

Retraining automatic sexual actiontendencies in women with female sexual interest/arousal disorder

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The aim of this study is to investigate whether women with FSDA and women without sexual problems can be trained with an AAT to perform more approach behaviour and less avoidance behaviour to sexual stimuli. The hypotheses which will be tested are (...)

Ethical review	Approved WMO
Status	Recruitment stopped
Health condition type	Sexual dysfunctions, disturbances and gender identity disorders
Study type	Interventional

Summary

ID

NL-OMON38717

Source

ToetsingOnline

Brief title

AAT-training for FSAD

Condition

- Sexual dysfunctions, disturbances and gender identity disorders

Synonym

female sexual desire and arousal disorder, lack of sexual desire

Research involving

Human

Sponsors and support

Primary sponsor: Leids Universitair Medisch Centrum

Source(s) of monetary or material Support: Onderzoeksgeld van de afdeling Psychosomatische Gynaecologie en Seksuologie inderdiend met bijvoorbeeld

Intervention

Keyword: approach-avoidance, automatic actiontendencies, FSAD, training

Outcome measures

Primary outcome

The AAT will consist of a few practice trials, a pre-assessment, the training and a post-assessment phase. The pre- and post-assessment are identical to each other regarding to the number of trials and stimuli. By comparing the phases one can evaluate the effect of the training. Subsequently, the participants will see 3 brief soft-erotic movies, with the instruction to rate them on their sexual arousing capacities. Participants can stop the movie themselves. The time of starting and stopping the movie will be registered. Differences between the conditions regarding to the lengths of watching the movie indicate that the training did have an effect. Also, participants will be asked to report their subjective sexual arousal after seeing the movies.

Next, participants will be asked to rate the pictures which were used in the AAT on how sexual arousing and positive/negative they are. Thus, not only the automatic and unconscious, but also the controlled and conscious responses to the pictures will be measured.

Finally, 24 hours later the participants will receive an e-mail with a short questionnaire to assess sexual activity to test whether the training affected their sexual activity during the 24 hours after training.

Secondary outcome

not applicable

Study description

Background summary

Women with low sexual interest/arousal (DSM-V: Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (FSAD)) feel more frustrated, concerned, unhappy, disappointed, hopeless, troubled, ashamed, and bitter in comparison to women without sexual dysfunctions. Prevailing treatment for FSAD consists of cognitive-behavioural therapy, though there is limited empirical evidence for its efficacy. FSAD is generally seen as a condition difficult to treat.

It is known that in the activation of sexual arousal and desire, both automatic and controlled cognitive processes and action tendencies play a role. During these automatic processes, people without sexual problems give a positive meaning to sexual stimuli, resulting in the activation of sexual approach tendencies and the experience of sexual desire. However, there are indications that women with FSAD evaluate sexual stimuli in a less positive or more negative manner, which impedes the development of sexual approach tendencies and feelings of sexual desire.

Interestingly research has shown that automatic motivational processes can be influenced by training of motor movements with a so-called approach-avoidance task (AAT). Research on alcohol, cannabis and cigarette abuse, social phobia, and obsessive-compulsive behaviour has shown that the AAT in which motor movements in response to problem relevant stimuli are trained can have positive effects to both unlearning of disfunctional behavior and learning of functional behavior. For example, in studies in problematic drinkers and alcoholics it is shown that training with the AAT to push alcohol stimuli away and to pull neutral stimuli results in decreased approach tendencies towards alcohol and in less alcohol consumption. In research in persons with obsessive-compulsive behaviour it is observed that training with the AAT to make a pull movement to aversive or feared stimuli results in less avoidance behavior and more approach behavior towards these feared stimuli.

In the present study it will be investigated whether in women with FSAD approach and avoidance tendencies towards sexual stimuli can be influenced by an AAT.

Study objective

The aim of this study is to investigate whether women with FSAD and women without sexual problems can be trained with an AAT to perform more approach behaviour and less avoidance behaviour to sexual stimuli. The hypotheses which will be tested are (1) women with FSAD differ from those without on their

controlled and automatic approach and avoidance tendencies towards sexual stimuli, (2) training with the AAT leads to more approach behaviour and less avoidance tendencies to sexual stimuli, (3) the AAT-training has a positive effect on the extent to which women seek for sexual stimuli, as well as on the degree of subjective sexual arousal and positive affect in response to sexual stimuli, and (4) the training leads to more sexual activity during 24 hours following the training itself.

Study design

Women with FSAD and women without sexual problems complete a computertask (the AAT) en watch 3 brief erotic film excerpts. Half of the women with FSAD and half of the women without sexual problems are trained in the computertask to make a pull movement towards erotic stimuli. Before and after this training the speed of pull and push movements in response to erotic and neutral stimuli is measured. Also, following the task it is measured how long they watch the erotic films, and to what extent they experience sexual arousal and postive affect in response to these films.

Intervention

The intervention consists of the AAT (the computer task). During this task erotic and neutral pictures are presented and based on the position of the picture on the monitor the participant has to pull the picture towards herself or pull it away from herself using a joystick. The reaction times are measured. In the training phase of the task erotic pictures are more often combined with the pull movement (approach).

Study burden and risks

As far as known there are no risks or adverse effects to be expected through the AAT training or the research methods. The participant will be busy with the study two hours in total (telephone screening: 15 min., visiting the LUMC: questionnaires: 20 min., AAT: 30 min., seeing and rating the erotic movies: 25 min., explicitly rating the pictures: 10 min., short questionnaire afterwards: 10 min. and the exit-questionnaire: 10 min.).

The financial compensation for participants who finish the whole study will be 30 Euro. Participants who stop earlier will receive the financial compensation according to the time they did participate in the study. In addition, travel expenses will be reimbursed to a maximum of 40 Euro.

Contacts

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Trial sites

Listed location countries

Netherlands

Eligibility criteria

Age

Adults (18-64 years)

Elderly (65 years and older)

Inclusion criteria

between 18 and 45 years of age, presence of FSAD according to the diagnostic criteria of the DSM-5, duration of current relationship > 6 months, heterosexual orientation because of heterosexual stimuli

Exclusion criteria

co-morbidity with other sexual disorders as dyspareunia and vaginismus, sexual disfunctions of the partner, use of medication which may influence the sexual respons, misuse of alcohol or drugs, severe psychopathology, pregnancy and/or breastfeeding, strong dissatisfcation with current relationship, severe psychosomatic problems/illness, insufficient command of the Dutch language

Study design

Design

Study type:	Interventional
Intervention model:	Parallel
Allocation:	Randomized controlled trial
Masking:	Single blinded (masking used)

Primary purpose: Treatment

Recruitment

NL	
Recruitment status:	Recruitment stopped
Start date (anticipated):	01-02-2013
Enrollment:	60
Type:	Actual

Ethics review

Approved WMO	
Date:	18-12-2013
Application type:	First submission
Review commission:	METC Leiden-Den Haag-Delft (Leiden)
	metc-ldd@lumc.nl

Study registrations

Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

In other registers

Register	ID
CCMO	NL46744.058.13