

# Study Suggests Women Are Bisexual Or Gay, But Almost Never Straight

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What turns us on and where we place ourselves on the sexual spectrum is exceedingly personal. A new study investigating the existence of this spectrum may prove some-what-controversial, then: It claims that women are almost always gay or bisexual and are almost certainly not straight. The research has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

Previous studies using volunteers to investigate the sexual arousal of both men and women have been conducted. Many have suggested that women are, on average, physiologically aroused – as in, showing physical changes in their bodies indicating attraction – to both male and female sexual stimuli. The same is apparently not true for lesbians as, surprisingly, they are significantly more aroused by their own sex than by the opposite sex.

This new study, led by Dr. Gerulf Rieger from the Department of Psychology at the University of Essex, asked 345 women of varying sexual orientations to watch a series of videos featuring sexual content. At the same time, their biological responses were measured, including their pupil dilation and their genital response (pulse and blood flow).

The subjects were women ranging in age, educational background, and ethnicity. They were asked to place themselves on a sexual spectrum scale, identifying themselves as either “straight,” “mostly straight,” “bisexual leaning straight,” “bisexual,” “bisexual leaning lesbian,” “mostly lesbian,” or “lesbian.”

The results indeed found that women who identified as heterosexuals were, on average, strongly aroused by videos of both attractive men and women. In contrast to this, self-identified lesbians exhibited a far stronger response to women than men, which the researchers likened to the responses of heterosexual men: both groups show proportional levels of attraction to their self-identified sexual orientation.

A major criticism this paper is likely to receive when it is published is that arousal is not precisely the same as sexual orientation, despite the language of the lead author suggesting so in the media. “Even though the majority of women identify as straight, our research clearly demonstrates that when it comes to what turns them on, they are either bisexual or gay, but never straight,” Dr. Rieger said, as reported by Pink News.

The study notes that, unlike men, a woman’s sexual attraction may be less affected by a partner’s sex and more influenced by cultural and social factors; these factors include relationship history, educational experiences, religious beliefs and cultural assimilation. As a result of this, a woman’s sexual attitude may vary far more than a man’s, and studies such as this one – and others – appear to back this idea up. Hormonal exposure levels from a young age are also cited as a possible explanation for the general variability in responses to sexual stimuli.

It’s a distinctly tricky subject: The authors of the study also mention that “there is considerable variability across sex in physiological sexual arousal to male or female stimuli.” They point out that their research base falls into the Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic – or WEIRD – demographic, and thus their results cannot be accurately applied to the wider populace just yet.



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# Female Sexuality: Straight Women Turned On By Attractive Women Are Either 'Bisexual Or Gay,' Says Study

Nov 5, 2015 06:03 PM By Lizette Borreli @lizcelineb



Straight women who are turned on by both naked men and women are considered to be "bisexual or gay, but never straight," say researchers.

What turns women on? This question has baffled men for ages. A groomed beard, a generous penis size, or a sexy cologne are all tried and true, but science has found something else that sexually arouses women — other women. According to a recent study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, eye tracking devices found videos of both naked men and women caused straight women's pupils to dilate, signaling sexual arousal.

"Even though the majority of women identify as straight, our research clearly demonstrates that when it comes to what turns them on, they are either bisexual or gay, but never straight," said Dr. Gerulf Rieger, lead researcher of the study from the University of Essex's Department of Psychology, according to *The Telegraph*. Women's sexual preferences tend to be a gray area. A 2011 study from Boise State University found 60 percent of heterosexual women admitted to being attracted to other women, while 45 percent had kissed another woman. Fifty percent of those participants also reported same-sex sexual fantasies. Based on these results, the researchers suggested women are more affectionate with other women because of their friendlier nature. In turn, this presents an opportunity for intimacy or even romantic feelings to develop.

Although previous research has shown women are sexually aroused by both sexes at varying degrees, the differences in arousal between straight and gay women has been overlooked. Which is where this study comes in.

To clearly define the differences in the physiological sexual responses of straight and gay women, Rieger and his colleagues used eye tracking devices on over 300 women who were shown videos of both naked men and women. The devices were used to capture pupil dilation (or lack thereof) in response to the sexual stimuli.

The findings revealed straight women were strongly sexually aroused by videos of both attractive men and women, even if they chose men as their sexual preference. This was in stark contrast to lesbian women who showed much stronger sexual responses to their preferred sex — women. Lesbians were seen as more “male-typical” in their arousal than women, meaning their responses seemed to align more with those of men, and were therefore distinct from other women.

Prior to the study, the researchers theorized since lesbians can be more masculine in their non-sexual behaviors (like the way they dress), they are also more likely to be masculine in their sexual responses. However, Rieger and his colleagues did not find supporting evidence to prove masculine-behaving lesbians always exhibited male-typical sexual arousal patterns. This suggests how women appear in public does not say anything about their sexual role preferences.

“Although some lesbians were more masculine in their sexual arousal, and others were more masculine in their behaviors, there was no indication that these were the same women,” said Dr. Rieger, in the press release.

The truth is straight women, not just lesbians, ogle at beautiful women. For straight women, these sexual fantasies and feelings of intimacy and romance with another woman may be projected onto their porn viewing habits. A recent study by Pornhub found lesbian content is the most popular among women, with “ebony lesbian” and “girl on girl” among the most common search terms. This highlights women are watching more porn than we might expect.

Remember, these findings should not be generalized because not all women have same-sex fantasies. Rather female sexual desire is a complex subject and unique to each and every woman. After all, “men are simple, but women’s sexual responses remain a mystery,” Rieger said.

Sources: Rieger G, et al. Getting in touch with our female sexuality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 2015.

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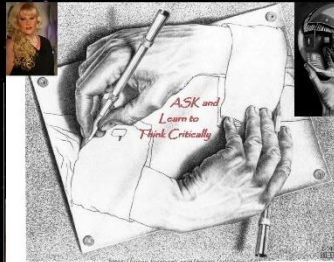
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