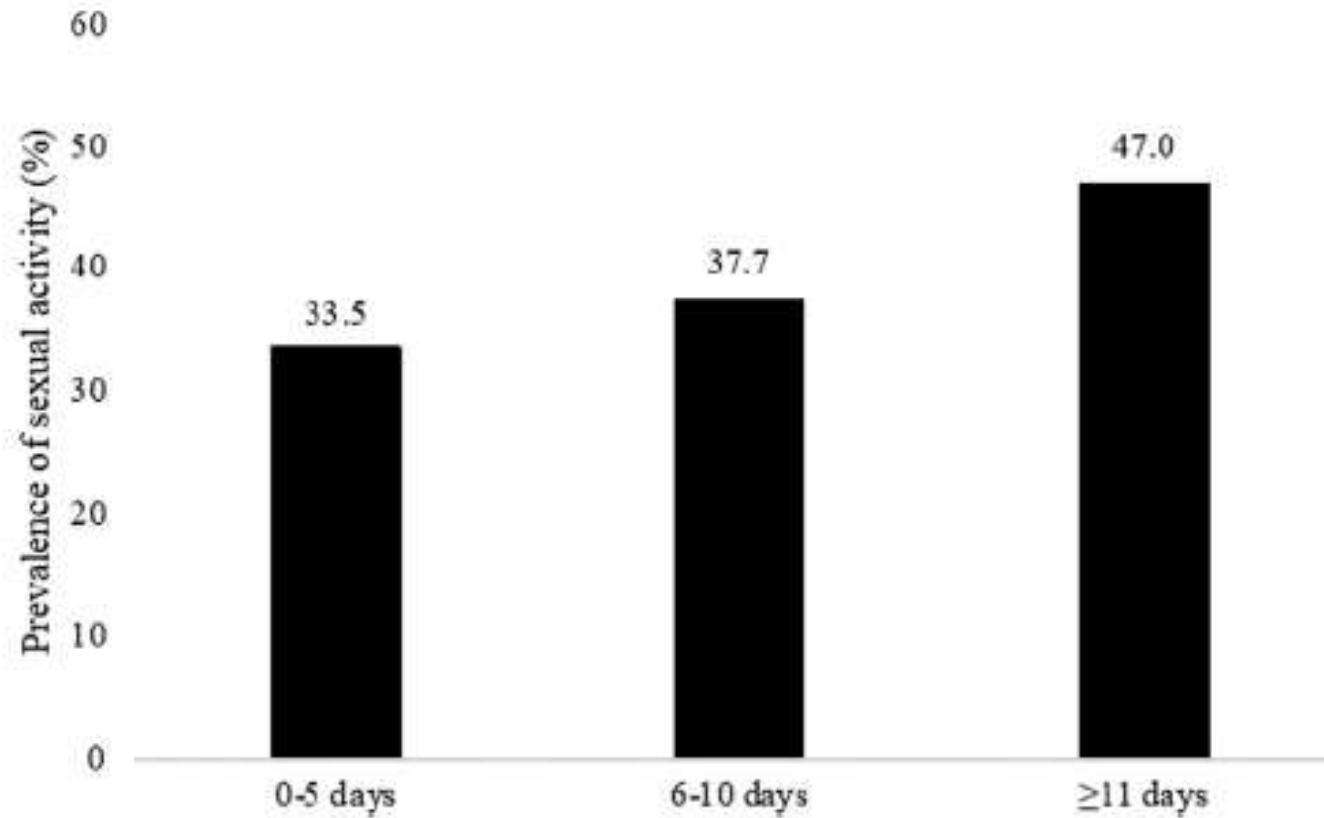
# 39.9% of the population reported engaging in sexual activity at least once per week on average

*Do we have a baseline??*

Table 1. Sample characteristics (overall and by sexual activity status)

Characteristics	Category	Overall (N = 868)	Sexual activity		Effect size*	P-value <sup>†</sup>
			No (N = 522)	Yes (N = 346)		
Sex	Male	36.9	28.6	49.7	0.21	<.001
	Female	63.1	71.4	50.3		
Age	18–24 years	10.6	10.7	10.4	0.21	<.001
	25–34 years	21.8	15.9	30.6		
	35–44 years	16.6	16.5	16.8		
	45–54 years	16.7	17.2	15.9		
	55–64 years	16.8	18.2	14.7		
	65–74 years	13.1	15.3	9.8		
	≥75 years	4.4	6.1	1.7		
Marital status	Single/separated/divorced/widowed	44.7	50.7	35.8	0.15	<.001
	Married/in a domestic partnership	55.3	49.3	64.2		

