Let’s Talk About Sex...

the rules of attraction, relationships, and sexual function in our patients

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Thursday, September 22, 2011
DISCLOSURES:
I have nothing to gain from this.
I am not getting paid.
I have no endorsements.
I get no presents or exotic trips.

But hopefully we can all gain the understanding of how important it is to be open and comfortable with our patients and let them talk about what is really important to them.
Sex...

- Birds do it, bees do it, humans since the dawn of time have done it
- What has changed?
- Humans have basically been the same anatomically since the creation of man — so is it safe to say that if we enjoy it now, then so did our cave-dwelling ancestors?
"Just as our bodies tell us what we might like to eat, or when we should go to sleep, they lay down for us our pattern of lust," "Sex has always offered pleasure." What has changed?

University of Toronto psychologist Edward Shorter.

“Sexuality has a lot to do with our biological framework”

Joann Rodgers, director of media relations and lecturer at Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions.
"People and indeed all animals are hard-wired to seek out sex and to continue to do so. I imagine that is evidence that people at least like sex and even if they don't they engage in it as a biological imperative."

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Sex...

- Did people ENJOY it 50...or 50,000 years ago?

- There is "no reason to think that we do it more now than in the past, although we are certainly more frank about it"

  - David Buss, professor of psychology at the University of Texas and author of "The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating" (Basic Books, 2003).

- Cultural restraints—rather than anything anatomical—have had the biggest effect on our sexual history.
Sex...

desire surges from the body

the mind interprets what society will accept or not

the rest of the signals are edited out/suppressed
"The idea that there is a sexual line that must not be crossed but in practice often is, is far older than the story of Eve's temptation by the serpent."

Timothy Taylor; "The History of Sex: Four Million Years of Human Sexual Culture" (Bantam Books, 1996)
Modern advances

- **Religion** especially has held power over the mind's attitude towards the body's carnal desires, most sexual psychologists agree.

- Men and women who lived during the pious Middle Ages were certainly affected by the fear of sin, but there were other inhibiting factors to consider, too:

  "The low priority attached to sexual pleasure by people who lived in distant times is inexplicable unless one considers the hindrances that existed in those days," - Shorter

Shorter points especially to the 1,000 years of misery and disease—often accompanied by some very **unsexy smells and itching**—that led up to the Industrial Revolution. "After the mid-nineteenth century, these hindrances start to be removed, and the great surge towards **pleasure** begins."
Many historians and psychologists see the late 1800s as a kind of watershed period for sexuality in the Western world.

With the industrial revolution pushing more and more people together—literally—in dense, culturally-mixed neighborhoods, attitudes towards sex became more liberal.
Modern advances

The liberalization of sexuality kicked into high gear by the 1960s with the advent of the birth control pill, letting women get in on the fun and act on the basis of desire as men always had.

"The 1960s vastly accelerated this unhesitant willingness to grab sex for the sheer sake of physical pleasure," Shorter said, noting that the trend of openly seeking out sex just because it feels good, rather than for procreation alone, has continued on unabated into the new millennium.
Modern advances

* But despite the modern tendency towards sexual freedom, even today there are vast differences in attitudes across the world.

"Cultures vary tremendously in how early they start having sex, how open they are about it, and how many sexual partners they have." - Buss

Swedes generally have many partners in their lifetime

Chinese typically have few.
Global sex survey (2005)
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81% Portuguese were quite happy with their national quota (108X/yr)
Social limitations...

- BONOBO CHIMPANZEE: they have sex most of the time
- a fairly quick, perfunctory, and relaxed activity that functions as their social cement
WHY IS SEX GOOD?

- expensive
- risky
- steals time
- drains nutrient resources
- each act of reproduction runs the risk of messing up carefully crafted genetic blueprints
WHY IS

* expensive
* risky
* steals time
* drains nutrient resources

* each act of reproduction runs the risk of messing up the handcrafted genetic blueprints
WHY IS SEX GOOD?

* despite a logical alternative -- **asexual reproduction** by simple cloning without the help of a partner -- **sex is preferred in the wild**.

### Asexuality (which came first)

- plants that send out underground runners
- flatworms
- some microbes and fungi lean this way, too, and have since life began.

