

Which Sexual Fantasies are the most (and least) popular? Science finally weighs in!

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Sexual fantasies. We all have them. Yet many people think they're in the minority when it comes to their own fantasy of choice. Enter these scientists who took it upon themselves to catalog the most common sexual fantasies in a population of 1,516 people from Quebec, Canada. Turns out that very few fantasies are truly rare. The rest are primarily ranked as "common" while a few are so common as to be "typical" (e.g., "receiving oral sex"). Curious where you rank on the list? See below for the full fantasy tally.

What Exactly Is an "Unusual" Sexual Fantasy?

Introduction

Although several theories and treatment plans use unusual sexual fantasies (SF) as a way to identify deviancy, they seldom describe how the fantasies referred to were determined to be unusual.

Aim

The main goal of this study was to determine which SF are rare, unusual, common, or typical from a statistical point of view among a relatively large sample of adults recruited from the general population. A secondary goal was to provide a statistical comparison of the nature and intensity of sexual fantasies for men and women. This study also aims at demonstrating with both quantitative and qualitative analyses that certain fantasies often considered to be unusual are common.

Methods

An Internet survey was conducted with 1,516 adults (799 ♀; 717 ♂) who ranked 55 different SF and wrote their own favorite SF. Each SF was rated as statistically rare (2.3% or less), unusual (15.9% or less), common (more than 50%), or typical (more than 84.1% of the sample).

Main Outcome Measures

An extended version of the Wilson's Sex Fantasy Questionnaire with an open question.

Results

Only 2 sexual fantasies were found to be rare for women or men while 9 others were unusual. 30 sexual fantasies were common for one or both genders and only 5 were typical. These results were confirmed with qualitative analyses. Submission and domination themes were not only common for both men and women but they were also significantly related to each other. Moreover, the presence of a single submissive fantasy was a significant predictor of overall scores for all SF in both genders.

Conclusion

Care should be taken before labeling an SF as unusual, let alone deviant. It suggested that the focus should be on the effect of a sexual fantasy rather than its content.

Bonus table from the main text:

