

Quebeckers' sexual tastes and interests: A new study debunks preconceived notions

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Are the sexual interests and behaviors of Quebeckers abnormal? According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), sexual interests fall into two categories: normal (normophilic) and anomalous (paraphilic). However, findings recently published in *The Journal of Sex Research* contradict the DSM-5, as they demonstrate that a number of legal sexual interests and behaviors considered anomalous in psychiatry are actually common in the general population. This study of 1,040 Quebeckers was conducted by Christian Joyal and Julie Carpentier, researchers at the Institut Philippe-Pinel de Montréal and the Institut universitaire en santé mentale de Montréal (CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal), both of which are affiliated with University of Montreal,

"The main goal of the study was to determine normal sexual desires and experiences in a [representative sample](#) of the [general population](#)," explained Christian Joyal, who is also a full professor in the Department of Psychology at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. The researchers used a professional survey firm to ask men and women who are representative of the general population about their experiences with and desire to engage in sexual behaviour considered abnormal by the DSM-5.

Based on this phone and online survey, the researchers were able to confirm their initial hypothesis. "Overall, nearly half (45.6%) of the sample subjects were interested in at least one type of sexual behaviour that is considered anomalous, whereas one third (33%) had experienced the behaviour at least once. These facts suggest that we need to know

what normal sexual practices are before we label a legal sexual interest as anomalous. Some paraphilic interests are more common than people might think, not only in terms of fantasies but also in terms of desire and behavior," explained Mr. Joyal.

Out of the eight types of paraphilic behaviour listed in the DSM-5, four (voyeurism - 35%, fetishism - 26%, frotteurism - 26% and masochism - 19%) are neither rare nor unusual when it comes to the experiences or desires reported by men and women. The researchers also found a statistically significant relationship between an interest in sexual submission and an interest in other sexual activities, suggesting that the desire to engage in masochism is significantly associated with more diverse sexual interests.

"In general, it is true that men are more interested in paraphilic behaviors than women. However, this doesn't mean that women don't have these interests at all. In fact, women who report an interest in sexual submission have more varied sexual interests and report greater satisfaction with their sex lives. Sexual submission is therefore not an abnormal interest," explained Mr. Joyal.

Overall, the researcher stressed that a distinction must be made between paraphilic sexual behavior, paraphilias, and paraphilic disorders. "A paraphilic disorder refers to sexual acts that involve non-consenting partners or that cause suffering or confusion in the person who engages in the behaviour. The paraphilia may be absolutely necessary in order for the person to achieve sexual satisfaction. A paraphilia is not a mental disorder but rather a sexual preference for non-normophilic behavior, whereas paraphilic behaviour is non-preferential and only engaged in from time to time. At the same time, this study strongly suggests that some legal paraphilic behaviors are far from abnormal, contrary to what is suggested by the DSM-5." Mr. Joyal concluded: "We have reasons to believe that this study's results which are based on Quebec's population

can be applied to the population of North America and Europe as well".

More information: Christian C. Joyal et al. The Prevalence of Paraphilic Interests and Behaviors in the General Population: A Provincial Survey, *The Journal of Sex Research* (2016). [DOI: 10.1080/00224499.2016.1139034](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2016.1139034)

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