Paraphilic Interests and Behaviors of the Adult General Population: 
A Provincial Bi-Modal Survey

Christian Joyal, Ph.D.
Julie Carpentier, Ph.D.
University of Quebec at Trois-Rivières

Background. Although paraphilias are defined as atypical (ICD-10) or anomalous (DSM-5) sexual interests, their prevalence in the general population is unknown. We recently surveyed a non-clinical sample of adults about their paraphilic sexual fantasies (Joyal, Cossette, and Lapierre, 2015), but the questionnaire was strictly online, the sample was not representative of the population, and no information was collected about sexual practices. Objective. The main goal of the present study was to conduct a survey of a representative sample of the adult active population of the province of Quebec (Canada). A secondary goal was to compare results obtained via Internet vs. conventional telephone. Method. A contract was given to a professional firm of interviewers to conduct a bi-modal survey with a representative sample of the Quebec adult population (18-65 y.o.) about their practice and interest (intent to practice) for the eight DSM examples of paraphilia (exhibitionism, voyeurism, frotteurism, sadism, masochism, pedophilia, fetishism, and transvestism). General questions regarding sex life were also asked (approximate number of lifetime partners; approximate frequency of current sexual relations with a partner; current frequency of pornography consumption; overall satisfaction with sex life). A total of 1040 persons representative of the Quebec population for age, gender, education, location of residence, income, and religion were successfully interviewed between August 9th and September 8th 2013. Results. When both survey modes and both genders are considered together, nearly half of the sample (45.6%) acknowledged a serious interest for at least one paraphilic behavior, and approximately a third (33.9%) experienced it at least once during their lifetime. Voyeurism was the most common theme (46.3% of interest and 34.5% of experience), followed by fetishism (44.5% and 26.3%, respectively), extended exhibitionism (30.6% and 30.1%, respectively), frotteurism (26.7% and 26.1 %), and masochism (23.8% and 19.2% respectively). Persons with masochism experience were more satisfied with their sex life than person without such experience. Conclusion. The definition of paraphilia as atypical or anomalous behaviors is questioned. The necessity of giving precise examples of paraphilic interests is also questioned, especially for non-criminal acts. The link between psychopathology and certain paraphilia seems dubious.

Goals of the Poster Presentation:
1. Determining the rates of experience and interest for paraphilic behaviors in the adult general population.
2. Questioning the definition of paraphilia (not to be confounded with paraphilic disorders).
3. Questioning the supposed link between psychopathology and masochism.