Scientists don't know how sex even got started. But they have long suspected that organisms prefer sex specifically **because** of the risk. The slight shuffling of genes produced through sexual reproduction may help organisms adapt more easily to a stressful or changing environment.
WHY IS SEX GOOD?

Sex is indeed beneficial:

1. a strain of yeast that reproduces sexually vs. a modified, asexual version
   - Each grew and reproduced at the same rate
   - Matthew Goddard of the University of Auckland

2. providing less food:
   Under these conditions, those engaging in the ultimate act still managed a growth rate of 94% whereas the asexual strain only reached 80%.
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Sexual organisms seem fit to survive!
Attraction

Why do we pick mates?

Scientists have:

- measured the shape/angle of the human face
- studied the symmetry of dancers
- crafted formulas from the measurements of Playboy models
- had both men and women rank attractiveness based on smelling armpit sweat
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TRUE LOVE!!
A short list of scientific rules for the game of love is emerging.
Symmetry

- Starting at conception, the human body develops by neatly splitting cells.

- If every division were to go perfectly, the result would be a baby whose left and right sides are mirror images.

- But nature doesn't work that way. Genetic mutations and environmental pressures skew symmetry, and the results have lifelong implications.
Good symmetry shows that an individual has the genetic goods to survive development, is healthy, and is a good and fertile choice for mating.
Symmetry

- Evolutionary biologist Randy Thornhill has been studying symmetry for 15 years and scanned faces and bodies into computers to determine symmetry ratios.

- Both men and women rated symmetrical members of the opposite sex as more attractive and in better health than their less symmetrical counterparts.

- The differences can be just a few percent—perceivable though not necessarily noticeable.

- By questioning the study participants, Thornhill also found that men with higher degrees of symmetry enjoy more sexual partners than men of lower symmetry.
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Body shape

- Women with a WHR of 0.7—indicating a waist significantly narrower than the hips—are most desirable to men.

- An analysis of hourglass figures of Playboy models and Miss America contestants showed that the majority of these women boast a WHR of 0.7 or lower.

- A range of 0.67 to 1.18 in females is “attractive” to men.

- 0.8 to 1.0 WHR in men is “attractive” to women (although having broad shoulders is more of a turn-on). - Singh 2004

- People in the ideal waist-hip-ratio range, regardless of weight, are less susceptible to disease such as cardiovascular disorders, cancer, and diabetes.

- **Women in this range also have less difficulty conceiving.**
Face

✧ The structure of a person's face also gives insight to fertility.

✧ Estrogen caps bone growth in a woman's:

✧ **lower face and chin**, making them relatively small and short

✧ **brow**, allowing for her eyes to appear prominent.

✧ Men's faces are shaped by testosterone, which helps develop a larger lower face and jaw and a prominent brow.

✧ Men and women possessing these traits are seen as attractive, because they advertise reproductive health. -Thornhill
Research has found **women** both smell and look more attractive to men at certain times of the month.

*And symmetrical **men** smell better!!*

Borrowing sweaty undershirts from a variety of men, Thornhill offered the shirts to the noses of women, asking for their impressions of the scents. Hands down, the women found the scent of a symmetrical man to be more attractive and desirable, especially if the woman was **menstruating**.
Odors

Women prefer the scent of men with genes somewhat similar to their own over the scent of nearly genetically identical or totally dissimilar men.

These subconscious scents might be related to pheromones, chemical signals produced by the body to communicate reproductive quality.

The human genome contains more than 1,000 olfactory genes—compared to approximately 300 genes for photoreceptors in the eyes—so pheromones have received a lot of attention from basic research scientists as well as perfume manufacturers.
After our ancestors began to see color, a gene important in the pheromone-signaling pathway suffered a deleterious mutation, making it impossible for the scent signals to reach the brain.

Although the classical pheromone pathway is dysfunctional, the mechanism for producing pheromones still works. Some scientists believe human pheromones might be influencing our decisions along the normal olfactory pathway.

However, visual cues are obvious and better understood.
Women with less-masculine husbands or boyfriends are more likely to lust after other men during the fertile part of their cycle.

A recent study reveals:

* heterosexual women whose partners have less-masculine faces report more attraction to other men during ovulation.

