

SOME ASPECTS OF SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF LOCAL WOMEN RESULTS OF A SURVEY III PETTING

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SYNOPSIS

This, the third article in the series, defines petting and outlines the techniques used.

Only 82 percent of the sample had indulged in petting.

18.1 percent, though married at the time of interview, had never indulged in petting prior to marriage.

27.4 percent admitted to premarital coitus. This constituted 171 married and 106 unmarried women.

A discussion of petting and its significance follows.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual activities may be solitary involving the individual alone or socio-sexual and involve two or more individuals.

Petting constitutes physical contacts between males and females not involving the union of the genitalia of the two sexes and is confined to physical contacts which involve a deliberate attempt to effect erotic arousal and give erotic satisfaction (1)

Petting serves as a substitute for premarital coitus.

This paper discuss petting and its significance.

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MATERIAL AND METHOD

1012 female patients of the Obstetrics & Gynaecology Unit of Toa Payoh Hospital were interviewed personally by the author as regards their premarital experiences.

RESULTS

Table I gives a breakdown of their premarital experiences.

18.1 percent of the sample had had no premarital socio-sexual encounters prior to marriage. 54.5 percent had had experiences with petting only while 27.4 percent had had experiences leading on to sexual intercourse. Of these with premarital sexual experience, 106 were unmarried at the time of interview.

In general, the more educated the females, the more they tended to indulge in premarital petting and premarital coitus.

Table I Premarital Socio-sexual Experiences

Experience	No. of Persons	Percentage
Nil	184	18.1
Kissing/Petting	551	54.5
Sexual Intercourse	277	27.4
Total	1012	100.0

DISCUSSION

The expression of sexuality is the result of a developmental process which occurs during adolescence.

Attitudes regarding premarital sexual activity are an important determinant of behaviour. Social standards are first learned from one's parents. Religion too, both directly and indirectly through its influence on parental attitudes also influences standards.

A person's premarital standards are the result of a differential input of two sets of influences. Early parental and religious influences are associated with conservative standards. Peer and partner influence lead to a greater acceptance of various sexual activities prior to marriage (2).

The emotional intensity of one's relationship is a critical determinant of current activity. Once a relationship develops its emotional quality rather than anything else determines the behaviour.

The most important change in female sexual behaviour in recent decades has been an increase in premarital petting. Petting may have developed as a means for females to adopt to the new sexual freedom without engaging in coitus (3).

With their extensive petting experience many virgins entering marriage today are often far more sexually experienced than were virgins about a decade ago (3).

Premarital sexual activity is one area of sexual outlet that is less restricted in many cultures, though in all cultures some degree of social control is exerted over sexual experience. Far more restrictions are placed over extramarital and homosexual activities than premarital sexual activities (3).

This increase in petting may reflect a compromise in the sexual values of some females who continue the ideal of virginity but take the opportunity sometime for some sexual involvement (3). The female gains power from her petting and her image of her sexuality centres not about performance but about her ability to attract the male and make him suppliant and eager (1, 2).

When a female engages in petting she remains a virgin but at the same time becomes sexually experienced (1, 3).

Petting is the commonly accepted standard of intimacy for both males and females while going steady while coitus may be acceptable also to some (3). 54.5 percent of the survey sample had indulged in petting alone while 27.4 percent had engaged in premarital coitus (19.8 percent of the married females).

Petting was usually confined for a period of a year or two.

The individual's participation in increasingly more intimate behaviour develops over a period of several years and is influenced by biological factors (2).

Premarital sexual behaviour undergoes a process of development beginning with the least intimate heterosexual behaviour i.e. holding hands and kissing. It then progresses slowly to involve more intimate sexual behaviour (2). A person must first learn a given behaviour and the associated socio-sexual skills and find participation in it rewarding before being willing to advance to more intimate behaviour. Participation in each of the behaviour precedes one's experiences with more intimate behaviour (2).

The behaviour sequence begins with petting and proceeds through french kissing and breast and genital fondling to inter-course and oral genital contacts (2).

Petting is usually a preliminary to sexual intercourse but in premarital situations petting per se may be the end point and it may give immediate satisfaction and act as a substitute for coitus.

