

Women who believe their sex drive changes can better cope with low libido

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Women who believe that their sex drive will change over time are better able to handle difficulties with sexual desire, according to a study from the University of Waterloo.

Siobhan Sutherland, a PhD candidate, and Uzma S. Rehman, a professor of psychology at Waterloo, conducted the research. They sought to determine how a woman's belief about [sexual desire](#) as either changing or unchanging over time affects her ability to cope with desire difficulties, such as problems getting in the mood or maintaining arousal.

Their findings suggest that [women](#) who see their sexual desire as variable and rate themselves as likely to have problems with it are less likely to behave negatively by ignoring or avoiding the [sexual problem](#). Conversely, they also found that women who believe that desire is unchanging are less likely to try to overcome sexual-desire problems when they arise. The participants did not have a diagnosis of any clinical sexual dysfunction.

"Women who believe that sexual desire levels remain the same may feel that challenges with sexual desire, such as low [sex drive](#), are impossible to overcome and therefore they try to avoid or ignore the problem," said Sutherland, the study's lead author and a recipient of the prestigious Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship.

In two online studies, the researchers randomly assigned readings designed to result in different beliefs about sexual desire. The

participants were then asked to indicate how true it is that they have experienced or are likely to experience a problem with sexual desire. They then completed a test to measure how they handle desire problems.

"Our findings suggest that holding a belief that sexual desire changes over time may protect women against responding helplessly to their sexual problems," said Sutherland. "Gaining a better understanding of how women's beliefs affect their coping with sexual desire challenges can help to refine psychological interventions for women's [problems](#) with sexual desire."

The researchers surveyed 780 women of mixed ages and ethnicities in the U.S. The findings appear in the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*.

Provided by University of Waterloo

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