Chapter 10

Try It Yourself: How Common Are Paraphilias?

A survey asked people about their interest in paraphilias and if they had ever tried them (Joyal & Carpentier, 2016). What percentage of people do you think reported a desire to experience the following paraphilias? What percentage do you think said they had tried these paraphilias at least once? After making your best estimates, see the answer key.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Paraphilia | % of People with a Desire to Experience It | | | % of People Who Have Tried It At Least Once | | |
| **% of all People** | **% of Men** | **% of Women** | **% of all People** | **% of men** | **% of women** |
| Exhibitionism: traditional definition (exposing self to unsuspecting people) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Exhibitionism: non-traditional definition (sex with a partner in front of others or with risk of being seen) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fetishism: arousal from non-sexual object (other than a vibrator) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Frotteurism: arousal from rubbing against others |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Masochism: desire to suffer, be dominated, or be humiliated |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pedophilia: arousal by children 13 or younger while an adult |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sadism: desire to impose suffering or humiliation on others |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Transvestism: arousal from wearing clothes of opposite sex |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Voyeurism: arousal from watching an unsuspecting stranger undress, be nude, or have sex |  |  |  |  |  |  |

###### Try It Yourself (Answer Key): How Common Are Paraphilias?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Paraphilia | % of People with a Desire to Experience It | | | % of People Who Have Tried It At Least Once | | |
| **% of all People** | **% of Men** | **% of Women** | **% of all People** | **% of men** | **% of women** |
| Exhibitionism: traditional definition (exposing self to unsuspecting people) | 4.5 | 5.9 | 3.4 | 5.0 | *7.8* | *2.7* |
| Exhibitionism: non-traditional definition (sex with a partner in front of others or with risk of being seen) | **30.6** | 35.0 | 26.9 | **30.9** | 32.6 | 29.4 |
| Fetishism: arousal from non-sexual object (other than a vibrator) | **44.5** | 40.4 | 47.9 | **26.3** | 30.1 | 23.2 |
| Frotteurism: arousal from rubbing against others | **26.7** | *34.2* | *20.7* | **26.1** | *32.4* | *20.5* |
| Masochism: desire to suffer, be dominated, or be humiliated | **23.8** | *19.2* | *27.8* | **19.2** | *13.9* | *23.7* |
| Pedophilia: arousal by children 13 or younger while an adult | 0.6 | 1.1 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.2 |
| Sadism: desire to impose suffering or humiliation on others | 7.1 | 9.5 | 5.1 | 5.5 | 7.4 | 3.9 |
| Transvestism: arousal from wearing clothes of opposite sex | 6.3 | 7.2 | 5.5 | 4.9 | 6.5 | 3.5 |
| Voyeurism: arousal from watching an unsuspecting stranger undress, be nude, or have sex | **46.3** | *60.0* | *34.7* | **34.5** | *50.3* | *21.2* |

* **Bold** = higher than statistical criteria (normal curve) for unusual occurrence  
  *Italics* = significant difference between men and women
* Compiled using data from Table 1a and Table 1b from Joyal, C. C., & Carpentier, J. (2016). The prevalence of paraphilic interests and behaviors in the general population: A provincial survey. *The Journal of Sex Research*, Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/00224499.2016.1139034

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How generalizable are these results? Would you expect similar results outside Quebec? Why or why not?
2. Paraphilic interests and behaviors are more common than many of us assume. Does this influence how “normal” you think such interests and behaviors are? In what way?
3. Should the level of criminality of a paraphilic interest or behavior influence whether we consider it abnormal to be interested in it or to engage in it? Explain your thinking.