

BDSM Internet Web “Masters”: Gender and Sexual Orientation effects on the internet sex survey responses of self-proclaimed sadomasochists.

J. Paul Fedoroff, M.D.<sup>1,2</sup>

Trevor Jacques, B.Sc.,ARCS,GradInstP.<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Internet survey responses, by 1,044 people (483 men and 561 women) with a sexual interest in some aspect of “bondage, discipline, submission, sadism and/or masochism” (BDSM) were analyzed to examine the effect of gender and sexual orientation upon self-reported sadomasochistic interest and behavior.

Using the Kinsey scale of sexual orientation, 29% of the male respondents and 14% of the female respondents were sexually attracted mostly or only to the same sex (Kinsey 6 or 7). As predicted, there were several statistically significant differences between men and women in terms of self-reported sexual characteristics. Compared to men, as a group, female respondents had fewer life-time sexual partners ( $p < 0.0001$ ) and were more likely to have been sexually abused in childhood ( $p < 0.0001$ ). Homosexual (Kinsey 6-7) men and women were significantly older than heterosexual men and women (Kinsey 1-5) when they became aware of their sexual orientation ( $p = 0.002$ ).

However, there were no significant differences between men and women of either sexual orientation at the time of first masturbation or awareness of an interest in BDSM activities. For both groups, age of first interest in BDSM was significantly later than age of awareness of sexual orientation ( $p = 0.005$ ). Surprisingly, most respondents reported engaging in BDSM activities without accompanying sexual activities. Compared to their heterosexual sisters, lesbian women were significantly less likely to separate sex from BDSM activities (73% vs. 84% respectively,  $p < 0.01$ ). Finally, heterosexual men were more likely to engage in exclusively sadistic sexual activities than were gay men or (straight or lesbian) women ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Taken together, the results of this study lend support to the view that the development of sexual orientation is independent of the development of specific sexual behavioral interests such as interest in BDSM. The finding that the majority of self-proclaimed sadists and masochists separate their BDSM interests from sexual activities challenges the view that all people with BDSM interests are paraphilic.

## References

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