

People who do not experience sexual attraction have been documented through history but in today's society they are largely unrecognised. The assumption that everyone should be able to experience sexual attraction pervades popular culture, medicine, therapy and academia. Asexuality is explicitly or implicitly pathologised or denied and asexuals themselves may be unaware that other people share their experience.

The Asexual Visibility and Education Network was founded in 2001 for the purpose of enabling communication among those who identify themselves as asexual, as well as creating public awareness and laying foundations for constructive discussions with academics and the media. Though increasing numbers of individuals identify themselves as asexual, the context in which asexuals understand their orientation is still open and highly variable. The presentation will explain how an asexual identity is consistent with a diversity of sexual and romantic experiences, united only by absence of sexual attraction. Drawing on AVEN's experience with the media, the evolution of an asexual identity in public space will be sketched. In recent years asexuality has been the subject of several studies, the findings of which will briefly be discussed.

Recognition of an asexual orientation enables asexuals to form a new self-image, increase within-partnership communication of sexual needs, break experimental ground and ultimately bring about new life-concepts. The idea of asexuality raises questions on such matters as the significance of sexual attraction; the possibility of intimacy, passion and infidelity without sexual attraction; sexual self-empowerment and the influence of normative imperatives on sexual well-being.

T11-O-07

Prenatal exposure to progesterone and sexual orientation in humans

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Objective: Evaluate the effects of prenatal exposure to progesterone (via maternal medical treatment) on the sexual orientation of offspring.

Design and methods: Data collected in young adulthood were analyzed for 34 exposed-unexposed matched pairs (17 male pairs and 17 female pairs) from the Copenhagen Perinatal Cohort. Mean age at assessment was 23.2 years. The following sexual orientation variables were assessed as part of a structured interview conducted by a psychologist: self-labeled sexual orientation; lifetime attraction to own sex; current attraction to own sex or both sexes; kissed with own

sex and with other sex, having been partially undressed in a sexual situation with own and with other sex, having been fully undressed in a sexual situation with own and with other sex, "intercourse" with own and with other sex. Questionnaires assessed the following: having "gone to bed with" a person of own sex, masturbation together with another person(s) of the same sex and of the other sex, and composite measures of attraction to males and attraction to females.

Results: Exposure was associated with decreased likelihood of identifying as heterosexual, greater likelihood of having engaged in same-sex sexual behavior, increased same-sex attraction, and higher scores on a scale of male attraction. Differences were not found on measures of heterosexual behavior.

Conclusions: These subjects' sexual orientation appears to be bisexual. Based upon these findings we suggest that sexual orientation may be more accurately and productively conceptualized in terms of a two-dimensional model, rather than a bipolar continuum.

T11-O-08

Bisexual women differ from lesbian and heterosexual women on several sexuality measures

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Objective: Compare sexual orientation groups on: numbers of male and female sexual partners and total numbers of partners in lifetime and the past year; propensity for casual sex; frequency of condom use in the past year; erotophilia-erotophobia; sexual sensation seeking; propensity for sexual excitation and sexual inhibition.

Design and methods: A volunteer sample of 545 women from the USA and Canada completed anonymous questionnaires. Analyses were conducted based on two groupings:

1) self-identity [heterosexual n=450, bisexual n=46, lesbian n=49] and

2) lifetime partner type [women who had sex with men only (WSMO) n=396, women who had sex with men and women (WSMW) n=136, women who had sex with women only (WSWO) n=13]. Comparison of the scores across sexual orientation groups included age as a covariate in a series of univariate GLM analyses.

Results: Statistically significant sexual orientation group differences (based on both self-identity and lifetime partner type) were found for almost all variables. These were not explained by other demographic differences. Specifically, bisexuals showed a different pattern of responding than both heterosexual and lesbian women, and WSMW

scored differently than WSMO. WSWO did not differ from WSMW or WSMO.

Conclusions: Research merging bisexuals with lesbians (or with heterosexuals) OR merging WSMW with WSMO as WSM may obscure important differences relevant to sexuality and sexual health. Care should be exercised in conceptualizing bisexuality as "in-between" heterosexuality and homosexuality. Attention should be given to discordant findings across multiple dimensions of sexual orientation and various aspects of sexuality.

T11-O-09

Female erotic imaginary: a research effected on a sample of heterosexual single and non-cohabitant women

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Objectives: The present work is aimed to investigate the erotic imaginary among a group of heterosexual Italian unmarried women and to compare the differences found with the results of previous works.

Materials and Methods: To collect the data it has been used the questionnaire of Crepault (1981), made up of 100 items, either open ended questions or multiple choice questions. To choose the participants, 200 questionnaires were distributed in meeting places for young people living in Rome.

The Istituto di Sessuologia Clinica received 114 fully compiled questionnaires.

Results: In comparison to previous works, it emerges from the obtained data, that nowadays a growing number of women uses erotic images either during masturbation and sexual intercourses or during non-sexual activities, even if with less frequency.

Conclusions: In comparison to the past, it is possible to assume that nowadays heterosexual single and non-cohabitant women are less inhibited in expressing their sexuality and their erotic imaginary. This probably happens because of a major legitimacy of sex and of female sexuality.

T11-P-01

Sexual hormones and sexual fantasies in subjects with history of mistreatment during childhood for the arousal of Schizophrenia

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Objective: Show that in the onset of Schizophrenia is very important the sexual identity strictly related with perverse sexual fantasies and their free expression as thoughts.

Methods: Clinical interview and psychotherapeutic relationship based on the psychosexual image of the "self", through the free expression of emotions.

Results: Schizophrenia comes out after a while from a confrontation with sexual disturbance of identity in subjects who had to face mistreatment during childhood, in particular when specific homosexual fantasies take place. Afterwards, the level of sexual hormone testosterone gets higher and higher, in men and women, probably making the level of dopamine to be proportionally higher. Testosterone can be strictly linked to the growth of dopamine's level, and at the same time it pulls individuals under the pressure of impulses out of control.

All the subjects referred an onset of symptoms linked to "dissociation" during the puberal time, in association with sexual impulses moved by homosexual fantasies and the pleasure linked to those.

Conclusions: Many symptoms can be explained with a sexual relation. It comes out that many symptoms can be intensity-reduced after a therapeutic relationship that makes all the perverse sexual fantasies come out and be shared with someone who completely accepts them and gives them the significance of normality.

T11-P-02

The Anne Frank phase. A phase of the homosexual development

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Objective: the article describes the peculiar elements of the psychosexual development of homosexuals, not very dealt at the moment. The few existing studies on the development of the homosexual identity have not developed what we consider the most distinctive element in the adolescent gay: "the hide".

Material and Methods: the article is a qualitative and speculative study based on the existing scientific literature and the analysis of the Anne Frank's Diary.

Results: the study put in evidence the parallelism between the homosexual teenager and Anne Frank; in fact the gay teenager is forcing himself to hide in a "secret flat" that could be comparable to the one of Anne Frank during the holocaust. In the article a lot of parallelism between the psychological experience of Anne Frank and the homosexuals are shown. This takes care of the differences between the two experiences, in fact Anne Frank has been forced to hide while for the homosexuals is a psychological experience.

Conclusions: this "auto-segregation" in the secret flat foresees a fundamental evolutive phase of the psychosexual development of a gay person. In the article links and connections of psychological experiences between Anne Frank and homosexuals are shown. These experiences and connections allow us to develop what we define "the Anne Frank phase".