

Study finds romance and affection top most popular sexual behaviors

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Researchers at the Indiana University School of Public Health-Bloomington and the [Center for Sexual Health Promotion](#) have published a new U.S. nationally representative study of sexual behavior, the first of its kind to capture a wide range of diverse sexual behaviors not previously examined in the general population.

The paper, published in *PLOS One*, highlights results from the Sexual Exploration in America Study, in which a sample of Americans were asked about whether they have engaged in more than 30 sexual behaviors. In addition, researchers investigated the level of appeal of nearly 50 sexual behaviors.

Researchers found that in the more than 2,000 men and women who completed the survey many have engaged in a wide variety of behaviors and that some are fairly common.

"Contrary to some stereotypes, the most appealing behaviors, even for men, are romantic and affectionate behaviors," says Debby Herbenick, professor and the lead author on the study. "These included kissing more often during sex, cuddling, saying sweet/romantic things during sex, making the room feel romantic in preparation for sex, and so on."

The researchers also noted that, although many men and women rated a range of sexual behaviors as appealing and may have tried them in the distant past, fewer engaged in them in the past month or year.

"These data highlight opportunities for couples to talk more openly with one another about their sexual desires and interests," said Herbenick. "Together they may find new ways of being romantic or sexual with one another, enhancing both their sexual satisfaction and relationship happiness."

As a first-of-a-kind study in terms of the breadth of sexual behaviors examined, this research has many implications for the future understanding of adult sexual behaviors beyond those that have been previously recorded and studied. Sexuality educators, clinicians as well as people in the [general population](#) will now have a better understanding of the prevalence and diversity of sexual behaviors experienced by adults in the U.S. general population.

More information: Debby Herbenick et al, Sexual diversity in the United States: Results from a nationally representative probability sample of adult women and men, *PLOS ONE* (2017). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0181198](#)

Provided by Indiana University

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