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Doctoral Thesis
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Hedonistic Personality and Sexual Enjoyment

Abstract

Background

Hedonism II is a clothing optional resort that attracts couples and individuals (Hedonists) that are less judgmental of themselves and others. Many describe the experience as a reawakening of their spirit and sexual lives. I prepared a survey to compare the sexual satisfaction of the Hedonists with the sexual satisfaction of the general population based on the Kinsey data, and to see if there were additional insights from those in the Hedonist group who did not experience this sexual reawakening.

Methods

A survey was designed using the standard questions recommended by the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality and placed on the survey site, Survey Monkey. Adult members of the Hedonism II Facebook Page were invited to participate. One hundred and eighty-five were completed and compared to the Kinsey data.

Results

The results described a highly sexualized and experimental group of individuals with a high sexual enjoyment index. Within this group are individuals who feel sexual time is very important, but rated their sexual enjoyment index as below average. They developed their sexual interests later than the group as a whole and had trouble accessing sexual partners.

Conclusions

Individuals with late development of sexual interest and those with decreased access to sexual partners had the lowest sexual satisfaction index rating.

Introduction

Hedonism II is an adult clothing optional resort on the island of Jamaica. It has operated continuously for over thirty years, hosting large groups of free-spirited couples and individuals. It is a unique community, where a dramatic reduction in societal rules and regulation has created an environment of acceptance and non-judgment. This allows individuals to learn their authentic nature and to learn how to pursue their hearts desire in all aspects of their lives.

Many people describe their first trip to Hedonism as a personal reawakening. It is personal because it is not influenced by a teacher or curriculum; it is self directed learning. In this non-judgmental environment and with isolation from the influence of their daily lives, individuals and couples can re-examine the core beliefs they inherited from their childhood and communities and see if they apply to their true authentic nature. They begin to see and feel the possibilities; this is called a reawakening.

The experience is so powerful that new friendships are made, groups are formed, and the guests return frequently for another dose of Hedonism. It is not unusual to meet people who have been to the resort over thirty times. On any day, fifty percent of the resorts guest are repeat or returning customers.

Society and religion place a lot of restrictions on sexual behavior. What is our true nature when these rules are not influencing our decisions? What are the effects on sexual satisfaction? I designed a survey to quantify the sexual satisfaction of this group to see if this would provide any insights for sexual happiness and to see if it would suggest further topics of study.

Methods

The primary objective of the study was to compare a subset or group of individuals with the data gathered on sexual attitudes and experiences by Dr. Kinsey, a pioneer in sexual research. The survey was designed using the standard questions recommended by the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality. Survey Monkey was used as the sole hosting site and submissions were allowed for 30 days. Adult members of the Hedonism II Facebook Page were invited to participate by intermittently posting invitations on the Facebook page. Individual members were not contacted or asked to participate.

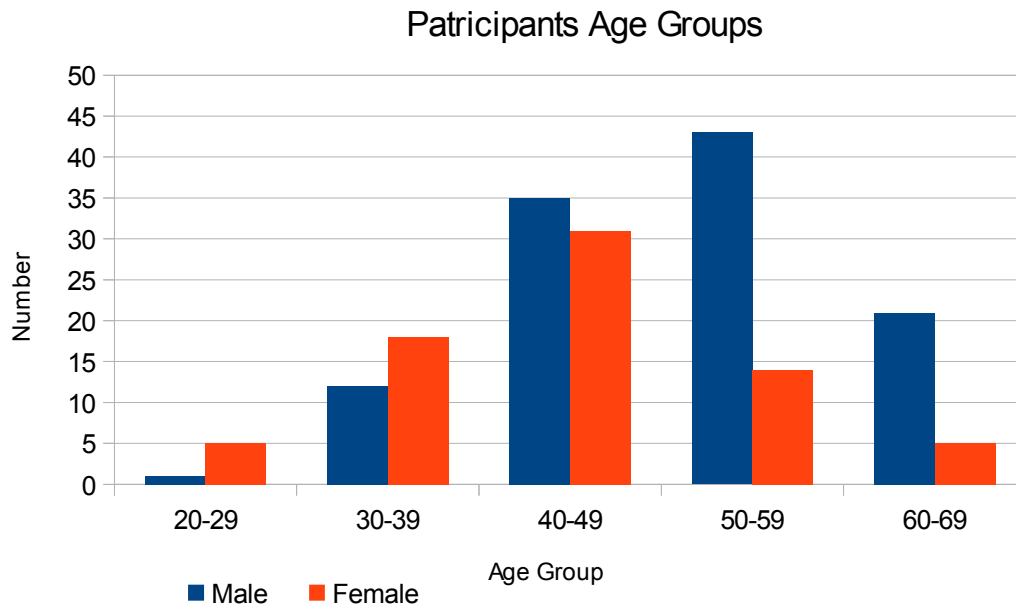
Submitted data was modified, when necessary to numeric form, so the data could be analyzed and placed on charts. For example, the written word “one” would be change to its identical integer value. Incomplete submissions were used when the required comparison data was present.

One hundred and eighty-five surveys were collected from a member base of approximately 5000. Based on reproducibility statistics from the work of Dr. Kinsey, the results would accurately represent the studied population forty-seven percent of the time. The ideal sample size based on his work is 400, which would be accurate or reproducible sixty-nine percent of the time (Page 84.”Sexual Behavior in the Human Male”). Larger sample sizes did not improve his results.

