

## A Study to Assess Multiple Facets of Attraction to Women and Men

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### Abstract

*Objective:* To assess multiple facets of attraction to women and men among college students. *Methodology:* A sample of 150 undergraduates and postgraduates of medicine were approached at random. Participant's were provided with self-administered 23 item questionnaire to assess multiple aspects of attraction to women and men. Statistical analyses were carried out and the findings were discussed by referring to relevant literature. *Results:* A number of 123 questionnaires were obtained from the participants after having ruled out those who did not give consent and those who filled in the forms incompletely. Physical attractions, emotional attractions and sexual fantasies have a significant positive correlation among themselves. *Conclusion:* There is a possibility for an individual to experience sexual and/or romantic feelings for multiple people throughout the course of a relationship.

**Keywords:** Attraction; Men; Women; College Students.

### Introduction

Attraction is an empowering emotion. It's a positive attitude of one person to another, displayed by the desire to approach and be closer to another person [1,2].

Physical attraction is the desire to look and touch a person because what you see is pleasant to look at or arousing on a biological level. Basically, our sexual desire is triggered. Physical attraction is comparatively less sustainable than emotional attraction. It is more of a one-sided attraction. It is possible for an individual to feel a sexual attraction without necessarily feeling an emotional connection.

On the other hand, Emotional attraction is a feeling that you want to kiss someone and meld the story of your life with theirs. You want them to love you back and you feel a possessive romantic drive to be important to them, and to share life with them. It is driven by the respect an individual feels for an

another individual he or she would like to experience a two-way relationship with. Emotional attraction is necessary to experience a true, and deep relationship. It is expected that an individual might experience sexual and/or romantic feelings for multiple people, often called as "crushes" that they choose to never act on [3].

Features of the partner that satisfy a given person's emotional and physical needs are the factors that attract them to that partner [4].

This study focusses to assess multiple aspects of attraction to women and men among first year college students.

### Methodology

#### Place of Study

A study was conducted in Mamata Medical College and General Hospital, Khammam, Telangana.

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*Study Period:* The study period is from July 2017 to December 2017.

#### *Study Sample*

A total of 150 students including undergraduates and postgraduates were approached. They were then provided with the questionnaires with a verbal introduction. Participants were asked to rate their responses for the questionnaire used in this study.

*Study Design:* Cross sectional study.

#### *Inclusion Criteria*

All the undergraduates (Interns) and postgraduates (all departments) during the study duration were included in the study.

#### *Exclusion Criteria*

Students that did not agree to participate in the study.

### **Materials**

A self-administered 23-item questionnaire to assess multiple facets of attraction to women and men had been used in the current study. This questionnaire provides an assessment of both the frequency and the intensity of an individual's attraction to women and men. All the questions can be answered by either women or men. Therefore, the estimate of same-sex and other-sex attractions can be obtained depending on the gender of the respondent. All the questions are phrased with respect to "woman" and "man", instead of "same-sex" and "other-sex". The questions are not designed to be aggregated into a single scale. Rather, the intent is to provide a detailed assessment of an individual's pattern of sexual and emotional feelings.

Items 1-13 focus on women and items 14-23 focus on men exclusively.

Items 1-3 assess the "relative frequency" of same-sex and other-sex attractions and fantasies, (0%-100%).

Items 4, 7, 10, 14, 17 and 20 assess "overall frequency" of attractions and fantasies towards women (4, 7, and 10) and men (14, 17 and 20).

Items 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, and 19 assess the "breadth". This will distinguish whether the individuals are only capable of experiencing same-sex attractions for one specific individual or do they

experience them for many individuals.

Items 11-13 (for women) and 21-23 (for men) focus on the "intensity" of attractions experienced.

Not all the items have comparable scales.

#### *Socio-Demographic Profile*

Age, gender, religion, education, and socio-economic status.

#### *Statistical Analysis*

The data from the questionnaire was coded using Microsoft Excel- spreadsheet. All the entries were double checked for any possible keyboard error. Correlations were calculated using Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation for determining the attraction to women and men.

### **Results and Discussion**

This research study identified the responses of 123 students out of 150 study population, who participated in the research about the assessment of multiple facets of attraction to women and men. We found a tremendous interindividual variation in the degree of physical and emotional attractions as well as sexual fantasies. Data is elaboratively represented and explained using Tables 1 to 8.

**Table 1:** Demographic variables. (N=123)

Variables		N
Gender	Male	69
	Female	54
Religion	Hindu	88
	Muslim	16
	Christian	11
	Atheist	8
Education	Under graduation	94
	Post-graduation	29

Average age of the study population is 23±5years.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics of the study population. (N=123)

Variables	Undergraduates (n=94)	Postgraduates (n=29)
Male	49	20
Female	45	9
Hindu	71*	17
Muslim	11	5
Christian	9	2
Atheist	3	5

\*Majority of the study population are Hindu by religion.

