



Asexuality

Orientation, paraphilia, dysfunction,
or none of the above?

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Disclosure

- None to declare



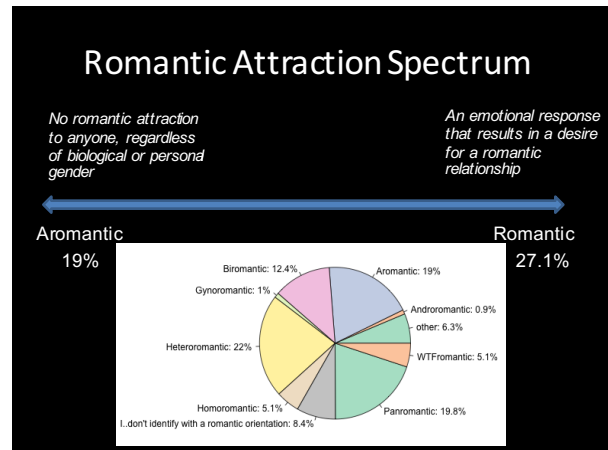
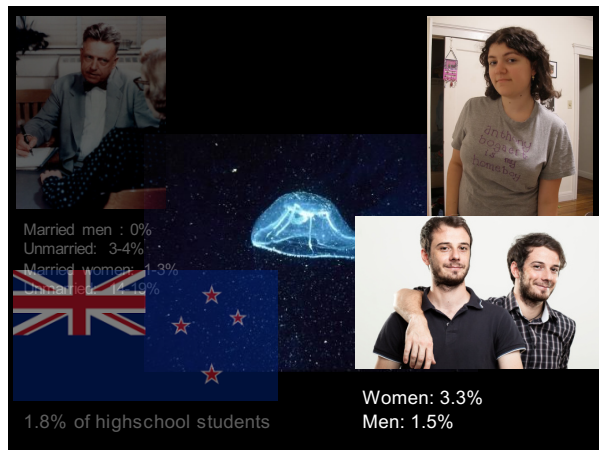
February 8, 2016, Jughead #4

“

I think something like asexuality is underrepresented, and since we have a character who was asexual before people had the word for it, I'm continuing to write him that way.

Chip Zdarsky, October, 2015





What is asexuality?

- Psychopathology
- Paraphilia
- Sexual dysfunction
- Sexual orientation

Asexuality is a manifestation of psychiatric symptoms and personality traits

- no different from other sexual orientation groups
Nurius, 1983
- 17% had Autism spectrum
Ingudomnukul, 2007
- No differences in trauma, disgust, or aversion
van Houdenhove et al., 2015
- 2x rates of depressive symptoms and interpersonal withdrawal. Qual evidence: schizoid and aspergers
Brotto et al., 2010
- Ace men had higher depression and interpersonal sensitivity; more SI and social avoidance
Yule, Brotto, Gorzalka, 2013

MacInnis & Hodson, 2012, Group Processes Intergroup Relations

What is asexuality?

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Asexuals masturbate?

Does masturbating mean I'm not asexual?

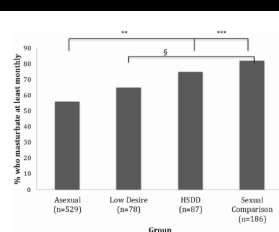
Masturbation, at its core, is a physical act which has nothing to do with sexual attraction. Although many people use it as an outlet for their sexual attraction, masturbating does not actually require sexual attraction in any way.

Masturbating does not make you less ace.

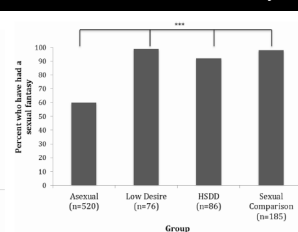
Masturbating does not make you a bad ace.

www.asexualityarchive.com

% masturbate at least monthly



% who've had a fantasy



automonosexuality

Yule, Brotto, & Gorzalka, 2014, Can J Human Sexuality

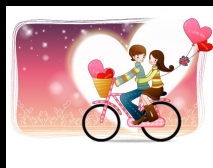
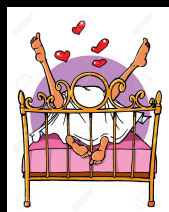
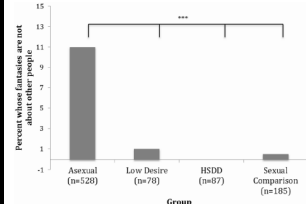
Autochorisexualism

One's self without sexuality

Bogaert, 2012, Arch Sex Behav

"...I wouldn't focus on any person really...sometimes I would imagine a mythical place with fairies..."