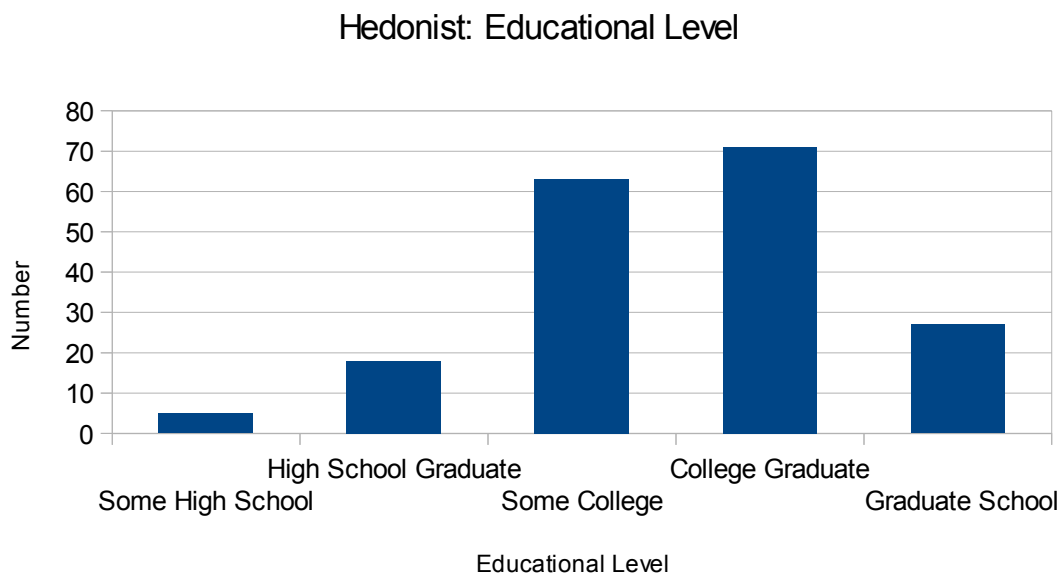
Results

Population

The age of the study population ranged from 20-70 with a median age of 48. Men were older with a median age of 50 vs 43 for the women.



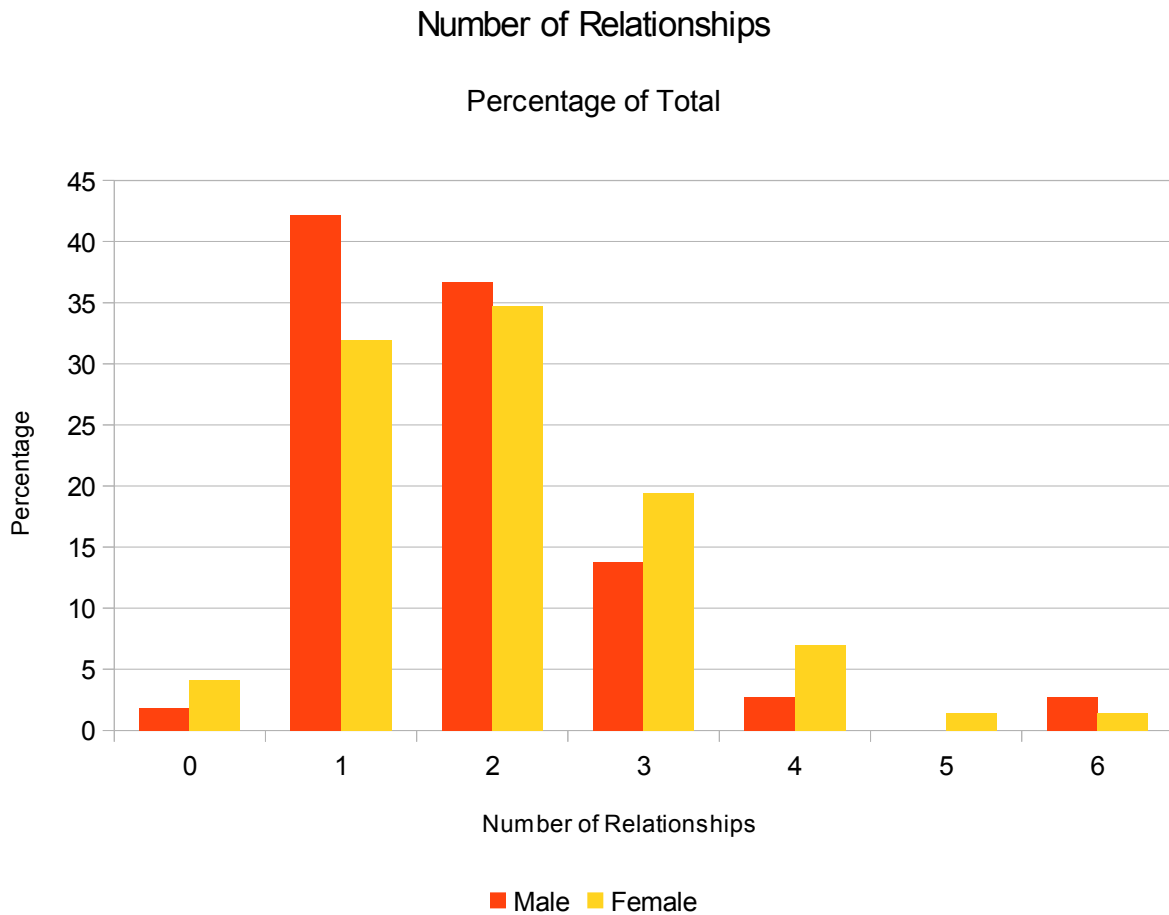
The educational level of Hedonists is higher than the general population with eighty-seven percent having a college or advanced degree. Income data was not collected, but it is estimated to be above average based on the educational level. These findings are consistent with the need to have a higher income to afford the recurrent travel to Hedonism II in Jamaica.