* Women with masculine-looking partners said their eyes wander less, perhaps because the traits women tend to find sexy when they're fertile are already present in their partners.
For many years, researchers believed that female *Homo sapiens* had evolved to hide their fertile periods, unlike other primates whose swollen genitals signal fertility to males.

The past decade of research suggests women aren't such stealthy *ovulaters* after all.

Studies have shown that men rate women’s *smells* and *looks* as more attractive during fertile periods of a women's menstrual cycle.

Other studies have shown that women *walk differently* when ovulating and may pay more attention to grooming and dress.
Ovulation and Masculinity

- A number of studies have found a peak in women's preferences for masculine, muscular men during fertile times, but many of those studies are lab-based.

- How does this carry over to real life couples? **66 monogamous couples**
  - Labs were performed to determine phase of the woman's cycle
  - over the course of a month, the women came to the lab three times to answer a questionnaire on their sexual attractions and fantasies:
    - 1 fertile period
    - 2&3 during luteal (infertile) period
  - The men in the couples reported their college entrance exam scores and took a test on pattern-finding to measure their intelligence.
  - The men's photos were rated for attractiveness and measured for masculinity.
    - strong jaw, chin and brow are masculine traits

Gangestad, et al
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"What we found was that, indeed, women who are with less facially masculine men — so more feminine men — they're the ones showing a shift toward men other than their partner."

For instance, while ovulating, women were more likely to have sexual fantasies about a non-partner.

"Things that may have been important ancestrally may not be all that important now, but the idea is you see the preferences that would have evolved ancestrally still show up."
A man's intelligence, on the other hand, made no difference in his woman's wandering eye.

Those findings are surprising in that evolutionary psychology theory would predict that women would want their offspring to have genes for intelligence -- however research on fertile women's preference for intelligence throughout the menstrual cycle has been mixed.

"The take-home message of that is that intelligence is probably always pretty important for a woman; Low intelligence is not really a turn-on for anybody." - Martie Haselton, UCLA psychologist who has studied changes in women across the menstrual cycle.
Appearance

✦ New research reveals couples in which the wife is better looking than her husband are more positive and supportive than other match-ups.

✦ The reason researchers suspect, is that men place great value on BEAUTY, whereas women are more interested in having a supportive husband.

✦ Researchers admit that looks are subjective, but studies show there are some universal standards, including large eyes, “baby face” features, symmetric faces, so-called average faces, and specific waist-hip ratios in men versus women.
82 couples, married within the previous six months, together for nearly three years prior

Researchers videotaped as each spouse discussed with their partner a personal problem for 10 minutes. The tapes were analyzed for whether partners were supportive of spouses' issues, which included goals to eat healthier, to land a new job and to exercise more often.

"A negative husband would've said, 'This is your problem, you deal with it', versus 'Hey, I'm here for you; what do you want me to do?; how can I help you?''"

A group of trained "coders" rated the facial attractiveness of each spouse on a scale from 1 to 10.

About a third of the couples had a more attractive wife, a third a more attractive husband and the remaining partners showed matching looks.

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Men are sensitive to women’s attractiveness.

Women are more sensitive to men’s height and salary.

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Similarities

- People seem to seek out partners with similar characteristics

  - “ASSORTATIVE MATING”
    - typically same: race, social class, physical characteristics (height, weight)

- Overweight individuals will look for an overweight partner.

- However, this may be a factor contributing to the continuing obesity epidemic as fat couples will pass on a double dose of the genes that predispose people to be overweight.

*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, August 2011*
Lasting Relationships

- The rules of attraction might drive our initial decisions, for better or worse. But lasting relationships are about much more than what we see and smell.

- Behavior plays a key role, with biology an intriguing contributing factor.

- One of the oldest theories about attraction is that like begets like.
Lasting Relationships

Based on a set of heritable personality traits, having similar genetics plays a predominant role in friendship and mate selection.

"The main theory is that some genes work well in combination with each other. If these genes evolved to work in combination, then you don't want to break that up too much for your offspring. Finding a mate with similar genes will help you ensure this."

J. Philippe Rushton, psychologist at the University of Western Ontario, 2010
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If your spouse is genetically similar, you're more likely to have a happy marriage, for example. Child abuse rates are lower when similarity is high, and you'll also be more altruistic and willing to sacrifice more for someone who is more genetically like you.
When it comes to sticking together for the long haul, researchers have shown that likeness of personality, which can take more time to realize, means more.