Petting is carried out by many males and females so that coitus can be avoided or because coitus may be inconvenient for various reasons. Petting avoids the danger of pregnancy as befalls coitus and maybe socially more acceptable (1).

Petting often precedes coitus in marriage, but some couples may have petting as the end point of their activity without carrying on to sexual union. Some extra-marital petting does occur in social circles between married people who are not spouses eg. at dances, parties etc.

Petting is usually initiated by the male who is usually psychologically aroused even before physical contact can occur. In males petting can lead on to ejaculation (1). The male can plan, elaborate and deliberately prolong his petting techniques (1).

Some groups (mainly religious) consider petting as a perversion.

Some 82 percent of the females in the sample had had some petting experience while 18 percent had had no petting experience although most were already married or had had premarital coitus. In most cases, petting was confined to simple kissing or caressing while in others orgasm or even genital apposition (but not union) had occurred.

The extent of petting practised depends on the compromise agreed to by the male and female as to what constitutes the upper and lower limits of acceptability.

Techniques of Petting (1)

Petting includes every conceivable type of physical

contact except sexual union.

Kissing

The initial approaches are general body contacts, hugging and simple kissing.

Simple kissing can cause arousal especially if pressure is included in lip contacts and if the activity is prolonged. However, psychological factors too play a part in effecting arousal.

Deep kissing entailing tongue to tongue contact, lip and tongue sucking, deep exploration of the mouth with the tongue and nibbling of the lips and tongue can occasionally lead to orgasm in the female.

Breast Stimulation

Males are considerably stimulated psychologically by observing, touching and manipulating the female breasts. This activity leads to orgasm in some females. Sometimes the unclothed breasts are manipulated by the tongue or lips.

Manual Stimulation of Female/Male Genitalia

Some sort of manipulation of the female genitalia is usual.

The female usually manipulates the male genitalia after some initial delay and after some encouragement by the male.

However, many females appear unstimulated by this activity while some get aroused on seeing the male's responses.

Some males tend to think a female to be indecent if she does this act.

Oral Contacts with Male/Female Genitalia

In virtually all mammals, mouth genital contacts are a part of precoital play. However, this is the last of the petting techniques accepted by the human males or females mainly due to social and religious taboo.

Less frequently the female makes oral contact with the male genitalia and usually at the urging of the male partner. Some females may initiate this activity and be aroused and reach orgasm with it.

With coital experience, the females and males tend to accept petting techniques which the inexperienced would consider taboo.

Genital Apposition of the male genitalia with the female's without any attempt to penetrate the vagina occurred in one case in this study. This is due to the decision by both male and female not to attempt penetration.

Orgasm can occur within a minute or two of petting, but the activity can be deliberately prolonged for as long as the situation permits.

Petting often occurred and the extent depended on the place and time involved, either in the home, park and field, car, cinemas and the like.

Significance of Petting (1)

Religious codes condemn petting because it does not have procreation as its objective. Because of these prohibitions many do petting with a sense of guilt and if this is extreme problems such as sexual maladjustments, social maladaptation, impotence and homosexual activities may be precipitated.

If a minor is involved in petting, then this could be interpreted as delinquency and a change of public indecency or disorderly conduct can be brought.

Physiologically, petting brings immediate satisfaction. If considerable arousal occurs without orgasm the individual feels upset, disturbed in thinking and unable to concentrate. Pain can occur in the groins or pelvis. Not infrequently the individual will want to masturbate or seek coitus or homosexual relationships.

Socially petting is the source of first arousal and orgasm for many women. The woman gets educated in socio-sexual relationships and learns what to expect in heterosexual relationships later on in life. Due to the physical, psychological or social factors involved in petting, the female gets a chance of deciding on her spouse to be.

Petting is positively correlated to orgasm after marital coitus. As such petting helps to improve marital coitus. The woman gets training in the various petting techniques which she will have to face with after marriage.

If disagreement occurs at petting, no harm comes if the relationship is broken off. However, if disagreement occurs after marriage, the result will be divorce. Thus premarital petting gives the female an opportunity to adjust emotionally and socially to the various types of males and helps in her choice of a mate.

There is no truth to testify that petting leaves a woman unsatisfied with coitus in marriage and all evidence shows that many women who have been thus involved respond excellently in their marital coitus.

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