**Table 3:** Relative frequency of same-sex and opposite-sex attractions and fantasies (N=123)

Variables*		Total	Undergraduates (n=94)		Total	Postgraduates (n=29)	
			Male (n=49)	Female (n=45)		Male (n=20)	Female (n=9)
Physical attraction	0%	44	<u>1</u>	43	7	0	7
	100%	37	37	0	19	19	0
	Below 25%	46	<u>2</u>	44	7	0	7
	25-50%	3	<u>3</u>	0	2	0	2
	51-75%	4	3	<u>1</u>	1	1	0
	Above 75%	41	41	0	19	19	0
Emotional attraction	0%	42	<u>1</u>	41	7	0	7
	100%	35	35	0	18	18	0
	Below 25%	45	<u>3</u>	42	7	0	7
	25-50%	3	<u>3</u>	0	3	<u>1</u>	2
	51-75%	5	3	<u>2</u>	1	1	0
	Above 75%	41	40	<u>1</u>	18	18	0
Sexual fantasies	0%	45	<u>3</u>	42	7	0	7
	100%	38	38	0	19	19	0
	Below 25%	45	<u>3</u>	42	8	0	8
	25-50%	4	<u>3</u>	1	1	0	1
	51-75%	4	4	0	0	0	0
	Above 75%	40	40	0	20	20	0

\*Frequency; (in the past 6 months)

0% - never experienced attractions/ fantasies towards women

100% - Individual had attractions/fantasies only towards women.

50% - had attractions/fantasies towards women as well as menrelatively in the same frequency.

<50% - had attraction/fantasies relatively less towards women.

>50% - had attractions/fantasies relatively more towards women.

In 21 instances, undergraduates both men and women experienced attractions/fantasies relatively more towards the same gender in the past 6 months.

And in 5 instances, undergraduate men have expressed that they never had attractions/fantasies towards women in the past 6 months.

In 1 instance, a male postgraduate expressed that he had attractions/ fantasies relatively less towards women.

**Table 4:** Overall frequency of the attractions. (N=123)

Variables		Undergraduates (n=94)				Postgraduates (n=29)			
		Towards women		Towards men		Towards women		Towards men	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Physical attraction	Almost never	21	24	32	37	8	1	18	9
	<0nce/month	2	1	6	2	0	0	1	0
	Once or twice/month	3	4	6	4	1	0	1	0
	About once/week	3	2	1	1	1	1	0	0
	>once/week	3	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
	About everyday	17	13	3	1	10	5	6	0
Emotional attraction	Almost never	22	24	28	34	7	4	15	8
	<0nce/month	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
	Once or twice/month	4	5	5	3	0	0	1	0
	About once/week	4	3	1	0	2	1	0	0
	>once/week	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
	About everyday	16	9	15	5	11	4	3	0

In 40 instances, undergraduates of both the genders expressed that they had physical/emotional attractions more towards the same gender overall in the past 6 months.

Similarly, in 18 instances, postgraduates expressed physical/emotional attractions more towards the same gender.

**Table 5:** Overall frequency of the fantasies. (N=123)

Variables		Undergraduates (n=94)				Postgraduates (n=29)			
		Towards women		Towards men		Towards women		Towards men	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sexual fantasies	Almost never	20	22	28	34	6	0	15	8
	<Once/month	2	3	3	4	0	1	1	0
	Once or twice/month	4	7	4	5	4	0	1	1
	About once/week	5	0	5	1	0	0	1	0
	>once/week	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	About everyday	16	11	9	1	10	8	2	0

In 20 instances, undergraduate male and female expressed to have experienced sexual fantasies more towards the same gender in the past 6 months.

Similarly, in 10 instances, postgraduates had experienced sexual fantasies more towards the same gender.

**Table 6:** Breadth of the attractions. (N=123)

Variables		Undergraduates				Postgraduates			
		Towards women		Towards men		Towards women		Towards men	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Number of Physical attractions	0	21	20	25	32	5	0	13	9
	<25	48	40	49	45	20	9	20	9
	25-50	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	51-75	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	>75	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexually or romantically involved with a physical attraction	Yes	5	5	13	5	5	3	5	0
	No	44	40	36	40	15	6	15	9
Emotional attraction	0	23	22	26	32	4	3	0	8
	<25	49	43	49	45	20	9	20	9
	25-50	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	51-75	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	>75	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexually or romantically involved with an emotional attraction	Yes	10	5	15	7	6	3	7	1
	No	39	40	34	38	14	6	13	8

In 83 instances, undergraduate women expressed <25 physical/emotional attractions towards the same gender and in 5 instances, they expressed to have sexually involved with a single physical/sexual attraction.

