

Researchers find vibrator use to be common, linked to sexual health

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Two Indiana University studies conducted among nationally representative samples of adult American men and women show that vibrator use during sexual interactions is common, with use being reported by approximately 53 percent of women and 45 percent of men ages 18 to 60. Not only is vibrator use common, but the two studies also show that vibrator use is associated with more positive sexual function and being more proactive in caring for one's sexual health.

The studies, led by researchers at the Center for [Sexual Health Promotion](#) in IU's School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, are the first to publish data about vibrator use from nationally representative samples of the U.S. population. This lack of data has existed despite a longstanding practice by many physicians and therapists to recommend vibrator use to help treat sexual dysfunctions or to improve sexual enjoyment.

One study surveyed [women](#). The other surveyed men. Both were published this week by the "*Journal of Sexual Medicine*," a leading peer-reviewed journal in the area of urology and sexual health.

"The study about women's vibrator use affirms what many doctors and therapists have known for decades -- that vibrator use is common, it's linked to positive sexual function such as desire and ease of orgasm, and it's rarely associated with any side effects," said Debby Herbenick, associate director of the Center for Sexual Health Promotion.

Michael Reece, director of the Center for Sexual Health Promotion, said the studies are important for the contributions they make to an understanding of the sexual behaviors and sexual health of adults in today's society.

"The study about male vibrator use is additionally important because it shows that vibrator use is also common among men, something that has not been documented before," Reece said. "Also, both studies help us to further understand the way in which American consumers are turning to the marketplace for products that promote their sexual health, and that has important economic implications."

The studies are the first to document insights into how and why people use vibrators, examine side effects and to explore associations with sexual health behaviors, sexual enjoyment and quality of life measures.

The studies were funded by Church & Dwight Co. Inc., maker of Trojan® brand sexual health products. Here are some of the findings from the studies, which involve survey responses from 2,056 women and 1,047 men ages 18-60.

For women:

- More than half of the women (52.5 percent) had used a vibrator with nearly one in four having done so in the past month.
- 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.
- Vibrator use was positively related to several aspects of sexual function (desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, pain and overall function) with recent vibrator users scoring themselves higher on

most sexual function domains, suggesting more positive sexual function.

- Most women (71.5 percent) reported having never experienced any side effects associated with vibrator use. Those side effects that were reported were typically rare and of a short duration.

For men:

- The prevalence of men who had incorporated a vibrator into sexual activities during their lives was 44.8 percent, with no statistical differences between the rates of vibrator use between men who identified as heterosexual and those who identified as gay or bisexual.
- Heterosexual men most commonly reported having used vibrators during foreplay or intercourse with a female partner, with 91 percent of those who had used a vibrator reporting that they had done so during such activities with women.
- Of men who have used vibrators, 10 percent had done so in the past month, 14.2 percent in the past year and 20.5 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 four of the five domains of sexual function, as measured by the International Index of Erectile Function (erectile function, intercourse satisfaction, orgasmic function and

sexual desire).

The study specifically sought to establish nationally representative rates of vibrator use among men and women in the United States. Vibrators are electrical devices that produce pulses of variable amplitude and frequency to enhance sexual arousal in [men](#) and women by stimulating the genitals. Marketed widely to women through the Internet, women's magazines, boutiques and in-home sex toy parties, they also are available in drug stores and other mainstream retailers.

Source: Indiana University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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