Comedy can also help a relationship. But the importance of humor is different for men and women. -Eric Bressler of McMaster University

* A woman is attracted to a man who makes her laugh,

* A man likes a woman who laughs at his jokes.
Brain scans in people who'd recently fallen in love reveal more activity related to LOVE than SEX.

"Romantic love is one of the most powerful of all human experiences. It is definitely more powerful than the sex drive." - Helen Fisher, anthropologist Rutgers University

The rules of attraction make up a pretty long list. No scientist knows the order of the list. But near the top is perhaps one of the toughest characteristics (to gauge in advance) in the search for the perfect partner.
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True Love

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Despite all their differences, men and women place high value on one trait: FIDELITY!

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True Love

- Nearly 1,000 people age 18 to 24 were asked to rank several attributes, including physical attractiveness, health, social status, ambition, and faithfulness, on a desirability scale.

- People who rated themselves favorably as long-term partners were more particular about the attributes of potential mates. After fidelity, the most important attributes were physical appearance, family commitment, and wealth and status.

* Cornell University; Stephen Emlen et al
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"Good parenting, devotion, and sexual fidelity—that's what people say they're looking for in a long-term relationship."

Cornell University; Stephen Emlen et al
After the attraction...  

...comes the bedroom
Ladies who have a more positive attitude about female genitals find it easier to reach orgasm, according to a survey reported this year.

Such women also are more likely to engage in sexual health-promoting behaviors, such as visiting a gynecologist for regular exams.

Men had more positive attitudes about women's genitals than women themselves.

"Women are often more critical about their own bodies — and other women's bodies — than men are. What we found in this study is that men generally feel positive about a variety of aspects of women's genitals including how they look, smell, taste and feel."

She suggests teaching girls from a young age to feel more positive about their bodies, including the parts "down there."

Debby Herbenick of Indiana University
Desire

* Sexual desire or lack thereof could be in our genes.

* Individual differences in human sexual desire can be attributed to genetic variations.

  * The study is the first to provide data to show that common variations in the sequence of DNA impact on sexual desire, arousal and function.

  * The scientists examined the DNA of 148 healthy male and female university students and compared the results with questionnaires asking for the students' self-descriptions of their sexual desire, arousal and sexual function.

  * They found a correlation between variants in a gene called the \textit{D4 receptor} and the students' self-reports on sexuality.

Richard Ebstein, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2011
Quiz

In the early part of the 20th century, an idea was floated that the contractions a woman experiences during orgasm served to pull sperm towards her eggs. What was the name of this medical theory?

tally ho theory
retrieval theory
upsuck theory
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For one out of four women, orgasm during sex is an elusive goal.

According to a new report, medical science isn't doing enough to ensure these women find satisfaction between the sheets.

A review of 101 studies on female orgasm disorder, a condition in which women have difficulty reaching climax or can't orgasm at all:

- Despite the fact that inability to orgasm is the second most common female sexual complaint after lack of desire, and orgasm is one of the top reasons we have sex, treatments for the disorder are inadequate.

- There is some focus on therapy, but little on medications.
Anorgasmia

- Difficulty orgasming seems to be very common among women.

- A 2001 study found that 24 percent of women reported months-long stretches in which they couldn't climax during sex.
  - The complaint is most common in women in their 20s to 40s.

- Only a fraction of anorgasmia cases come to the attention of clinicians.

- "There's a lot of shame about sexual dysfunction. There are a lot of implications in terms of what relationships the person's having. They might be afraid it might complicate their relationships more, so people tend to underreport it."

Waguih William IsHak, a psychiatrist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles
Anorgasmia

• Even when patients seek medical help, treatment can be difficult.

• There is no "normal" when it comes to timing or number of orgasms

  • clinicians must take into consideration their patients' age, sexual experience, satisfaction and even the quality of sexual stimulation they receive before making a diagnosis.

• Teasing out the root cause of anorgasmia is another challenge.

  • In many cases, the problem is psychological: Past abuse, guilt over sexuality and poor body image are all associated with difficulty orgasming. Rocky relationships and lack of communication about sex are other factors.

  • In these cases, the best treatment might be relationship counseling or psychotherapy.

