

Researcher finds 'first time' could predict sexual satisfaction

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(Medical Xpress)—Research conducted by Matthew Shaffer, a doctoral psychology student at UT, and C. Veronica Smith, an assistant psychology professor at the University of Mississippi, reveals that the first sexual experience can set the tone for the rest of one's sexual life.

The study is published in the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* and is the first to look at whether the circumstances of losing one's virginity have lasting consequences.

"The loss of virginity is often viewed as an important milestone in human development, signifying a transition to adulthood," said Shaffer. "However, it has not been studied in this capacity. We wanted to see the influence it may have related to emotional and physical development."

The researchers examined how first-time [sexual satisfaction](#) impacts long-term [sexual function](#) as well as how first-time physical and [emotional responses](#) affect long-term sexual experiences. They found that positive first-time experiences were predictive of physical and emotional satisfaction. Specifically, those who felt loved and respected by their partner found later encounters more emotionally satisfying.

The researchers asked 331 young men and women about how they lost their virginity. The anonymous participants ranked the experience according to emotions related to anxiety, contentment, and regret. They also answered questions about their sex life using scales measuring sense of control, satisfaction, and well-being. Finally, the participants filled out

a diary for two weeks describing each sexual experience.

A series of analyses revealed those who were most emotionally and physically satisfied the first time found their sex lives the most fulfilling. Those who reported higher [levels of anxiety](#) and negativity with the first time reported lower overall sexual functioning.

"While this study doesn't prove that a better first time makes for a better sex life in general, a person's experience of losing their virginity may set the pattern for years to come," said Shaffer.

Shaffer suggests that a first-time sexual experience may create a general pattern of thought and behavior that guides sexual experiences and understanding of information concerning sexuality.

Provided by University of Tennessee at Knoxville

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