

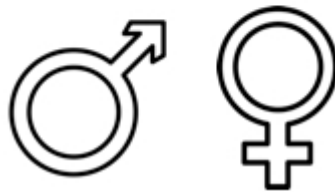
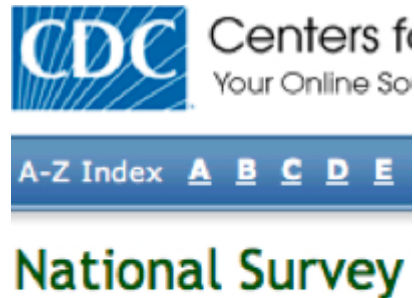


Written by [Beverly K. Eakman](#) on March 10, 2011

## Sex and the “Study”

In an era of trillion-dollar budgets and out-sized deficits, the U.S. government continues to finance studies that nobody needs. The latest goofball “research analysis” hit the news on Thursday, March 3, telling us that virginity was on the rise (albeit with minuscule numbers).

Supposedly, the phenomenon exists even among the 40-plus crowd for both sexes — “about 1.2 percent of men and ... 0.3 percent of women,” according to the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) (NCHS). Never mind that TV shows have been canceled for citing statistical data on viewing audiences larger than those in the above study.



Researchers boasted a bed full of details about our collective sex lives, all of questionable relevance and worth. For example, the [National Survey of Family Growth](#) (NSFG) [found](#) that “29 percent of women and 27 percent of men under age 24 reported “no sexual contact with another person,” and that “22 percent of [such] young men and women said they were abstinent.”

NSFG’s studies run the gamut of sexual behavior, from simple attraction to sexual identity — topics deemed useful by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and others who plan government-subsidized health services and health-awareness programs as they affect families, fertility, and general wellbeing. NSFG’s questionnaires are supported by government via the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), including “data files, code books and documentation” — not exactly a warm and fuzzy prospect to those Americans who do not wish to be surveyed about the intimate details of their lives. Admittedly, there might be some need for statistical data on sexually transmitted diseases, births to single mothers (i.e., formerly characterized as “illegitimate children”) and sex crimes. But the studies above weren’t focused on any of that.

Some conservatives rushed to attach earth-shaking significance to the virginity findings — even as one lurid sex scandal after another revealed politicians behaving badly. The greater wonder is that more people aren’t either completely turned off by today’s hypersexualized environment and that, given the behavior of our national leaders and authority figures, there is anyone still left who has not been sexually abused.

But the economic fallout from a nation awash in frivolous sex research is worse because the government grant process exists on the taxpayer’s dime. *Ergo*, do we really need data on 40-year-old virgins? Is that, in fact, even an appropriate topic of conversation?

Apparently yes, inasmuch as a whole movie was made about it (*The 40-Year-Old-Virgin* starring Steve Carell in 2005). The message of the movie (and no doubt the virginity statistics) is that it is hilariously funny that individuals who haven’t found their soul-mate might actually choose to remain chaste until they find the right person to marry. A mere 40 years ago, we called that “normal.”



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Today, we spend immense sums “[defining deviancy down](#),” as the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) once famously quipped in a 1993 speech. A Google search of “sex studies/surveys” + “government” gets pages of results, and that doesn’t count computer searches for “teen births” and “fatherhood studies,” or grants available for single moms to go to college.

Yet, oddly, there seems to be a dearth of government-funded studies that center on the possible relationship between, say, early sex education and violent sex crimes, or between sex-filled advertising and youth experimentation — things that might be of value to policymakers, educators and parents.

Of course, a few organizations fund such studies privately, but the results rarely make it to the news media and are confined instead to professional periodicals. Given that correlation does not prove cause, perhaps this is not surprising. But the spate of school shootings, coupled to government’s ongoing love affair with the longitudinal study, (see [Tracking Your Digital Trail](#) and "[Just Because They Can](#)") especially those of the mental illness variety, makes such an apparent lack of professional curiosity seem strange. It’s almost as if experts don’t want to confront the makers of sexually explicit, violent-video games, much less licentious film-makers and sex-product advertisers. One way to avoid that, of course, is not to conduct or publicizing sex crime-correlation studies. Better to stick to abstinence and 40-year-old virgins — topics entertaining and benign.