Geographically the primary areas represented are the east coast of the USA and Canada, with the latter accounting for 20 percent of the sample. These are the areas that have practical travel access to Jamaica.

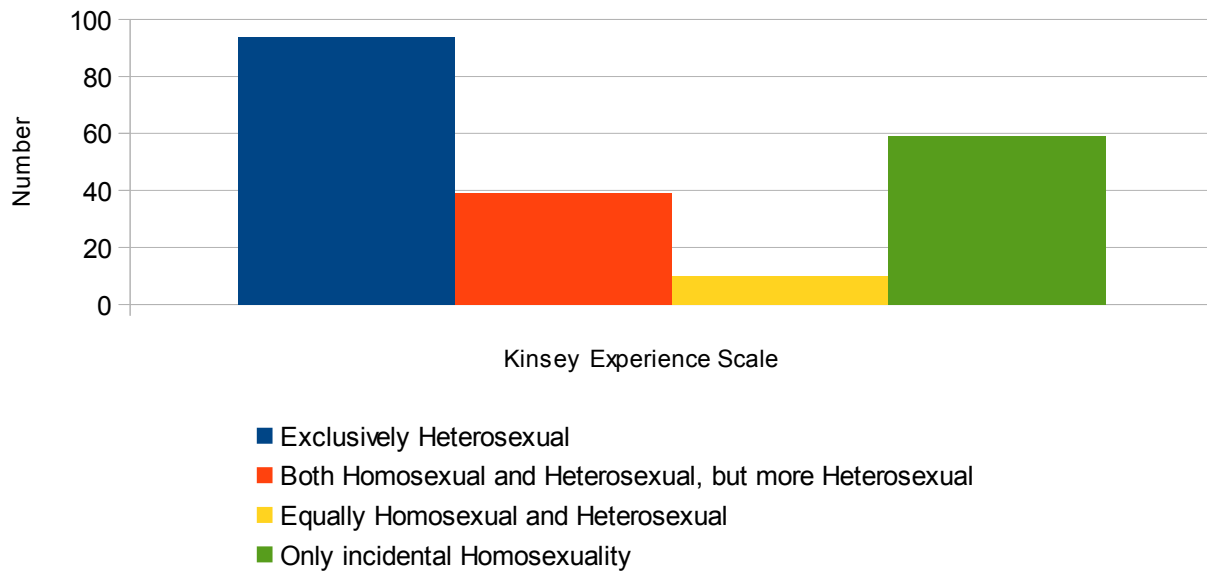
Religious groups were represented in similar proportion to the population of North America, except for a higher number of individuals without a religious background. Atheists represented twenty-five percent of the group. Catholicism, the largest single group, was twenty-eight percent.

Hedonists, compared to the general population, have experienced a higher number of committed relationships, which is defined as a marriage or cohabitational arrangement. Women as a group had a higher number of relationships than men.



Sexual types based on the Kinsey Experience were overweighted by bisexual females and underweighted by committed homosexual men. There was a large number of “Incidental Homosexual Encounters” by both men and women.

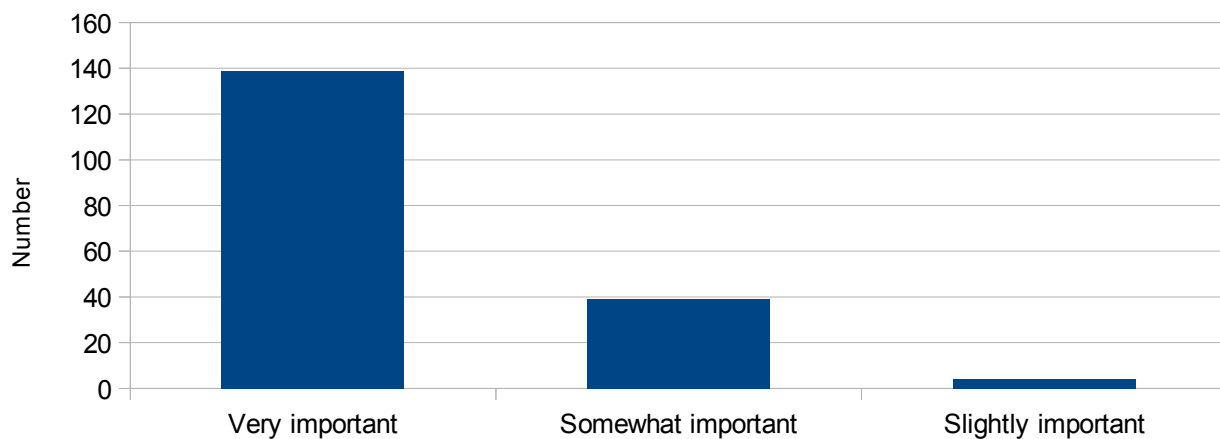
Hedonists Sexual Categories
Kinsey Experience Scale