Yule, Brotto, & Gorzalka (2014)

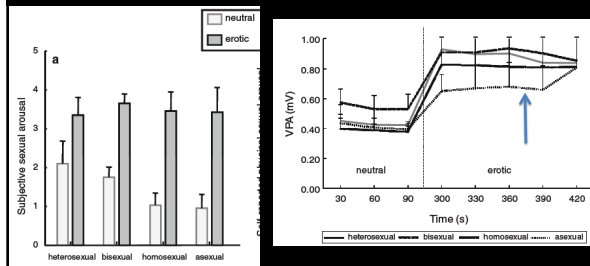


Yule, Gorzalka, & Brotto, In Press, Arch Sex Behav

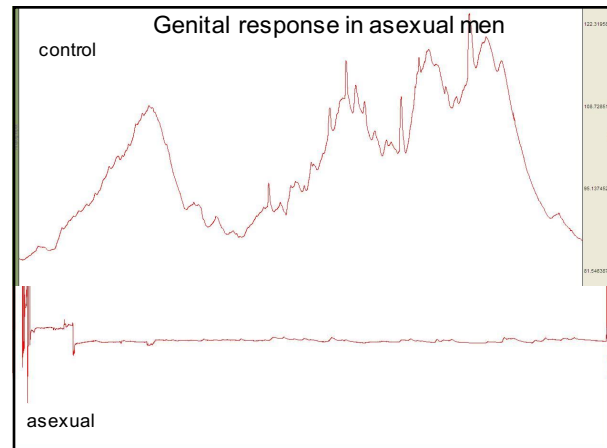
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Asexual women show similar genital arousal response to erotica as sexual women



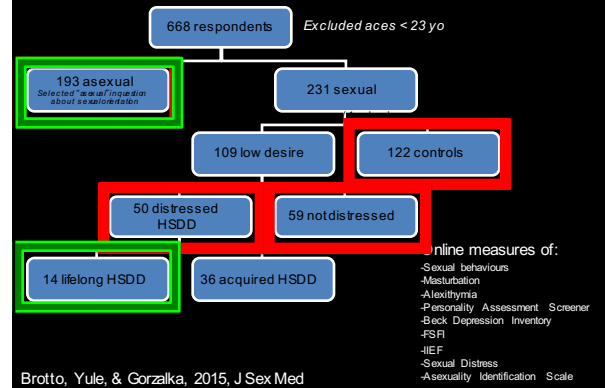
Brotto & Yule, Arch Sex Behav 2011



Fuzzy distinction between asexuality and Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder



Methods



Asexuals differ from HSDD and controls

	Controls	Asexuals	HSDD	Subclinical HSDD
Age	31.7	30.9	36.5	36.1
% in Rel	66.1	22.0	80	53.4
# sex partners	10.9	2.5	15.6	14.1
# romantic partners	3.8	1.7	5.0	3.8
% masturbate	94.9	73.0	87.8	84.2
% kissing/petting	82.4	36.1	83.7	84.2

Brotto, Yule, & Gorzalka, 2015, J Sex Med

Intercourse and Fantasy frequency (%)

	Controls	Asexuals	HSDD	Subclinical HSDD
Intercourse freq				
Not at all	24.2	78.2	12.2	45.6
< 2/mon	37.5	16.5	49	35.1
1-3/wk	30.8	5.3	34.7	14.0
4/wk	7.5	0	4.1	5.3
Never had a fantasy	4.2	38	16.3	15.8

Brotto, Yule, & Gorzalka, 2015, J Sex Med

Predicting Asexual vs HSDD Binary Logistic Regression

- Block 1: Age, Relationship status

$\chi^2(2)=46.8, p < .001$
OR (age) = 1.03
OR (partnered) = 3.11

- Block 2: sexual behaviour, desire, distress

$\chi^2(3)=34.0, p < .001$
OR (desire) = 1.78
OR (sexual distress) = 1.06

- Block 3: Depression, Alexithymia, Desirable Responding

$\chi^2(4)=11.58, p = .021$
OR (alexithymia) = 0.94

Brotto, Yule, & Gorzalka, 2015, J Sex Med

Fuzzy distinction between asexuality and Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder



Summary

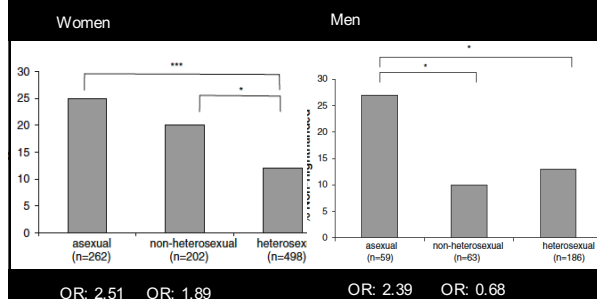
–Sexual behaviour freq	asexuals = lifelong HSDD
–Sexual desire	asexuals = lifelong HSDD
–Sex-related distress	asexuals < lifelong HSDD

Brotto, Yule, & Gorzalka, 2015 J Sex Med

What is asexuality?

