Creating emotionally-enhanced genital sexual arousal in a community sample: A pilot study

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The current pilot study aims to assess whether it is possible to create a genital reaction by means of excitation transfer and what are the optimal parameters to induce this effect.

Ethical review	Approved WMO
Status	Recruitment stopped
Health condition type	Other condition
Study type	Observational non invasive

Summary

ID

NL-OMON46430

Source
ToetsingOnline

Brief title
Emotionally-enhanced sexual arousal

Condition

- Other condition

Synonym
but rather a normal reaction (i.e. sexual arousal), disease, NA, no disorder, or condition is being investigated

Health condition

seksueel functioneren

Research involving
Human

Sponsors and support

Primary sponsor: Vrije Universiteit Medisch Centrum
Source(s) of monetary or material Support: Ministerie van OC&W,de uren van 1 van de onderzoekers worden gefinancierd door de onderzoeksafdeling van stichting De Forensische Zorgspecialisten

Intervention

Keyword: emotional arousal, excitation transfer, incentive motivation, sexual arousal

Outcome measures

Primary outcome

In this pilot study we primarily aim to assess whether it is possible to

enhance genital sexual arousal in men by means of excitation transfer.

Additionally, we aim to explore the optimal parameters to create this effect,

e.g. the nature of the stimulus and the order of presentation.

Secondary outcome

Secondarily, we aim to assess if sympathetic arousal levels (assessed by means

of heart rate and HRV) are associated with enhanced sexual responses (assessed

by penile circumference) to the various stimuli. Third, we aim to assess if

there is an association between erectile response, subjective sexual arousal

and self-reported sexual interest.

Study description

Background summary

A recently proposed incentive motivational model of sexual deviance (IMMSD; Smid & Wever, 2017) suggests that paraphilic sexual interests may be born from the need to enhance sexual arousal by means of other emotional stimuli, a process referred to as *excitation transfer*.

According to this perspective, sexual arousal is an emotional reaction, comparable to other emotions coupled with strong bodily reactions. Sexual arousal and other emotions can influence each other back and forth, leading to various expressions of emotional self-regulation and sexual self-regulation. With regard to paraphilic interests, the IMMSD suggests that other emotions can be used (consciously or unconsciously) to regulate sexual arousal. At the core of this paraphilic sexual self-regulation is the process of excitation transfer (Zillmann, 1996). If an emotion surges while another lingering emotion is still present it will *inseparably combine with the excitatory reaction to the present stimuli and thereby intensify both emotional behavior and emotional experience* (p. 250). In other words: one emotion lifts the other, or builds on the other. Consistent with this hypothesis, a number of deviant sexual interests/paraphilia*s exist that appear to be associated with certain emotions. Disgust may, for example, play a role in paraphilia*s like scatophilia, sexual attraction to feces, or necrophilia, sexual attraction to (dissected) dead bodies. Another example is embarrassment, which may play a role in exhibitionism.

Excitation transfer has never before been studied in the specific context of sexual arousal and not with genital sexual arousal in men as an outcome measure. In this pilot study we primarily aim to assess whether it is possible to enhance genital sexual arousal in men by means of excitation transfer. Extending this pilot study to a subsequent main study is a first step to increase knowledge on the etiology of nonparaphilic sexual interests. Eventually, this might help to increase our knowledge on the nature and development of paraphilic sexual interests, which in turn might be useful in treatment of (potential) sexual offenders.

Study objective

The current pilot study aims to assess whether it is possible to create a genital reaction by means of excitation transfer and what are the optimal parameters to induce this effect.

Study design

The current study is of experimental nature with a combined within-subjects and between-subjects design. Thirty volunteers will be presented with the same stimuli in counterbalanced order to prevent order effects. Participants are randomly assigned to condition A or B, which differ in the moment of vibrostimulation relative to emotion induction.

Intervention

Genital arousal will be induced by a vibrostimulator and assessed by penile circumference as well as by subjective ratings following each phase of

vibrostimulation. Subjects view neutral film clips and film clips inducing two negative and two positive emotions. The affective reaction to each of the emotional stimuli will be assessed by means of the self-assessment manikin (Bradley & Lang, 1994). Condition A and B differ in the moment of vibrostimulation with respect to emotion induction: i.e. in condition A vibrostimulation happens simultaneous to emotion induction, whereas in condition B, emotion induction precedes vibrostimulation.
Pre-measurement, participants will fill in the International Index of Erectile Function (Rosen et al., 1997), and the Sexual Inhibition Scale/Sexual Exitation Scale (Janssen, Vorst, Finn, & Bancroft, 2002). They will fill in an adapted version of the Sexual Opinion Survey (Fisher, White, Byrne, & Kelley, 1988) both pre- and post-measurement. Throughout the experiment, heart rate will be measured continuously.

Study burden and risks

There are no major risks associated with participation. It is however possible that the participants find genital vibrostimulation and measures of penile circumference intrusive. However, research indicates that people experience the assessment of penile circumference as minimally intrusive (Huberman & Chivers, 2015). To maximize comfort, participants are left in the room unsupervised during the experiment, sit underneath a blanket, and get recovery time after the experiment.

Participants receive a ¤35,- reimbursement for participation. Participants may always withdraw from the experiment without any consequences.

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

male, 18-40 years old

Exclusion criteria

self-reported erectile disfunctions, heart problems, recent or current use of medication that may affect sexual response or heart function, recent or current medical disorders that may affect sexual response or heart function, major psychiatric problems or drug abuse

Study design

Design

Study type:	Observational non invasive
Intervention model:	Parallel
Masking:	Open (masking not used)
Control:	Uncontrolled
Primary purpose:	Basic science

Recruitment

NL
Recruitment status: Recruitment stopped

Start date (anticipated):	20-03-2019
Enrollment:	30
Type:	Actual

Ethics review

Approved WMO Date:	03-09-2018
Application type:	First submission
Review commission:	METC Amsterdam UMC

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	NL63499.029.18