

The Pleasure Deficit

The Discourse and Discrepancy on the Cis-Woman's Orgasm



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Introduction

The pleasure deficit, which is the discrepancy in the frequency of orgasms between men and women, is a phenomenon where men experience significantly more orgasms than women in relationships. By addressing and researching the question of the pleasure deficit, I hope to explore potential reasons of how and why the pleasure deficit exists. Due to its patriarchal nature, American society functions in a way where men are favored in most settings compared to women. Because of this, inequality between men and women exists in every aspect of people's lives. Sexual activity is one aspect of this inequality, and needs to be highlighted because it is not being discussed enough in today's society. I analyzed the pleasure deficit through the method of discourse analysis using women's magazines that discuss orgasms. Despite the orgasm discourse of women's magazines, the pleasure deficit persists and needs to be discussed beyond this single media.

Methodology

I researched common magazines that reach exclusively to a female audience. With this, I then searched the term "orgasm" in order to find relevant articles. My focus groups in research relied in heterosexual relationships since there is a significantly larger amount of information in this type of relationship than others. My project is feminist because this research deals with one of several inequalities between males and females. The goal of this project is to have onlookers become aware of what society is not talking about, why it is not being talked about, and what society can do to decrease and eventually eliminate the pleasure deficit. Another goal of my project is to empower women so that they can be confident with their partner while engaging in sexual activity. I want to inspire women to be assertive so that they can express what they want during sex in order to achieve an orgasm.

Epistemology

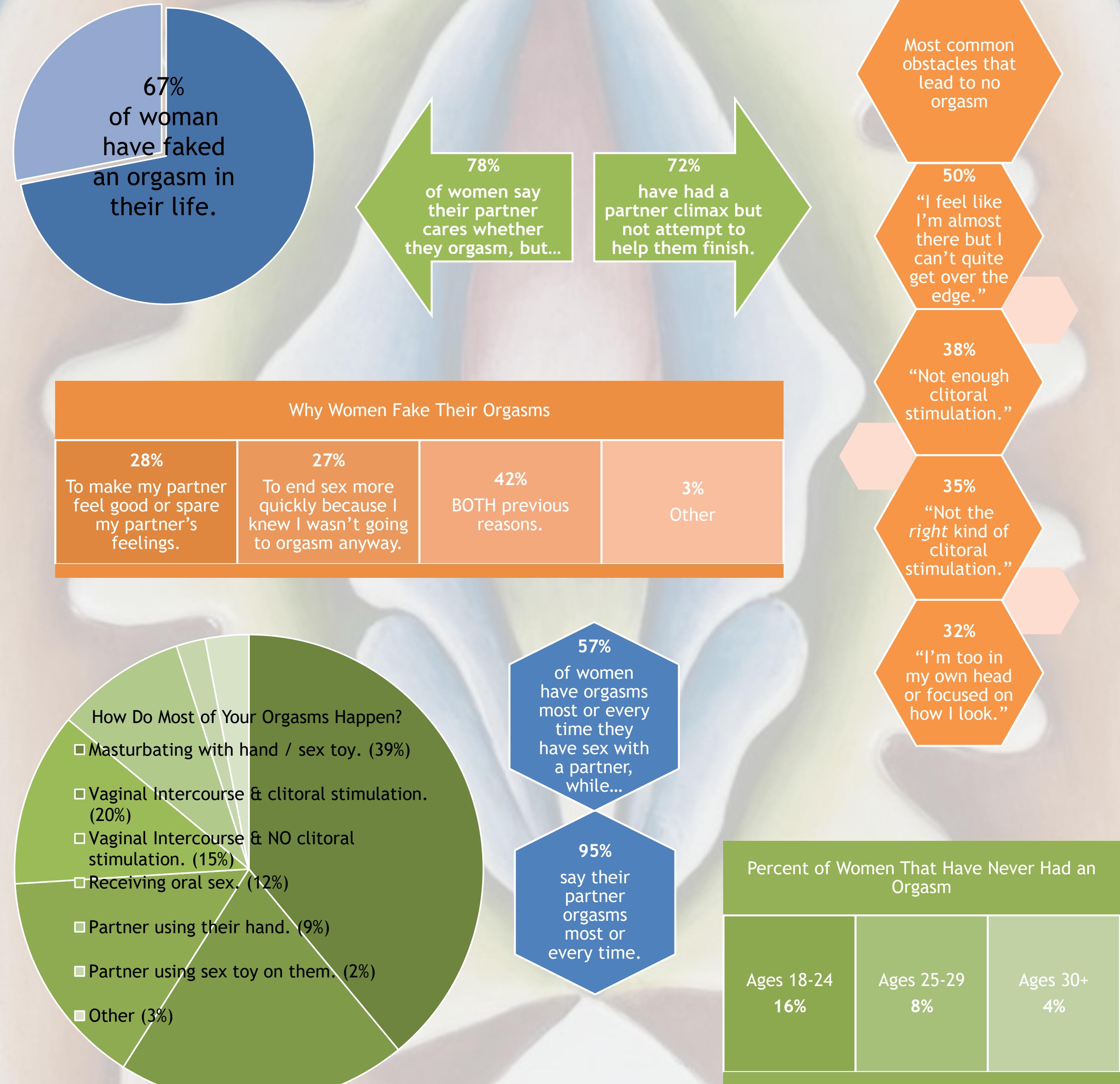
Experiential knowledge is needed in order to answer the question of the pleasure deficit. Sexual activity is unique to individuals in that people experience different emotions, pleasures, and displeasures while having sex. What allows every person to figure out what makes them achieve orgasm is experience itself. Furthermore, experience does not always mean two people must be involved. People are often able to discover what allows them to orgasm through masturbation. Because of the society that we live in, males and (especially) females are often uncomfortable with simply hearing the term "masturbation," but a benefit that derives from masturbation is that people can learn what they like / dislike when it comes to sex. With that, individuals will be able to express to their partner exactly what they want from them so that they can achieve orgasm. Due to the specific individualizations of sex and orgasms, academic knowledge would not be effective in this type of research. Academic knowledge would be unable to communicate the reasons as to why females feel they do not orgasm as frequently as their male counterparts.