Sexual Characteristics

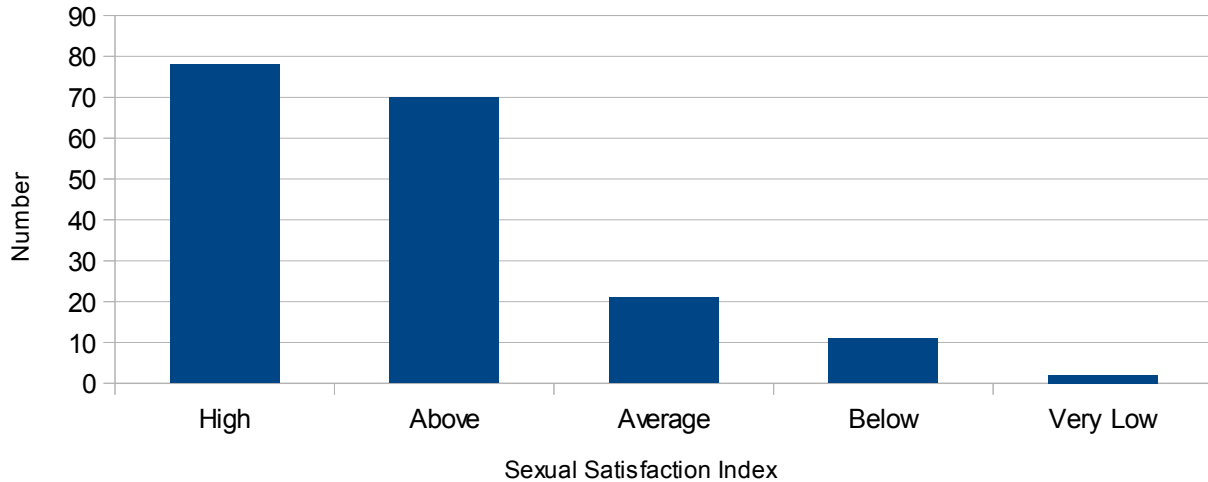
For Hedonists sexual activity and the enjoyment of sexual time is important. Only four individuals listed the importance of sex as slightly important. If we assume the three empty responses are in the same category, the total is still less than four percent of the study population.

Hedonist: Importance of Sex



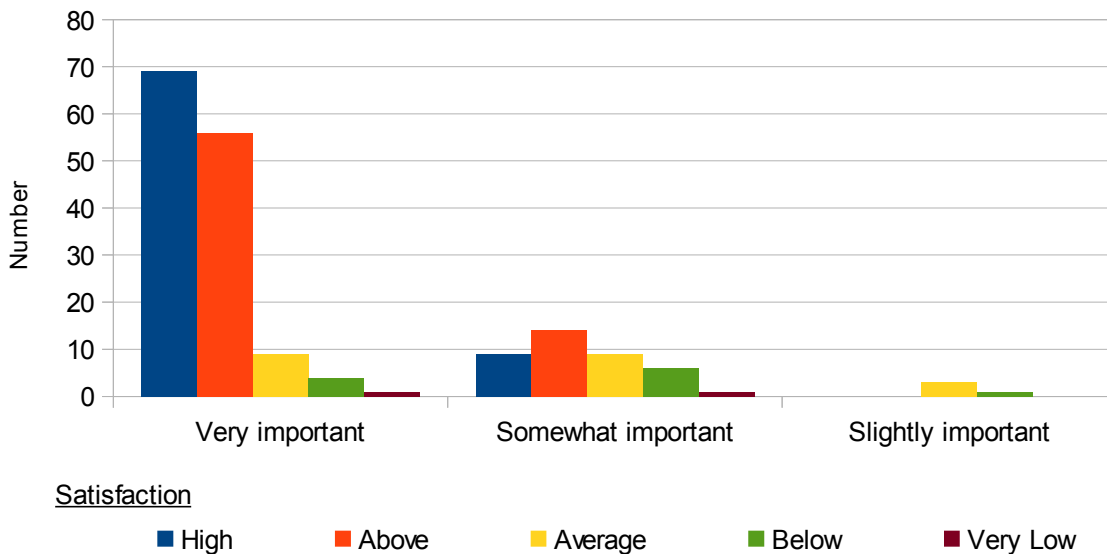
Thirteen individuals listed their sexual time as below average or very low, representing only seven percent of the group.