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Thursday, September 22, 2011
Anorgasmia

- For other women, the problem is medical.
  - Kidney disorders, fibromyalgia and atherosclerosis are all associated with anorgasmia.
  - Weakness of the pelvic floor muscles is another factor.
  - Hormonal changes
  - Some medications, particularly SSRI antidepressants
- Treating the underlying physical problem can help.

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Anorgasmia

- So far, there are no drugs approved by the FDA specifically for the treatment of female orgasmic disorder.

- On June 18, a drug called **flibanserin**, intended to treat low female desire, was rejected by an FDA advisory panel on the grounds that the benefits of the drug did not outweigh the risks.

- The recent review by IsHak and his colleagues found that a few studies showed promise in hormone therapies and drugs like Viagra.

  - For example, one 2003 study found that a botanical oil called Zestra was effective in improving arousal and orgasm in women. But the study only included 20 participants, 10 of whom received the oil and 10 of whom receive a placebo. That's too small of a sample to know for sure whether or not the treatment works.
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"We need larger studies with larger samples and adequate dosing of the medicines in order really to test the effect; If we're really serious as a society about quality of life of individuals, then we need to pay attention to sexual dysfunction."

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Orgasm Quiz

In most cases, what does it take for a woman to reach orgasm?

vaginal penetration
clitoral stimulation
both
Orgasm Quiz

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Thursday, September 22, 2011
But why (and how) do women orgasm??
Quiz

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hysteria
menstrual cramps
lymphoma
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Vibrators...the history

- The use of vulvar massage as a therapy for "hysterical" patients dates back to Hippocrates. During the 19th century, it caught on as a treatment for the rampantly diagnosed afflictions hysteria and neurasthenia.

- The doctor of Alice James, the sickly sister of the famous Henry and William, probably brought her routinely to "hysterical paroxysm."

- The treatment wasn't generally thought of as sexual, but rather as ho-hum therapy. Not surprisingly, it was a cash cow for the medical profession. Women had to return week after week, year after year. But doing it by hand was exhausting, tedious work; some women had to be massaged for an hour before they reached paroxysm.

- Thus, entrepreneurial doctors experimented with mechanizing the process. Hydrotherapy—the shooting of water directly at the patient's reproductive region—proved effective and became quite fashionable.
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- The doctor of Alice James, the sickly sister of the famous Henry and William, probably brought her routinely to "hysterical paroxysm."

- The treatment wasn't generally thought of as sexual, but rather as ho-hum therapy. Not surprisingly, it was a cash cow for the medical profession. Women had to return week after week, year after year. But doing it by hand was exhausting, tedious work; some women had to be massaged for an hour before they reached paroxysm.

- Thus, entrepreneurial doctors experimented with mechanizing the process. Hydrotherapy—the shooting of water directly at the patient's reproductive region—proved effective and became quite fashionable.
Vibrators...the history

* In the 1880s, a British doctor stepped in to invent the first electric vibrator, an industrial-size contraption meant to be a permanent fixture in a doctor's office. It was a major labor-saver, allowing many patients to reach paroxysm in less than 10 minutes.
Vibrators...the history

- Paradoxically, while female patients were being massaged to paroxysm week after week, men prone to excessive unwholesome nocturnal secretions were diagnosed with "spermatorrhea."

- Torturelike contraptions were contrived to strap and zap them back to normal.

- Men fortunate enough to be diagnosed with more amorphous ailments were sometimes treated with vibrator massage. The legendary naturalist John Muir patented his own vibrator for men in 1899.
Vibrators...the history

- Around the turn of the century, entrepreneurs began to recognize the huge potential market for hand-held vibrators for home use. Vibrator innovation was in fact a driving force behind the creation of the small electric motor.

- Hamilton Beach of Racine, Wis., patented its first take-home vibrator in 1902, making the vibrator the fifth electrical appliance to be introduced into the home, after the sewing machine and long before the electric iron.
By 1917, there were more vibrators than toasters in American homes. Dozens of patents were issued for new designs between 1900 and 1940.

Manufactured long before the era of engineered obsolescence, these machines were built to last.

Many vibrators of this vintage still survive.
Starting in the 1920s, stag reels blew the vibrator's cover, revealing it to be the sex toy that it was.