Results

- Most women feel the need to resort to fake an orgasm instead of engaging in sexual activity that does not lead to an orgasm.
- Women put the blame on themselves as well as their partners for not being able to achieve orgasm.
- Women are more likely to have difficulties in achieving orgasm with a partner than by themselves.
- Women's magazines such as Cosmopolitan provide much more information about orgasms than teen magazines.

Data

Cosmopolitan Magazine's Female Orgasm Survey Participants: 2,300 women ages 18-40



Number of Results When Searching "Orgasm" On Popular Women's Magazine Websites

Cosmopolitan Magazine: 265
Teen Vogue: 26
Seventeen Magazine: 2

Type of Results from Each Magazine

Cosmopolitan	Teen Vogue	Seventeen
Tips & How-To 60	Tips & How-To 0	Tips & How-To 0
General Discussion 77	General Discussion 1	General Discussion 1
Not Relevant to Research 128	Not Relevant to Research 25	Not Relevant to Research 1

Literature Review

None of the eleven scholarly journal articles I studied displayed any instance in which women were achieving the same amount of orgasms as men. Many of these articles looked into the discrepancies of orgasms between women and men, and men were consistently seen as achieving more orgasms than women. Because we, as researchers, are unable to find a large amount of scholarly journal articles on this important topic, we as a society need to consider the questions of the pleasure deficit and continue to ask why women still do not achieve as many orgasms as men do. Through further research and the persistent questioning of the patriarchal twist of sexual activities, some answers could address why these discrepancies exist in the first place as well as what people can do about them. The more consistent people are in performing egalitarian sexual activities, the more likely our society will become a little less scripted, and the pleasure deficit will decrease and eventually be eliminated.

Discussion

There are several suggestions to make in terms of the question of the pleasure deficit. Firstly, more research needs to be performed on this topic, and not with just heterosexual couples. Inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in research is needed more than ever so that more people can reap benefits of the research. Outside of research, sex education and dialogue are needed among teens as well as adults. Teen magazines are not providing enough information about sex and orgasms to adolescents, and these years are crucial to start learning about sex and orgasms so that they know what they want and do not want when it comes to sexual activity. As long as both men and women are a part of the public dialogue about orgasms and sex as well as sex education, the pleasure deficit has the potential to decrease and eventually be eliminated. Today, both women and men contribute to the pleasure deficit by not communicating to each other what they want during partnered sexual activity in order to achieve orgasm. Also, orgasm is seen as a goal rather than a part of sexual activity, leading to added pressure for both men and women to achieve orgasm as well as feeling embarrassed for not having an orgasm.

References

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