At the K-12 level, however, things get tricky. Questionnaires, polls, and surveys centering on sex (often under the cover of academics such as “health”) are pervasive. The difference is, nobody publicizes the questions, and results are used to craft curriculum rather than to incite public curiosity. If you can find the questions at all, you discover they are of the “When-did-you-stop-beating-your-wife?” variety, forcing youngsters to look bad. Many school administrators and education policymakers don’t pick up on that fact when they review survey results, which makes it easy to jump to the wrong conclusions.

Parents complain loudly and often when they find out about sex surveys — for obvious reasons, such as privacy and inappropriateness, but also because they aren’t informed beforehand so they can opt their kids out. But assessment creators say there is no other way to get this “critical” information, unless they can spring it on the unsuspecting child. Well, probably so. Especially if the goal is for young people to engage is “safe sex” as opposed to abstaining outside of marriage.

Single motherhood, meanwhile, is held up as a pinnacle of female emancipation, even though it winds up being more confining for women in the long run, because single parenthood makes it very difficult to pursue a life beyond childrearing. One result of that has been the emergence of a huge day-care market, which not only is expensive, but forces youngsters into a peer-pressure mentality as opposed to a family-centered orientation. It’s a vicious circle, one that inevitably results in even more government funding — especially day care for low-income, single mothers.

So the various sex studies and frivolous questionnaires ultimately beget federal and state “obligations” that go way beyond sex-research — such as government-funded counseling services for mental-health “intervention,” Head Start-type programs and oversight boards.

Studies that appear to emanate from universities and private organizations are often mixed with government grant monies. Thus the term *public-private partnership*. This makes it difficult for the citizen to ascertain who or what entity actually is the source for a sex study under the rubric of “family survey data.” If taxpayers complain, local entities blame the state, states blame local agencies, local agencies say the feds made them do it, the feds lash out at the grantee, and so on, until everyone tires of the process.



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Thus have busybodies at all levels become complicit in a political game to skew norms relating to marriage and the family — with taxpayers' help. Sex studies are redefining the family, altering sexual mores and eradicating gender roles to accommodate a political agenda that normalizes and destigmatizes what was once considered deviant behavior — promiscuity, same-sex liaisons, and single parenthood. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that romantic love itself is [considered a mental illness](#). The idea was first articulated by British psychologist Frank Tallis in his 2005 book, *Love Sick: Love as a Mental Illness*, then picked up by American psychologists as an excuse to underwrite further studies — on the roots of “expansiveness” (mania), depression, anxiety, insomnia, and obsessions.

Love and the role of high anxiety in sexual attraction, for example, was funded with research grants from the National Science Foundation and university research monies, both of which make regular use of federal dollars. In something called The Kissing School, Helen Fisher, a professor of anthropology and human behavior researcher at Rutgers University, discovered (with the indirect help of tax dollars) that love “lights up the caudate nucleus because it is home to a dense spread of receptors for a neurotransmitter called dopamine,” which Fisher characterized as part of a human “endogenous love potion.” In the right proportions, dopamine purportedly “creates intense energy, exhilaration, focused attention, and motivation to win rewards.” In an article, she expanded this theory to explain some people’s seeming addiction to a particular romantic love interest who has rejected the smitten party.

No doubt such insights are of interest to certain parties and provide mild entertainment to the rest of us. But do they rise to the level of needed budget expenditures when the government is racking up trillion-dollar debts?

The National Education Association thinks so, and so does the United Nations, which views sexual information as a human right (NEA to UN: “Oral sex, masturbation, and orgasms need to be taught in education”). The NEA actually went to the UN insisting that since various studies supported the notion of ignorance by students on the topics above, it behooved the UN to call for mandatory, international participation in such courses, out of concern for misguided teachings from religious organizations and the family.

So-called studies, both here and abroad (specifically, in Belgium) preceded this bizarre pronouncement. Belgian schools apparently serve as a model for other nations to get their teachers to address gender/transgender issues in their courses. Belgium’s “open-minded” coursework is known as “gender in the blender,” highly reminiscent of Aldus Huxley’s *Brave New World* in that the pleasure-seeking, carnal aspect of human nature is heightened while the human spirit and reason are downplayed. Thus are sex studies a part and parcel of nearly every classroom so that gauging opposition to “gender-blender”-type programs is made easier. Parents and concerned citizens groups feared just such an outcome back when intimate questionnaires began invading U.S. classrooms in the 1970s.

Moreover, in today’s waste-ridden, trillion-dollar spending climate, when taxpayers are told that expenditures of every sort already are trimmed to the bone, one is motivated to ask: Why are we spending money on sex studies?

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