

TALK

COGNITION AND AFFECT IN WOMEN WITH LIFELONG ORGASMIC DIFFICULTIES: AN EVOLUTIONARY AND BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Female orgasmic dysfunction, particularly its lifelong subtype, presents a compelling challenge for human ethology. While cognitive-affective factors like inhibition, automatic thoughts, and emotional states are well-documented in acquired orgasmic difficulties, their role in primary anorgasmia – a persistent, developmentally early-onset condition – remains unexplored from an evolutionary behavioral lens.

This study investigates whether women who have never experienced orgasm exhibit distinct cognitive-emotional profiles compared to those with situational difficulties or typical orgasmic function. Drawing on evolutionary theories of sexual motivation and stress response, we hypothesize that primary anorgasmia reflects heightened sexual inhibition, more frequent threat-related automatic thoughts during arousal, and lower sexual mindfulness – patterns that may reflect evolutionarily adaptive calibrations that have become maladaptive in modern sexual contexts.

Using an online anonymous sample (n=410 women, 18+), we assessed sociodemographics, sexual history, and validated measures including sexual inhibition/excitation scales (SIS/SES-SF), automatic thoughts (SMQ-ATS) and sexual beliefs (BASEF) as potential mismatch indicators; also, affect (PANAS) and mindfulness (FFMQ-S) as modulators of sexual responsiveness. Analyses will compare three groups (lifelong anorgasmia, situational difficulties, no complaints) to test whether primary anorgasmia shows a unique cognitive-affective signature, and how these patterns align with evolutionary models of sexual behavior (e.g., sexual shutdown under stress).

Preliminary results will be presented, with discussion of their implications for evolved female sexual psychology, mismatch hypotheses in sexual functioning, and behavioral interventions informed by ethological approach. This work bridges sexual medicine with human ethology by framing orgasmic capacity as a biosocial phenomenon shaped by ancestral priorities and modern cognitive-affective landscapes.