

Study shows regular sex improves the memory of young women

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(Medical Xpress)—A team of researchers with McGill University in Canada has found evidence that suggests that young women who engage in frequent sex experience memory improvements. In their paper

published in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, the researchers outline their study, which included asking young female volunteers to fill out surveys regarding their sex lives and taking memory tests.

Prior research has shown that frequent sex (penile-vaginal intercourse between a male and female) leads to better memory in young men and also in males of other species—in this new effort, the researchers sought to learn if the same might be true for [young women](#).

To find out, the researchers enlisted the assistance of 78 young women between the ages of 18 to 29—each was asked to fill out a questionnaire and then to take a series of tests designed to measure their ability to remember things. The tests included face and word recognition tasks—pictures of each were shown and then the volunteers were later asked if they could remember what they had seen.

The researchers report that the women who reported having the most frequent sex scored higher on the tests than did those that reported lower sex frequency. They noted also that the improvement occurred for both facial and [word recognition](#) but that it was much more pronounced for words.

Prior research has suggested that having frequent sex can bolster neurogenesis in the hippocampus, which has been found to be involved in [memory retention](#), particularly when it involves verbal communications. Additionally, researchers have previously learned that frequent sex leads to higher levels of neurotransmitters associated with good feelings. The scientists still can't say for sure why sex might improve memory, but some theories suggest it has to do with the physical exertion involved, which causes increased blood flow and a heightened metabolism. Still unclear is whether the quality or duration of the sex (or whether having an orgasm) has any measurable impact on memory retention. The researchers add that their experiments were part

of a larger study meant to better understand the underlying relationship between memory retention and various activities.

More information: Larah Maunder et al. Frequency of Penile–Vaginal Intercourse is Associated with Verbal Recognition Performance in Adult Women, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* (2016). [DOI: 10.1007/s10508-016-0890-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-016-0890-4)

Abstract

Previous studies have identified a number of factors that contribute to improved cognitive function, and to memory function specifically, in cognitively normal individuals. One such factor, frequency of penile–vaginal intercourse (PVI), has been reported in a number of animal studies to be advantageous to memory for previously presented objects by increasing neurogenesis in the dentate gyrus of the hippocampus. However, studies investigating the potential benefits of frequent PVI on memory function in young women are to the best of our knowledge absent from the literature. The current study thus investigated whether the self-reported frequency of sexual intercourse was related to memory function in healthy female college students. To determine whether variation in PVI would be associated with memory performance, we asked 78 heterosexual women aged 18–29 years to complete a computerized memory paradigm consisting of abstract words and neutral faces. Results showed that frequency of PVI was positively associated with memory scores for abstract words, but not faces. Because memory for words depends to a large extent on the hippocampus, whereas memory for faces may rely to a greater extent on surrounding extra-hippocampal structures, our results appear to be specific for memory believed to rely on hippocampal function. This may suggest that neurogenesis in the hippocampus is higher in those women with a higher frequency of PVI, in line with previous animal research. Taken together, these results suggest that PVI may indeed have beneficial effects on memory function in healthy young women.

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