Hedonists: Enjoyment of Sex



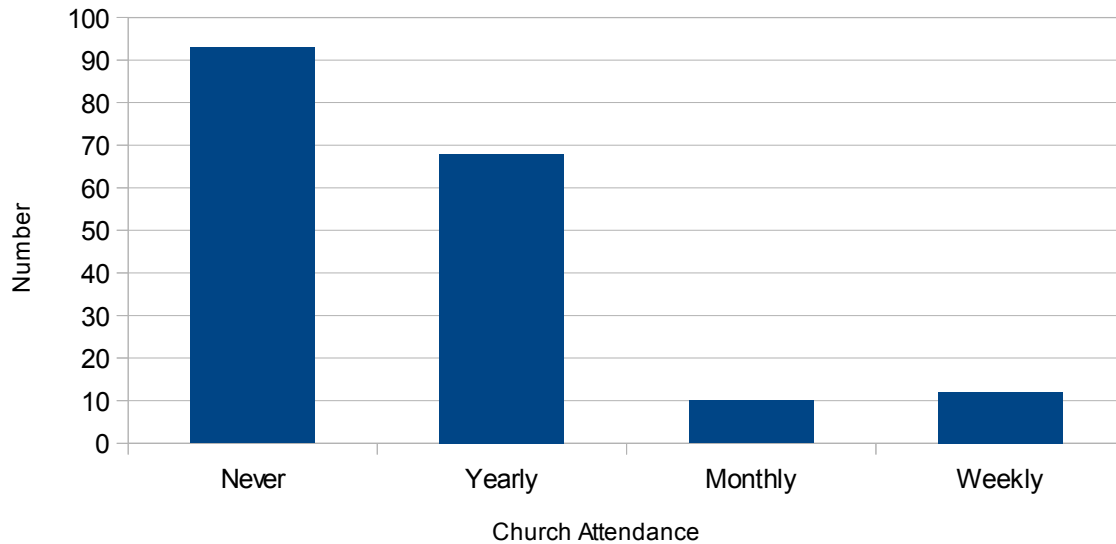
The individuals who felt sexual time was very important had the highest number of individuals listing an above average sexual satisfaction index; whereas the group listing sexual time as only slightly important did not have any sexual satisfaction ratings over average; however, the numbers are small. Of the thirty-four individuals who listed their sexual satisfaction as average or below, fourteen listed sexual time as very important. This is a significant finding in a sexually charged group and will be one of the recurrent themes in this study.

Sexual Satisfaction vs Importance

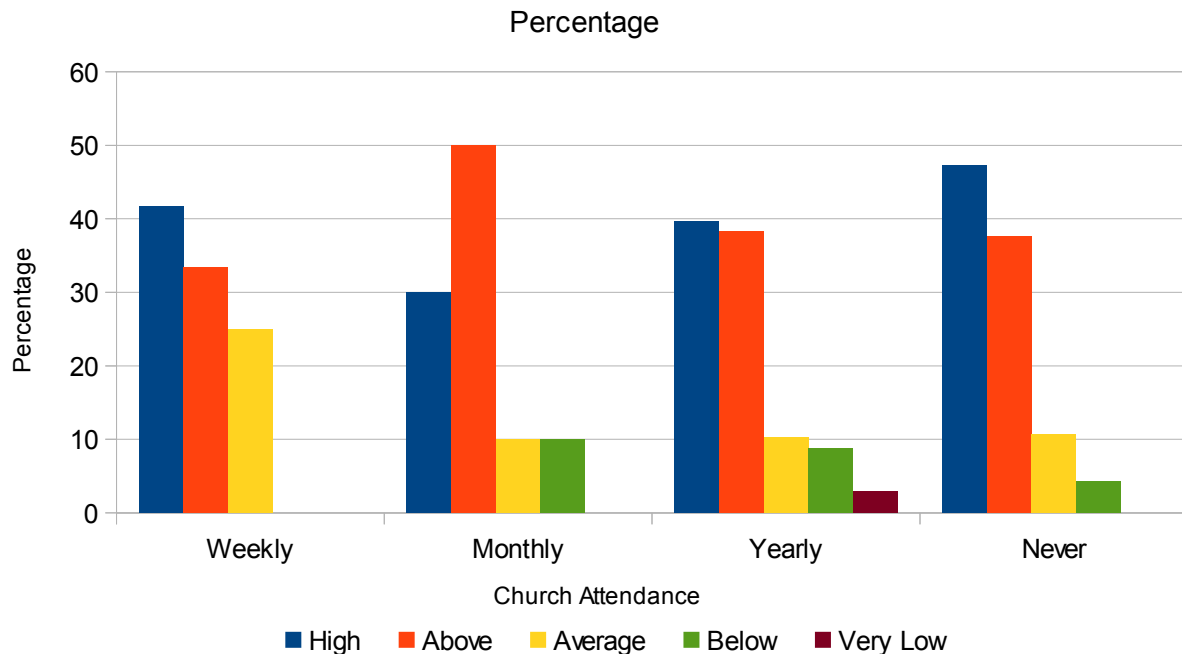


The effects of religious beliefs were estimated by counting the frequency of church attendance. Although seventy-seven percent of responders listed religious training and beliefs, fifty percent of them never attend church and an additional thirty-seven percent only attended a few times a year. When converted to percentages and compared to the sexual satisfaction index, religious attendance did not have an influence on sexual satisfaction.

