Why Do Sexual Orientation Differences In Male Masturbation Exist?

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Introduction

- Masturbation is characterized by sex differences:
  - Men masturbate more frequently\(^1,2\)
  - Men begin to masturbate earlier\(^3\)
- There are also sexual orientation differences within men:
  - Homosexual men masturbate more frequently\(^1,2\)
  - Homosexual men report greater pleasure from masturbation\(^4\)
  - Homosexual men are more likely to masturbate in front of a mirror\(^4\)
- Homosexual men are androphilic (i.e., attracted to men), meaning that they possess the same type of sexed body that they desire
- Heterosexual men are gynephilic (i.e., attracted to women) and do not possess the same type of sexed body that they desire
- RESEARCH QUESTION: Do homosexual men eroticize their bodies more than heterosexual men, resulting in sexual orientation differences in masturbation?

Method

- Participants: 38 homosexual men (\(M\) age = 22.8 years, SD = 3.7), 65 heterosexual men (\(M\) age = 20.6 years, SD = 2.8)
- Sexual orientation determined by Kinsey scale scores (fantasy since age 18)
- Recruited from the University of Lethbridge and from across Canada via advertisements sent to gay and lesbian organizations and posted on websites
- Measures: the Body Eroticization Subscale of the Autoandrophilia Questionnaire
- Body Eroticization Subscale (BES) - assesses degree to which men experience erotic feelings toward their own bodies
- Rated on 7-point likert scale (1 = not at all true for me; 7 = very true for me)
- Data Analysis: Mann-Whitney \(U\) tests on 10 individual items from the BES and average BES scores
  - Independent variable = BES scores
  - Dependent variable = sexual orientation

Results

![Figure 1: Mean Body Eroticization Subscale Scores](image)

\(z = 5.90, p < .001\)

![Table 1: Means and standard deviations of the Body Eroticization Subscale Items](table)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Eroticization Subscale Item</th>
<th>Homosexual Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Heterosexual Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney (U)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes I become sexually aroused because of my masculine appearance</td>
<td>4.00 (1.79)</td>
<td>2.22 (1.36)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at or thinking about my own naked body is sexually arousing</td>
<td>3.16 (1.94)</td>
<td>1.80 (1.19)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just thinking about having a man’s body can be enough to get me sexually aroused</td>
<td>4.78 (1.99)</td>
<td>1.17 (4.09)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The idea of masturbating in front of a mirror is sexually arousing</td>
<td>3.13 (1.91)</td>
<td>1.89 (1.44)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be interested in watching a video of myself touching my naked body and masturbating</td>
<td>2.56 (1.76)</td>
<td>1.46 (1.12)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naked pictures of myself would arouse me</td>
<td>2.24 (1.57)</td>
<td>1.32 (1.71)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My body turns me on if I find my body sexy</td>
<td>2.27 (1.68)</td>
<td>2.09 (1.61)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I become sexually aroused when I look at, or touch, my chest</td>
<td>3.32 (1.82)</td>
<td>1.45 (1.04)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I masturbate, I have the most intense orgasms when I think about how sexy my body is</td>
<td>1.84 (1.40)</td>
<td>1.22 (1.55)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I masturbate, I like to think about my facial hair, beard, mustache, or having facial hair</td>
<td>1.47 (1.11)</td>
<td>1.11 (1.41)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\(p < .05\), **\(p < .01\), ***\(p < .001\)

Discussion

- Homosexual men exhibited higher average Body Eroticization scores; they also scored significantly higher on each of the individual items from the Body Eroticization Subscale items
- The results suggest that homosexual men tend to eroticize their bodies more than heterosexual men
- Future research should investigate whether elevated self-directed eroticism correlates with masturbation frequency, experiences, and behaviours, as a means of understanding sexual orientation differences in these phenomena

References


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