**SOCIAL DISTANCING**



**Psychological distress or bias?**



## COVID-19 Social Distancing and Sexual Activity in a Sample of the British Public

In conclusion, in this sample of 868 UK adults self-isolating/social distancing owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, those at particular risk of lower levels of sexual activity included females, older adults, those not married, and those who abstain from alcohol consumption. Interventions to promote sexual activity during the COVID-19 pandemic may mitigate some of the detrimental health consequences in



Letter to the Editor

**Does COVID-19 pandemic affect sexual behaviour? A cross-sectional, cross-national online survey**

Individuals of three south-east Asian countries (Bangladesh, India & Nepal)  
from 3rd April 2020 to 15th April 2020

**120 married individuals (77% male)**

**Outcomes:**

- Frequency of sexual intercourse during usual time
- Frequency of sexual intercourse during lockdown

Letter to the Editor

Does COVID-19 pandemic affect sexual behaviour? A cross-sectional, cross-national online survey

Sexual intercourse per week in usual time (i.e. before lockdown)

1 to 5 times	92	76.7
More than 5 times	8	6.7
No sexual intercourse	20	16.7

Among the sample, 45% of the participants reported that the lockdown affected their sexual life. However, the data collected in this research shows no substantial difference in sexual activity between before and during the lockdown; most of the participants engage in sexual

1 to 5 times	87	72.5
More than 5 times	10	10
No sexual intercourse	21	17.5

Affected emotional bonding

Positively	60	50
Negatively	4	3.3
No change	56	46.7





## Love at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic: preliminary results of an online survey conducted during the quarantine in Italy

1515 respondents → males ??

### OUTCOMES

- DEPRESSION: Beck depression inventory
- ANXIETY: Beck Anxiety Inventory
- SEXUALITY: how satisfied are you with your sex life during quarantine on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied)?”
- AUTOEROTISM before and during lockdown



## Love at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic: preliminary results of an online survey conducted during the quarantine in Italy

Median age was 21.0 (interquartile range [IQR]: 19.0–25.0),

### Sexual intercourse during quarantine, *n* (%)

Yes	239 (15.78)
No	1276 (84.22)

### Did you have intercourse before quarantine? *n* (%)

Yes	284 (18.75)
No	1231 (81.25)

### Sexual desire during quarantine, *n* (%)

No sexual desire	241 (15.91)
Less than before	64 (4.22)
Equal to before	594 (39.21)
More than before	616 (40.66)

### How did autoerotism change during quarantine? *n* (%)

No autoerotism	320 (21.12)
Less than before	147 (9.70)
Equal	446 (29.44)
More than before	602 (39.74)



## Is the pandemic really changing sexual behaviour?

We do not have good quality data but certainly social distancing has an impact on sexual activity especially among younger



# Should we change the sexual behaviour?

*The fear of contagion*

# Sexual behaviour: The fear of contagion



- There is **conflicting evidence** regarding the presence of SARS-CoV-2 in seminal or vaginal fluid
- However **the virus can be transmitted by other routes** during sexual intercourses (oral/anal contact)

Corona G et al. *J Endocrinol Invest* 2020 May 27;1-5.  
Patri J *Am Acad Dermatol.* 2020 Jun; 82(6): e227.  
Cipriano et al *Arch Sex Behav* 2020



ELSEVIER



Journal of Clinical Epidemiology 123 (2020) 120–126

## COVID-19 ARTICLES

COVID-19 coronavirus research has overall **low methodological quality** thus far: case in point for chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine

### Key findings

- Clinical decision-makers must be informed by the best, most trustworthy, highest-quality, robust evidence. This translates into how much confidence we can have in the research findings and thus be optimally informed for decision-making.
- **The estimates of effect in clinical research depend on the underlying research methodology.**
- COVID-19 disease is presenting global health systems, clinicians, and patients grave challenges.
- No treatment or prophylaxis currently exists for COVID-19.
- **The overall body of COVID-19 research is very flawed methodologically and underpinned mainly by uncontrolled confounded evidence.**





## Take Home Messages

- Social distancing due to the COVID19 pandemic has led to an overall decrease of sexual activity
- There is no convincing evidence showing an increase of sexual dysfunctions during the lockdown phase
- The longitudinal effect of lockdown on sexual function deserve to be monitored and investigated in the next months