Religious Attendance by Hedonists

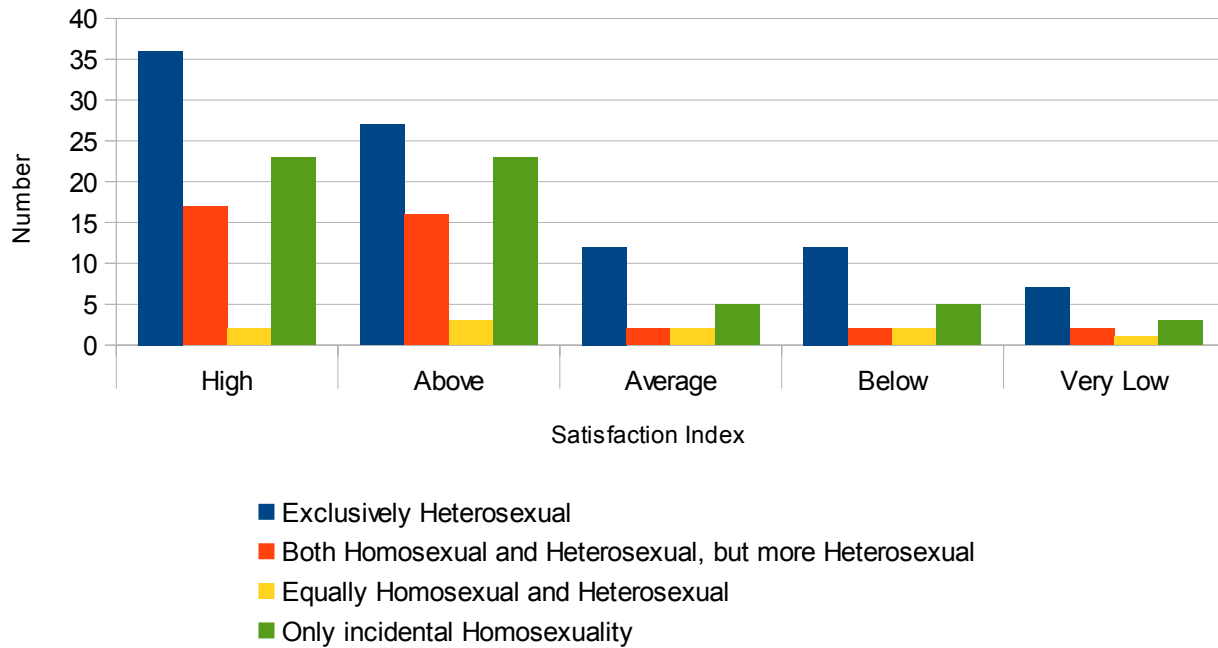


Church Attendance vs Sexual Satisfaction



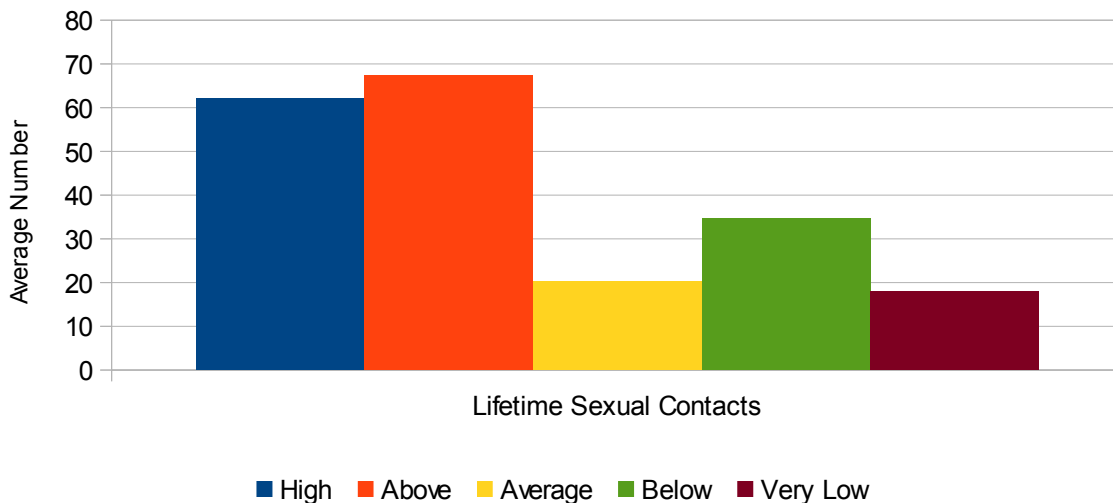
In the Kinsey sexual experience categories, bisexual individuals (but more heterosexual) and individuals who were incidentally homosexual were over represented in the high and above average sexual satisfaction index group.

Hedonist Sexual Categories vs Sexual Satisfaction



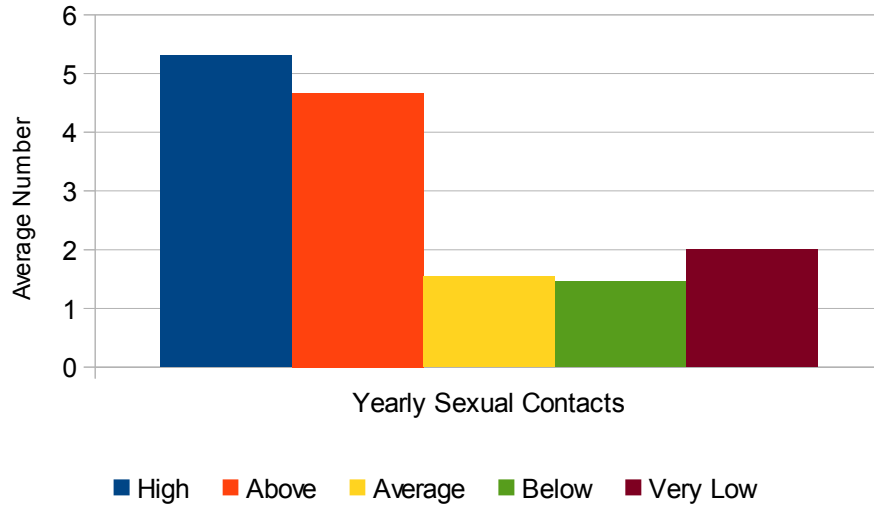
Hedonists with a higher sexual satisfaction index had a higher number of lifetime and recent sexual contacts.