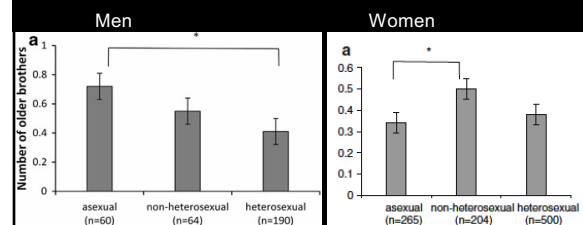
- Paraphilia
- Psychopathology
- Sexual dysfunction
- Sexual orientation

Handedness and Asexuality % non-right handed



Yule, Brotto, Gorzalka, 2014, Arch Sex Behav

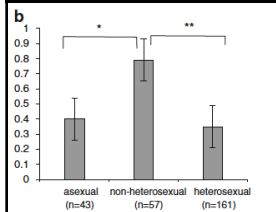
Older Brothers



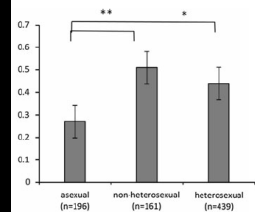
Yule, Brotto, Gorzalka, 2014, Arch Sex Behav

Older Sisters

Right-handed men



Right-handed women



Yule, Brotto, Gorzalka, 2014

What makes a sexual orientation?

- Sexual orientation is an internal mechanism that directs one's sexual and romantic disposition to females, males, or both (Levay & Baldwin, 2012)
- Seto, 2012
 - Age of onset
 - Sexual and romantic behavior
 - stability

Do the incentives to find biological underpinnings bias the science?

Is evidence of biological correlates sufficient to label it as a sexual orientation?

Is sexual orientation a classification only after ruling out other explanations?

Is self-identification as asexual sufficient for classifying it as a unique sexual orientation?

Is asexuality a lack of a unique sexual orientation?

Conclusions

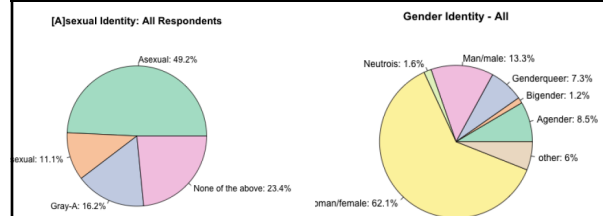
- preliminary support for at least a subgroup with a paraphilic characterization
- modest support for asexuality's placement as a unique sexual orientation
- as much variability among asexual individuals' lack of sexual attraction as there is among sexual individuals'
- future research should aim at exploring the possibility for asexual subtypes

Brotto & Yule, In Press, Arch Sex Behav

Ace Diversity

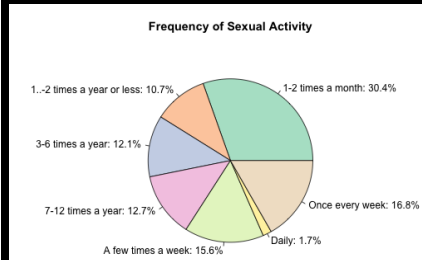
Sexual Orientation

Gender Identity



2014 AVEN Census Survey

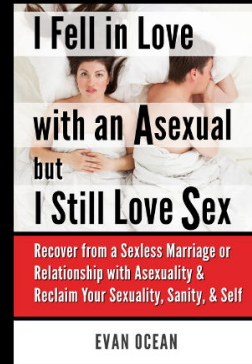
Relevance for Sex Therapists and Sexual Medicine Specialists



2014 AVEN Census Survey

Reasons for Sex

1. To please a partner
2. Curiosity
3. Social expectations
4. For Pleasure
5. To conceive
6. Other



(My boyfriend said to me) “Oh gosh, I would like to crawl into you,” and I said, “Wow, I would like to crawl into you too!” And then he said that maybe that’s what sexual feelings are, when I want to have sex with another person—that is the ultimate “crawling into”. And then I said, “Well, aren’t sexuals then disappointed when they find out that they have gone through all of this trouble to crawl into a person and then finally they have just had sex and are still not in the other person?”

Brotto et al., 2010

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