The most famous of these flicks was *The Nun's Story* (not to be confused with the 1959 Audrey Hepburn film of the same name).

It starred the wife of bodybuilder Vic Tanney, who disrobes from her nun's habit and then reclines luxuriantly with her electric vibrator until a virile but clean-cut Peeping Tom shows up.
Vibrators...the history

* From the 1950s through the 1970s, the vibrator became what academics like to call a camouflaged technology.

* Mail-order catalogs featured beautiful women with long, silky hair loosening their tight shoulder muscles with banana-shaped vibrators.

* Also popular were vibrators that doubled as nail-buffer kits, hair brushes, backscratchers, and some that were designed as attachments for vacuum cleaners.

* Most of them were cheesy, battery-operated devices that came in shag-carpet hues: avocado, gold, and burnt orange.
Vibrators...the history

- In 1973, Betty Dodson started masturbation groups for women to raise their sexual consciousness.
  - She introduced them to the wonders of the Hitachi Magic Wand, which she contended could wake the most somnambulant clitoris.
  - Her book *Sex for One* was translated into eight languages.
- That same year, Eve's Garden, a sex shop for women, opened in New York City. Good Vibrations followed nearly five years later in San Francisco.
- Vibrators came back into the mainstream in the 1990s, thanks not to radical feminists but to the Reagan administration. With the public health threat of AIDS looming, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop mailed out a list of safe-sex options to every household in the land in the late 1980s. Vibrators were on it.
In 1999, Rachel Maines published *The Technology of Orgasm*, a provocative history of the vibrator that she spent 20 years researching.

Maines started out studying needlework but was intrigued to discover that the backs of old sewing magazines were filled with vibrator advertisements.

In addition to treating hysteria, these early vibrators were multipurpose:

- They ostensibly relaxed furrowed foreheads, cured sore throats, and restored plumpness to bony arms.

Fearing that her new line of academic inquiry might offend alumni, Clarkson University fired Maines. *The Technology of Orgasm* has become one of the best-selling histories of technology of all time.
Vibrators...the history

- 2005: a retired oil-industry executive received a patent for a vibrator improvement that he contends will do for ordinary citizens what the orgasmatron did for the characters in Woody Allen's *Sleeper*: allow them to achieve climax without any physical exertion whatsoever.

- The invention is a special motor that serves as a connection between a cordless screwdriver and a conventional vibrator.

- Unlike other similar machines on the market, its inventor contends, it thrusts and swivels, thereby eliminating any need for labor on the part of the user. And at $139.95, it's a relative bargain.
But why do women orgasm??

- Female reproductive organs, unlike male reproductive organs, are not usually active and mobile.

- The ovaries and fallopian tubes mostly just “hang out” quietly in the pelvis, minding their own business, and the uterus only expands with pregnancy and is happy to shrink back to normal size after pregnancy is over.
But why do women orgasm??

- But as David Elad of the Department of Biomedical Engineering at Tel Aviv University, Israel, has recently discovered:
  - the uterus, like everything else on Earth, is subject to the laws of motion.
  - Understanding those movements can also have a major impact on the success or failure of in vitro fertilization and the possibility of successful pregnancies for infertile couples.
But why do women orgasm??

• Conception occurs when a mature egg pops off of the ovary and then slides into the fallopian tube.

• If the woman has had sex, the egg might meet a sperm high up in the fallopian tube, and this might seem like a passive process from the uterus's point of view.

• But Elad claims that the uterus actually plays a role in make sure sperm are in the right place at the right time. Apparently, uterine contractions propel sperm upwards.

• After conception, the uterus waits below, for about seven days, as the newly fertilized egg takes its own sweet time to float into the womb, and then the uterus goes into action again.

• When the embryo finally arrives, the uterus begins to contract again, performing a welcoming dance that sucks the new embryo into the soft lining of the uterine wall.
But why do women orgasm??

Several years ago, biologists Robin Baker and Mark Bellis recruited women to collect the "flow back" that seeps out of the vagina after sex.

They found that women retain only about 65% of an ejaculate after sex and they can reject almost all of it if they want.

More interesting, the researchers found that if a woman has an orgasm (and that orgasm might indeed include uterine contractions) soon after her male partner, she literally draws sperm up into her reproductive tract.

If she has no orgasm, or orgasms after the man, she retains much less sperm.
But why do women orgasm??