Hedonists: Sexual Satisfaction vs Lifetime Contacts



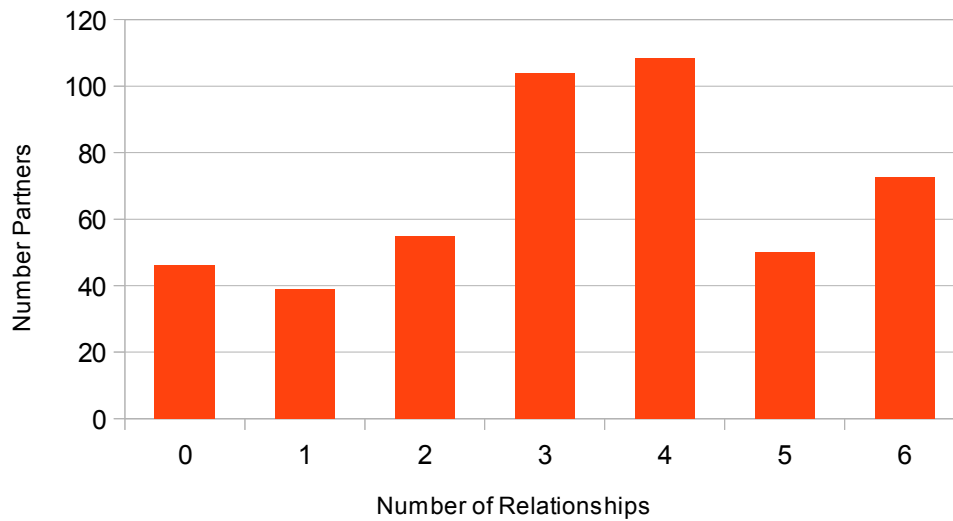
Hedonists: Sexual Satisfaction vs Recent Partners

(Last 12 Months)



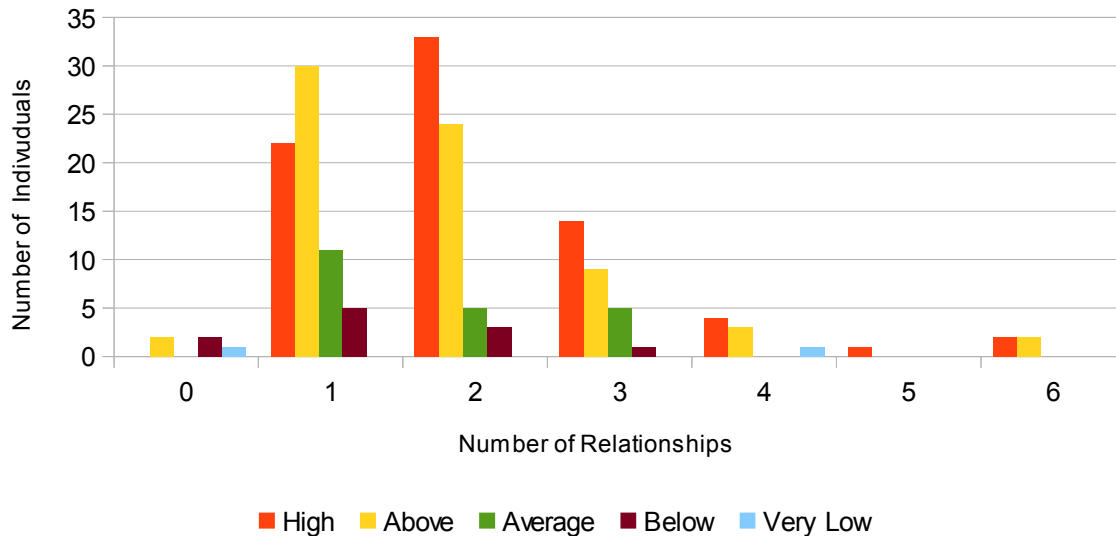
Individuals with three to four committed relationships had the largest number of total lifetime sexual contacts.

Relationships vs Total Lifetime Partners



Individuals with no formal relationship (zero on the graph), all rated their sexual index as average or below. After the first relationship, as the number of relationships increased (x axis), the number of individuals with below average sexual satisfaction index decreased. After three relationships, only one individual rated their index as very low. Again we have to note the effects of the small sample size.

Relationships vs Sexual Satisfaction



The Hedonists participated in various sexual activities indicating a willingness to be creative and experimental. Male-female anal intercourse occurred in eighty-seven percent. Male-male anal intercourse occurred in eight men who listed themselves as heterosexual and an additional thirteen fantasized about the possibility. Rape was fantasized by twenty-two and participated in by two individuals. Sexual contact with children had been fantasized by six and participated in by two. The variety of sexual encounters included vaginal, anal, oral, mutual masturbation and group sex, etc., but they did not have an influence on sexual satisfaction. (Appendix 1)

The Hedonists enjoyed their sexual activity. The individuals reporting the high sexual satisfaction had higher enjoyment with participating in group sex and SadoMasochism; otherwise, sexual satisfaction was not influenced or did not influence the type of sexual activity. Rape and sexual contact with children were listed as “Not at All” by all the participants. (Appendix 2)

In the group that listed their sexual satisfaction index of average or below (34 individuals), the average age of first-time sexual intercourse was 17.5 vs the remainder of the group at 16.5. Thirty percent of the group was bisexual (female). They had the lowest frequency of sexual activity and three individuals had had no sexual activity in the last twelve months. With the exception of one individual with thirty lifetime partners, the remainder averaged only two, and one-half of the group only had a single lifetime partner. The first time of masturbation was delayed until the age of 17 vs 13 for individuals with above average sexual satisfaction. In this group, six disagreed with the following statement, “The basic right of all persons who are sexually dysfunctional to have available non-judgmental sexual health care”, accounting for fifty percent of the “disagree” responders.

