

The Influence of Sexual Arousal on Emotion Perception in Men:

A Pilot Study

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QUESTION

- How does sexual arousal affect emotion perception in men?

OBJECTIVE

- Determine whether men perceive facial emotions as more positive when sexually aroused compared to when unaroused.

METHOD

Participants

- 11 pilot participants (heterosexual men)

Conditions

- Within-Subjects Design
- Sexual Arousal*: 7-minute erotic video
- Neutral Mood*: 7-minute figure skating video

Facial Perception Task

- B&W Female Faces (for 300ms)
- 56 Stimuli: 7 models displaying 8 emotions
- Happiness, anger, disgust, surprise, sadness, fear, contempt, and a neutral expression

Measures

- Sexual Arousal (measured 3 times)*: 9-point Likert Scale ("not at all aroused" to "very aroused")
- Mood (measured 3 times)*: International 10-item version of The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule
- Perceived Affect*: Visual Analogue Scale from 0 ("completely negative") to 100 ("completely positive")

Sexual Arousal,
Mood



Sexual Arousal,
Mood



Sexual Arousal,
Mood

RESULTS

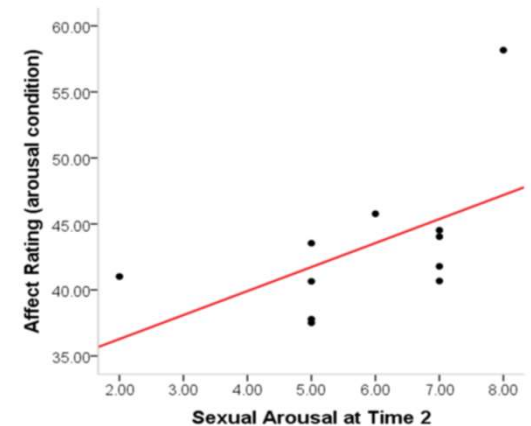
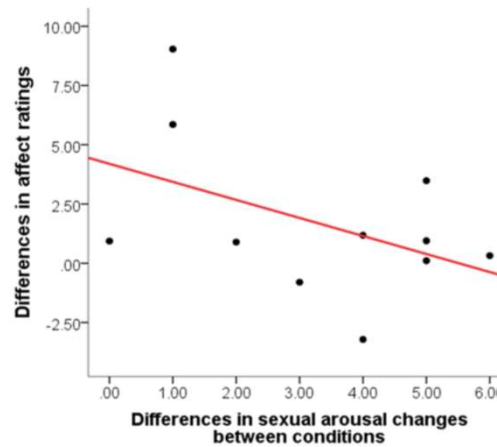
- Emotions were perceived as more positive in the sexual arousal condition, except for happiness.
- The more participants' sexual arousal levels increased in the sexual arousal condition relative to the control condition the less their affect ratings changed. Higher absolute levels of sexual arousal correlated with more positive affect ratings.
- The regression model indicated no effect of condition, order, or mood.

Average face ratings by affect and condition

Emotion Affect	Arousal	Control
	M(SD)	M(SD)
Positive	84.253(14.786)	84.584(11.681)
Negative	35.884(15.452)	33.509(13.719)
Neutral	47.144(11.290)	45.818(10.013)

Linear mixed effects model

Predictor	β	95 % CI	SE	df	t	p
	Condition	0.037	[-0.018, 0.092]	0.028	1208	1.315
Order	-0.093	[-0.213, 0.027]	0.061	11.05	-1.522	0.156
Mood.Pos	0.001	[-0.118, 0.120]	0.061	11.18	0.016	0.987



CONCLUSION

- Preliminary results indicate that being in a sexually aroused state can influence men to perceive more positive affect in negative and neutral female faces.
- If similar results are found with a larger sample, it could inform healthy sexual education, such as consent workshops, by unveiling potential cognitive biases during sexual communication.