Item	Intensity*	Mean intensity \pm S.D.		Presence of fantasy (%)	
		♀	♂	♀	♂
I like to feel romantic emotions during a sexual relationship.	7,897	5.53 \pm 1.8	4.85 \pm 1.9	92.2	88.3
I have fantasized about taking part in fellatio/cunnilingus.	7,580	4.67 \pm 2.5	5.4 \pm 2.1	78.5	87.6
I have fantasized about having sex in an unusual place (e.g., in the office; public toilets).	7,279	4.77 \pm 2.1	4.84 \pm 2.2	81.7	82.3
Atmosphere and location are important in my sexual fantasies.	7,186	5.0 \pm 1.9	4.45 \pm 2.0	86.4	81.2
I have fantasized about having sexual in a romantic location (e.g., on a deserted beach).	7,115	4.98 \pm 2.1	4.37 \pm 2.2	84.9	78.4
I have fantasized about having sex with someone that I know who is not my spouse [. .].	6,820	3.87 \pm 2.6	5.19 \pm 2.2	66.3	83.4
I have fantasized about masturbating my partner.	6,336	3.89 \pm 2.5	4.5 \pm 2.4	68.1	76.4
I have fantasized about being masturbated by my partner.	6,320	4.1 \pm 2.5	4.2 \pm 2.5	71.4	71.7
I have fantasized about having sex with two women.	5,570	2.21 \pm 2.6	5.31 \pm 2.3	36.9	84.5
I have fantasized about watching two women make love.	5,498	2.49 \pm 2.7	4.90 \pm 2.4	42.4	82.1
I have fantasized about having sex with an unknown person.	5,398	2.82 \pm 2.7	4.38 \pm 2.5	48.9	72.5
I have fantasized about making love openly in a public place.	5,291	3.26 \pm 2.6	3.75 \pm 2.5	57.3	66.1
I have fantasized about being dominated sexually.	5,203	3.79 \pm 2.7	3.04 \pm 2.5	64.6	53.3
I have fantasized about giving cunnilingus.	5,037	2.1 \pm 2.6	4.68 \pm 2.5	35.7	78.1
I have fantasized about having sex with a star or a well-known person.	4,969	3.04 \pm 2.7	3.55 \pm 2.6	51.7	61.9
I have fantasized about giving fellatio.	4,500	4.19 \pm 2.5	1.61 \pm 2.6	72.1	26.8
I have fantasized about dominating someone sexually.	4,498	2.66 \pm 2.5	3.3 \pm 2.5	46.7	59.6
I have fantasized about being masturbated by an acquaintance.	4,446	2.15 \pm 2.5	3.8 \pm 2.6	36.8	64.7
I have fantasized about being tied up by someone in order to obtain sexual pleasure.	4,326	3.02 \pm 2.7	2.67 \pm 2.6	52.1	46.2
I have fantasized about masturbating an acquaintance.	4,320	1.93 \pm 2.3	3.88 \pm 2.5	33.1	65.9
I have fantasized about being masturbated by an unknown person.	4,255	1.96 \pm 2.5	3.8 \pm 2.7	33.4	62.5
I have fantasized about having anal sex.	4,122	1.81 \pm 2.4	3.74 \pm 2.8	32.5	64.2
I have fantasized about having sex with more than three people, all women.	4,060	1.24 \pm 2.2	4.28 \pm 2.7	24.7	75.3
I have fantasized about masturbating an unknown person.	3,964	1.65 \pm 2.3	3.69 \pm 2.64	28.0	62.4
I have fantasized about tying someone up in order to obtain sexual pleasure.	3,934	2.38 \pm 2.6	2.84 \pm 2.7	41.7	48.4
I have fantasized about watching someone undress without him or her knowing.	3,922	1.78 \pm 2.3	3.49 \pm 2.6	31.8	63.4
I have fantasized about having interracial sex.	3,759	1.59 \pm 2.4	3.47 \pm 2.6	27.5	61.2
I have fantasized about having sex with a woman with very large breasts.	3,666	1.10 \pm 2.1	3.89 \pm 2.6	18.6	68.6
I have fantasized about ejaculating on my sexual partner. (For men only)	3,526	N/A	4.82 \pm 2.4	N/A	80.4
I have fantasized about having sex with someone much older than me.	3,472	1.92 \pm 2.5	2.71 \pm 2.6	34.2	48.0
I have fantasized about having sex with more than three people, both men and women.	3,357	3.27 \pm 2.7	0.96 \pm 2.1	56.5	15.8
I have fantasized about having sex with two men.	3,297	1.84 \pm 2.5	2.63 \pm 2.7	30.9	45.2
I have fantasized about being photographed or filmed during a sexual relationship.	3,226	1.83 \pm 2.4	2.46 \pm 2.5	31.9	43.9
I have fantasized that my partner ejaculates on me.	3,145	2.39 \pm 2.6	1.73 \pm 2.6	41.3	28.7
I have fantasized about having sex with someone much younger (legally). than me	3,104	1.04 \pm 2.0	3.17 \pm 2.7	18.1	57.0
I have fantasized about petting with a total stranger in a public place (e.g., metro).	2,930	1.13 \pm 2.0	2.83 \pm 2.7	19.8	48.4
I have fantasized about indulging in sexual swinging with a couple that I do not know.	2,911	1.5 \pm 2.2	2.38 \pm 2.5	26.9	39.6
I have fantasized about spanking or whipping someone to obtain sexual pleasure.	2,913	1.34 \pm 2.6	2.57 \pm 2.7	23.8	43.5
I have fantasized about being spanked or whipped to obtain sexual pleasure.	2,881	2.11 \pm 2.5	1.67 \pm 2.2	36.3	28.5
I have fantasized about having homosexual (or gay) sex.	2,702	2.2 \pm 2.7	1.32 \pm 2.4	36.9	20.6
I have fantasized about having a sexual relationship with a woman with very small breasts.	2,697	0.67 \pm 1.6	3.02 \pm 2.5	10.8	52.3
I have fantasized about indulging in sexual swinging with a couple that I know.	2,573	0.99 \pm 2.0	2.48 \pm 2.7	17.5	42.3
I have fantasized about being forced to have sex.	2,569	1.6 \pm 2.4	1.8 \pm 2.4	28.9	30.7
I have fantasized about having sex with a fetish or non-sexual object.	2,316	1.51 \pm 2.3	1.55 \pm 2.2	26.3	27.8
I have fantasized about having sex with a prostitute or a stripper.	2,226	0.76 \pm 1.8	2.25 \pm 2.6	12.5	39.5
I have fantasized about having sex with more than three people, all men.	1,910	1.7 \pm 2.5	0.77 \pm 1.9	28.3	13.1
I have fantasized about showing myself naked or partially naked in a public place.	1,854	1.03 \pm 1.9	1.44 \pm 2.1	16.6	23.2
I have fantasized about watching two men make love.	1,637	1.17 \pm 2.1	0.98 \pm 2.1	19.3	16.2
I have fantasized about sexually abusing a person who is drunk, asleep, or unconscious.	1,498	0.66 \pm 1.6	1.35 \pm 2.1	10.8	22.6
I have fantasized about forcing someone to have sex.	1,448	0.63 \pm 1.5	1.32 \pm 2.1	10.8	22.0
I have fantasized about wearing clothing associated with the opposite sex.	828	0.43 \pm 1.3	0.67 \pm 1.7	6.9	10.0
I have fantasized about my sexual partner urinating on me.	628	0.21 \pm 0.99	0.64 \pm 1.7	3.5	10.0
I have fantasized about urinating on my sexual partner.	584	0.2 \pm 1.0	0.59 \pm 1.6	3.5	8.9
I have fantasized about having sex with an animal.	263	0.18 \pm 0.8	0.16 \pm 0.8	3.0	2.2
I have fantasized about having sex with a child under the age of 12 years.	128	0.05 \pm 0.5	0.12 \pm 0.8	0.8	1.8

*Sum of scores given to each fantasy on the Likert scale (from 0, not at all to 7, completely). N/A = not applicable; S.D. = standard deviation

[†]Defined as a rating between 3 and 7 on the Likert scale

[‡]1 factor ANCOVAs with correction for multiple comparisons for mean scores of intensity all $F_s > 14.0$ and Chi-squares with corrections for multiple comparisons for percentages of presence (all Pearson's values > 12.0 after Yate's continuity correction, and all adjusted residuals > 3.5)

[§]Statistically unusual: one standard deviation on the normal curve or $< 16\%$; statistically abnormal: two standard deviations on the normal curve or $< 2.3\%$