In 98 instances, undergraduate men expressed <25 physical/emotional attractions towards the same gender and in 18 instances, they expressed to have sexually involved with a single physical/sexual attraction.

In 18 instances, postgraduate women expressed <25 physical/emotional attractions towards the same gender and in 6 instances, they expressed to have sexually involved with a single physical/sexual attraction.

In 40 instances, postgraduate men expressed <25 physical/emotional attractions towards the same gender and in 12 instances, they expressed to have sexually involved with a single physical/sexual attraction.

**Table 7:** Intensity of the attractions experienced and the degree of urge for sexual activity. (N=123)

Variables		Undergraduates (n=94)				Postgraduates (n=29)			
		Towards Women		Towards Men		Towards Women		Towards Men	
		Men (n=49)	Women (n=45)	Men (n=49)	Women (n=45)	Men (n=20)	Women (n=9)	Men (n=20)	Women (n=9)
Average physical attraction	No attraction	20	21	29	32	4	0	16	9
	Minimal	5	2	4	0	1	0	2	0
	Moderate	7	9	13	12	4	0	1	0
	Intense	6	3	0	0	1	1	0	0
	Most intense attraction	11	10*	3*	1	10	8*	1*	0
Strongest physical attraction	No attraction	21	21	29	32	4	0	16	9
	Minimal	2	3	4	4	3	0	2	0
	Moderate	7	7	12	7	3	0	1	0
	Intense	1	8	1	0	1	1	0	0
	Most intense attraction	10	4*	3*	2	9	8*	1*	0

Maximum sexual desire	No desire	21	22	29	33	6	0	9	15
	Minimal	4	4	4	0	3	0	0	3
	Moderate	8	6	12	10	1	0	0	1
	Intense	9	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
	Most intense desire	10	9*	4*	2	9	8*	1*	0

\*prevalence of attraction towards the same gender.

Above table shows that,

Undergraduates;

Average physical attraction that they experienced towards the same gender is the most intense; 10 instances in women and 3 instances in men.

Strongest physical attraction that they experienced towards the same gender is the most intense; 4 instances in women and 3 instances in men.

Maximum sexual desire that they experienced towards the same gender is the most intense; 9 instances in women and 4 instances in men.

Postgraduates;

Average physical attraction that they experienced towards the same gender is the most intense; 8 instances in women and 1 instance in men.

Strongest physical attraction that they experienced towards the same gender is the most intense; 8 instances in women and 1 instance in men.

Maximum sexual desire that they experienced towards the same gender is the most intense; 8 instances in women and 1 instance in men.

**Table 8:** Pearson’s correlation between the variables

Variables	Physical attraction		Emotional attraction		Sexual fantasy	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Physical attraction	-	-	0.95	<0.00001*	0.947	<0.00001*
Emotional attraction	-	-	-	-	0.932	<0.00001*

\*<0.05

There’s a significant positive correlation between the variables. More the physical attraction, high the emotional attraction and vice versa. High grades of physical attraction resulted in the high grades of sexual fantasies. Also, greater the emotional attraction, higher the sexual fantasies and vice versa.

## Conclusion

This study shows multiple facets of attraction to women and men. The prevalence of same sex attractions and sexual fantasies are demonstrated. We conducted a detailed assessment of an individual’s pattern of physical attractions, emotional attractions and sexual fantasies using the 23-item questionnaire. As charted in the tables represented above, there is an evidence of attractions and sexual fantasies towards the same gender in both undergraduate and postgraduate students. This research helps to bring about awareness of the possible existence of same sex relationships around us that are kept in the dark. Hypothetically, this could be because of the stigma around the topic in our society. This research only points out the prevalence of the same sex attractions with its

limitations. Further research is needed to find out about the quality of life of the concerned individuals and probable stress (if any) that’s perceived and ways of coping.

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### Limitations

Small study population; results cannot be generalized.

Although we took necessary precautions to maintain confidentiality, there is a probability that the answers to the questions were not entirely truthful because of prevalent stigma regarding same-sex relationships. This may be resulted by the social, cultural and other aspects of the study population.

#### *Future Directions*

Researchers may look into the assessment of general health and functioning of the individuals with same-sex and opposite-sex attractions, by using necessary scales like General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF). This may yield information about the possible psychological stress if experienced by the individuals.

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