- Although scientists are still trying to figure out the exact chemicals that urge such an attraction, sperm swim vigorously in the direction of extracts from various female reproductive organs, especially ovaries.

**Scientists call this type of attraction chemotaxis.**

- To see just how strong the attraction is for mouse sperm cells, researchers at the University of Indiana, Bloomington forced sperm to swim on a sort of liquid treadmill with ovarian extract on one end and buffer solution the other.

  - Even when the ovarian extract was diluted 100,000 times, some sperm still swam toward it, even uphill on the liquid treadmill.

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"Defects in sperm chemotaxis may be a cause of infertility, and consequently, sperm chemotaxis could potentially be used as a diagnostic tool to determine sperm quality or as a therapeutic procedure in male infertility."

Stephen Jacobson
Orgasm Quiz

Approximately how many seconds does the average male's orgasm last?

6
17
2
Orgasm Quiz

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Orgasm Quiz

On average, how many orgasmic contractions do women experience?

4 to 6
10 to 15
6 to 10
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Women have high expectations for nearly every area of their lives, but when it comes to sex, they settle for less.

Most women keep their dissatisfaction with sex a secret, leaving their partners (let alone their doctors) in the dark.

"Whereas men, if they have trouble with sex, it's a crisis. They run to the doctor and say 'I need something for this.' Women don't do that. They just sort of stuff it down and push it further down on the list."

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With surveys and years of clinical experience, Clayton has compiled a vast collection of data on women's sex lives.

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She attributes several factors to a woman's lack of sexual satisfaction, including:

- Sex gets shoved to the bottom of the "to do" list for women. And when they do have sex it becomes just another task.
- Women are not getting their emotional needs met during sex. An orgasm might not be the point.
- Many women strive for unrealistic physical perfection seen in the media and are unhappy with some aspect of their physical bodies.
- Women don't ask for what they want in bed, fearing their partner will be hurt or leave them.
- Medications such as antidepressants can reduce a woman's libido and ability to reach orgasm.

Thursday, September 22, 2011
Tips for success

✦ Both partners play a role:

✦ Women should know that the perfect body doesn't equal good sex.

✦ "You don't have to be a sexy bombshell-looking person to have great sex. It's really not about that. We might think that Victoria's Secret models have a great sex life, but their sex life is no better than anybody else's."

✦ A confident, sexy attitude and an openness to explore sensuality can breathe life into lackluster sex. Also, women can give a higher priority to sex, holding the laundry for another day.

✦ Men can be more open to talking about what a woman wants in bed, to the point of initiating the conversation. And to make more time for sex, men can help a girlfriend or wife with tasks around the house.
Encourage trying new things in the bedroom
Vibrators

- About half of Americans say they use a vibrator:
  - 45 percent of men reporting such
  - While men and women alike may keep their vibrators hidden, scientists say their use is a sign of a positive and healthy sex life.
  - Female vibrator users were significantly more likely to have had a gynecological exam during the past year and to have performed genital self-examination during the previous month.
- Women who used vibrators also reported better sex, including higher sexual desire and arousal, as well as orgasm.
- However, there was no significant difference in general sexual satisfaction between female vibrator users and non-users
- >50 percent of women participants had used a vibrator
  - nearly one in four having done so in the past month.
- >70 percent of women reported having never experienced any side effects associated with vibrator use.
- About 45 percent of men, both gay and heterosexual, reported incorporating a vibrator into sexual activities.
- Of men who have used vibrators:
  - 10 percent had done so in the past month
  - 14 percent in the past year
  - 21 percent more than one year ago.
- Men who reported having used vibrators, particularly those with more recent use, were more likely to report participation in sexual health promoting behaviors, such as testicular self-exam.
- Men who had used vibrators recently also scored themselves higher on factors used to measure sexual function:
  - erectile function, intercourse satisfaction, orgasmic function and sexual desire
Lubricant

* Women who use lubricant during sex have higher levels of satisfaction and less pain than those who don't.

* The finding showed that women using lubricants reported higher ratings of sexual pleasure and lower rates of negative genital symptoms, such as pain or burning, than those not using lubricant.

* More women also reported that water-based lubricant was more effective in reducing negative symptoms than silicone-based lubricant.
Explore...
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