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Coitus, Masturbation and Sex dream : Prepregnancy and During Pregnancy

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ABSTRACT

Objective To explore the rate and frequency of coitus, masturbation and sex dream prepregnancy and during pregnancy.

Design Retrospective descriptive study.

Setting Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Ramathibodi Hospital.

Subjects One hundred randomly selected normal pregnant women were included between June to December 1992.

Main outcome measures The rate and frequency of coitus, masturbation and sex dream prepregnancy and during pregnancy.

Results During prepregnancy the rate and frequency of coitus, masturbation and sex dream were 100, 54, 28,% and 8.5, 2.8 and 2.4 times per month respectively. During pregnancy in the first trimester these were 82, 28, 19% and 6.0, 1.2 and 1.4 times per month, while in the second trimester 90, 43, 22% and 4.0, 1.7 and 1.2 times per month and in the third trimester 45, 18, 8% and 1.4, 0.6 and 0.8 times per month respectively.

Conclusion The rate and frequency of sexual outlets were markedly reduced and the difference was statistically significant during the third trimester as compared to the prepregnant level.

Key words : coitus, masturbation, sex dream, pregnancy

Many changes of sexual behaviors i.e. coitus, masturbation and sex dream were observed during pregnancy as compared to the prepregnancy period. The influences of the state of pregnancy on these sexual behaviors are not well known. Masters and Johnson found an

increase in sexual tension and performance in the second trimester,[1] but Solberg et al found that for most women coital activity declines in a linear fashion once pregnancy is discovered and also decrease in noncoital behavior, such as masturbation.[2] The difference in findings reflect the highly individual groups of study population that respond to pregnancy. The objective of this study was to explore the rate and frequency of coitus, masturbation and sex dream prior to and during pregnancy among those who delivered at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine, Ramathibodi Hospital as a baseline information about specific sexual behaviors.

Materials and Methods

This retrospective descriptive study was carried out at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Ramathibodi Hospital from June to December 1992. There were 100 randomly selected normal postpartum women who met the following criteria for inclusion in this study : firstly, currently living with husband at least one year before pregnancy. Secondly, there was no psychiatric history or chronic physical disability. Thirdly, voluntary agreement to participate in this study. Each woman was interviewed on the first postpartum day by a female interviewer in a private room. A detailed interview included both open-ended and structured questions. The interview questions consisted of baseline characteristics i.e. her age, husband's age, age at marriage, her education, and gravidity, number and frequency per month of coitus, masturbation and sex dream. For the purpose of analysis, pregnancy was divided into first trimester (1-3 months of pregnancy), second trimester (4-6 months), third trimester (7-9 months), and a baseline of one year prepregnancy.

For statistical analysis, chi-squared with Yates' correction was used to compare coitus, masturbation and sex dream between pre-pregnancy level and during pregnancy (first, second and third trimester). Significance was determined at $P < 0.05$.

Results

The baseline characteristics of one hundred normal postpartum women were, their age ranging form 16 to 42 years at the time of interview, with a mean age of 28.3 (S.D. of 4.2 years). The husband's age ranged from 18 to 43 years, with a mean age of 30.3 (S.D. of 4.8 years). The age at marriage ranged from 15 to 38 years, with a mean age of 23.5 (S.D. of 3.9 years). Distribution of the level of education showed 41% below high school, 24% high school, 22% college and 13% at university level. Obstetric history showed 71% as primigravida, 28% as gravida 2 and 1% as gravida 3.

Prior to pregnancy the rate and frequency of coitus, masturbation and sex dream were 100, 54, 24% and 8.5, 2.8 and 2.4 times per month respectively. During pregnancy in the first trimester there were 82, 28, 19% and 6.0, 1.2 and 1.4 times per month, in the second trimester 90, 43, 22 % and 4.0, 1.7, 1.2 times per month and in the third trimester 45, 18, 8% and 1.4, 0.6, 1.8 times per month respectively (Table 1, 2). The rate of coitus, masturbation and sex dream in the first, second and third trimester showed statistically significant difference when compare to prepregnancy level except masturbation in the second trimester and sex dream in the first and the second trimester (Table 1).

Table 1. Rate of coitus, masturbation and sex dream in each stage of pregnancy and prepregnancy

Type of sexual behaviors	Prepregnancy (%)	First trimester (%)	Second trimester (%)	Third trimester (%)
Coitus	100	82*	90*	45*
Masturbation	54	28*	43	18*
Sex dream	28	19	22	8*

* Statistically significant difference when compared to prepregnancy ($P < 0.0001$)

Table 2. Frequency of coitus, masturbation and sex dream in each stage of pregnancy and prepregnancy per month.

Type of sexual behaviors	Prepregnancy	First trimester	Second trimester	Third trimester
Coitus	8.5	6.0	4.0	1.4
Masturbation	2.8	1.2	1.7	0.6
Sex dream	2.4	1.4	1.2	0.8

Discussion

During pregnancy there are some changes in physical, hormonal and psychological milieu of women but response to these changes varied according to experience in sexual behaviors i.e. coitus, masturbation and sex dream. Many women responded to the changes with a generalized loss of libido. This loss of libido is usually reflected by decreasing sexual behaviors.[3, 4] In this study the finding supported this notion but the decrease was not in a linear fashion as reported by Solberg et al.[2] It was the same as reported by Masters and Johnson[1] and Facilov.[5] This study found that in the second trimester there was an increase in coitus, masturbation and sex dream. The increase in sexual behaviors may probably due to an increase congestion of the pelvic vasculature. In the third trimester, there was markedly reduced in sexual behaviors as similarly reported by Solberg et al.[2] The major reasons for changes may be due to loss of sexual desire, physical discomfort, awkwardness of having sexual activities, fear of injury to baby, sexual desire of the husband[6] and/or recommendation by the physician but this study was not intended to explore these reasons.

In our society, it is possible that details of

coitus, masturbation and sex dream were obscured during interview, however, in this study the rate of respondents' acceptance was very high, all women were very cooperative and responsive so that minimal recall bias would be excluded. In this study informed consent was received from the women themselves, none refused to participate nor discontinued the interview once it began.

In conclusion, besides coitus, pregnant women had masturbation and sex dream as an alternative sexual outlet. The rate and frequency of sexual behaviors were markedly reduced during the third trimester when compared to the prepregnant level.

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