Discussion

Our suspicions are supported by the data; Hedonists are sexually liberated individuals who enjoy sexual activity. They have a high number of lifetime partners and a high number of recent, different sexual partners. This exceeds the Kinsey data which estimated that only five percent of the married population has over seven different sexual partners.

Hedonists are sexually creative, participating in a variety of sexual activities, which would be considered second level sexual activities such as anal sex, incidental homosexual contact, sadomasochism and fantasized rape.

Rape and sexual contact with children was universally condemned by this group. This supports the concept that sexual energy and interest, by themselves, are not a cause for these activities.

The Hedonists who list sexual activity as important, rated their sexual satisfaction higher. They had on average more lifetime partners and recent sexual contacts. They participated in more variety of sexual activities and enjoyed them more. In contrast, the Hedonists who listed sexual activity as less important and rated their sexual satisfaction lower, had fewer lifetime partners and fewer recent contacts. This may just reflect a necessary adjustment in their attitudes; if sexual time is not satisfying, then it must not be important.

However, when we look at individuals with a sexual satisfaction index of average or below, forty percent still felt that sexual time was very important. This suggests their needs and interest in sexual time was not being fulfilled. This study is just a single snapshot in time and does not measure the evolution or change in that group. Perhaps these individuals just needed more time to become discouraged or frustrated causing them to finally lower their level of interest. The important question is why is their interest in sex not being fulfilled?

Age was not a cause of the lower sexual activity or satisfaction. This contrasts with the usual belief that sexual capability declines with aging and results in decreased interest or satisfaction.

Religious training has no effect on the sexual satisfaction index. This is a surprising finding because of the beliefs, doctrine and policies of religion that promote monogamy and associate guilt with sexual promiscuity.

The lower satisfaction group did have a later onset of masturbation and a higher age for first-time sexual intercourse. These findings suggest a physical cause, but there was not enough additional data to separate this from other cultural or social pressures.

Although controversial, the data suggests that in the lower satisfaction index group, fewer committed relationships decreases the satisfaction in sexual time by decreasing the number of lifetime partners. There are emotional barriers to changing relationships, so sexual enjoyment may suffer in those who do not have an optimal partner. Dr. Phil has said, "Great sex does not guarantee a good relationship, but poor sex almost always suggests a poor one". Intuitively we know that picking a compatible partner is essential for sexual enjoyment.

The data suggests that other barriers to access of sexual partners reduces the enjoyment. The lower

satisfaction group had a larger representation of bisexual women. Three of the women had no sexual activity in the last twelve months and when active they were less active than the group average. This is not surprising as developing and maintaining a bisexual relationship is usually delayed and is more difficult.

In summary this group of highly experimental and energetic sexual individuals still had a subset of people who feel sexual time is important, but are not sexually fulfilled. The data suggests this is due to a delay in development of sexual interest and access to the right sexual partner or partners.

This conclusion can be extrapolated to other groups of individuals who have access problems to sexual partners due to injury, birth defects, etc. and should be a further source of study.

There are limitations to this and all studies. This study was limited to forty questions and did not include questions on overall happiness, wellbeing and mental health, for example, a depression or happiness scale. This would have allowed the simple comparison between sexual satisfaction and more general happiness.

Dr Kinsey's research suggests that the optimal survey size for this type of study is 400. Our study had less than one-half of this number, so the data may not accurately reflect the study group. This is why positive findings must be supported by multiple studies before being accepted as true.

I found it difficult to compare my data to Dr. Kinsey's. This led me to the conclusion that the effort to gather and analyze the data has been more important than the data and results themselves. It opens the mind to unexpected possibilities.

Dr. Kinsey spent a lifetime studying sexual activity. Because of social, religious and political suppression, no-one had a global or complete understanding of the types of sexual interests and activities. When he started his institute, homosexual sex and relationships were not accepted and were actively discouraged. Fortunately, as we know, attitudes and values can change with time.

This creates a paradoxical situation or "Catch 22" for Dr. Kinsey, researchers and our Institute. The information gathered in the 30's and 40's helped change our attitudes and beliefs. This in turn empowered people to pursue different sexual practices and orientations. And consequently, his data on sexual practice and preferences became historical and out-of-date.

Dr. Kinsey was a researcher. A large portion of his work was dedicated on how to perform studies on sexual topics. In his books he covers in detail the optimal survey size that is necessary. He repeated studies several times with different survey sizes and calculated the reproducibility of the data. This led to understanding the optimal survey size. There is a lot of preparation before a study begins. The correct sample size is critical for having meaningful conclusions. Understanding this process is a characteristic of an academic researcher.

His greatest legacy has been the formation of the Kinsey Institute, emphasizing the need to perform accurate and peer reviewed studies, and demonstrating that this information is interesting and necessary for change. His findings are often disputed, but no one can doubt the importance of continued studies; this process remains necessary so we continue to evolve and change.