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Rise in Female Sexual Activity at Ovulation: Married vs. College Women

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In a previously published study, it was found that there is a rise in female-initiated sexual activity at ovulation in married women, and that the rise is suppressed by oral contraceptives, as would be predicted if it were estrogen-induced.¹ The present report extends the analysis to college women and considers the importance of a woman's level of self-awareness in the expression of the ovulatory rise.

The data for autosexual activity is similar for married women and for unmarried college students. Autosexual activity includes masturbation, fantasy, dreams, and arousal stimulated by books, films, dancing, etc. Among married women the highest rates of auto sexual behavior for subjects using IUD or diaphragm/condom contraception occur on the 14th day prior to the following menses. In married women using oral contraceptives there is no such peak and the rate of autosexual behavior is no greater than average at that time in the menstrual cycle. Among unmarried college women using diaphragm/condom contraception the highest rate of auto sexual behavior is also on the 14th day before the following menses, While the rate for college women using oral contraceptives is no greater than average on that day.

If one divides the subjects into two groups based simply upon their overall rates of auto sexual behavior, it is found that the ovulatory peak is due completely to data from those subjects with high rates of autosexual behavior. We have called them "sensuous subjects"²: The effect is seen in both married and unmarried college women. It may be related to the level of sexual self-awareness in the subjects.

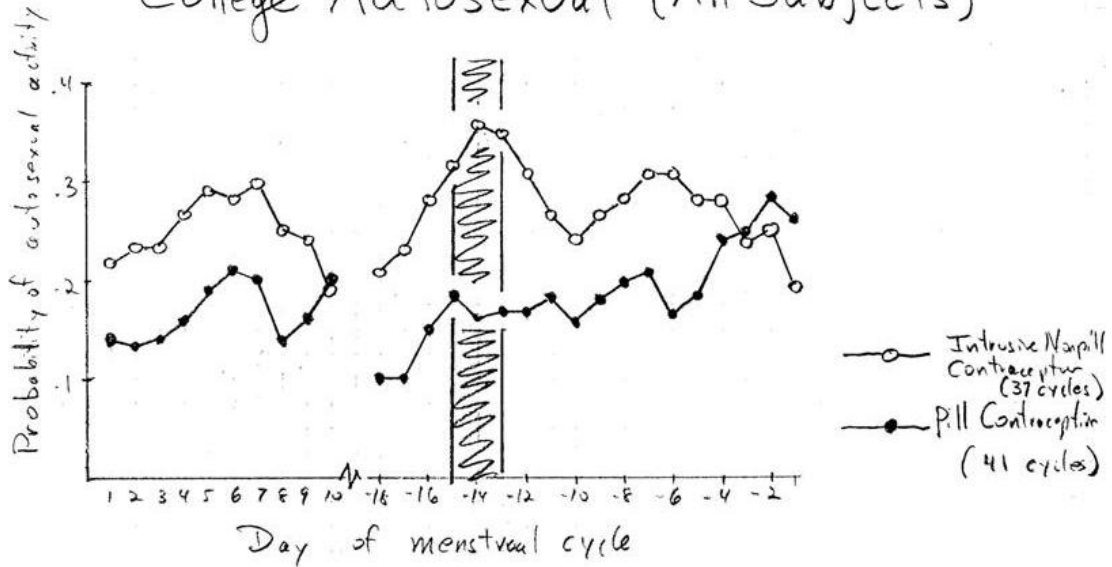
The data for female-initiated heterosexual behavior (intercourse or caressing) are more complex than for autosexual. There is a strong ovulatory peak in female-initiated heterosexual activity in married women with IUD's that is due completely to the contribution from sensuous subjects, i.e. those with high rates of autosexual activity. There are no comparable college students. In married women using diaphragm or condom there is no ovulatory peak in female-initiated heterosexual behavior when all subjects are considered together, but there is a distinct peak when sensuous subjects are considered alone. In college students, however, there is no ovulatory peak for female-initiated heterosexual behavior in either sensuous or non- sensuous subjects. As would be expected, there is no ovulatory peak for either married women or unmarried college women using oral contraceptives.

It may be proposed that fear of pregnancy when using intrusive contraceptives such as the diaphragm or condom reduces or eliminates an ovulatory peak in female-initiated heterosexual activity of non-sensuous married women and all college students.

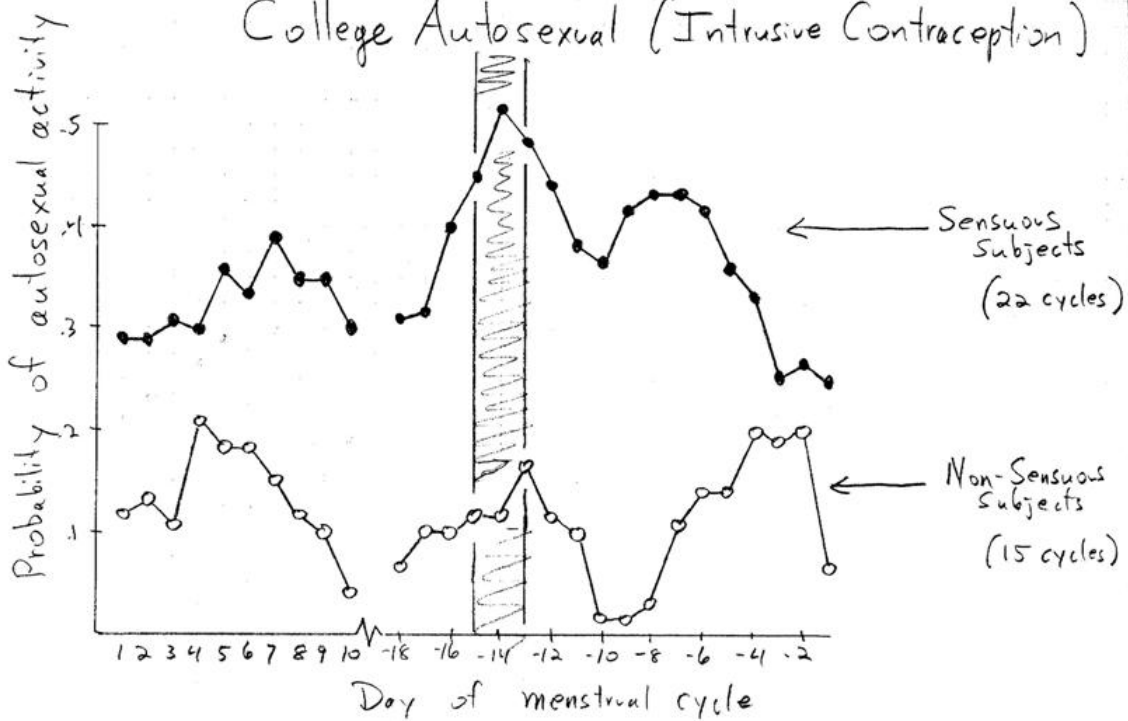
1. DB Adams, AR Gold and AD Burt, N.E. Jnl. Med. 299: 11.45, 1978.

2. AR Gold and DB Adams, Contemp. OB/GYN, 12:147, 1978.

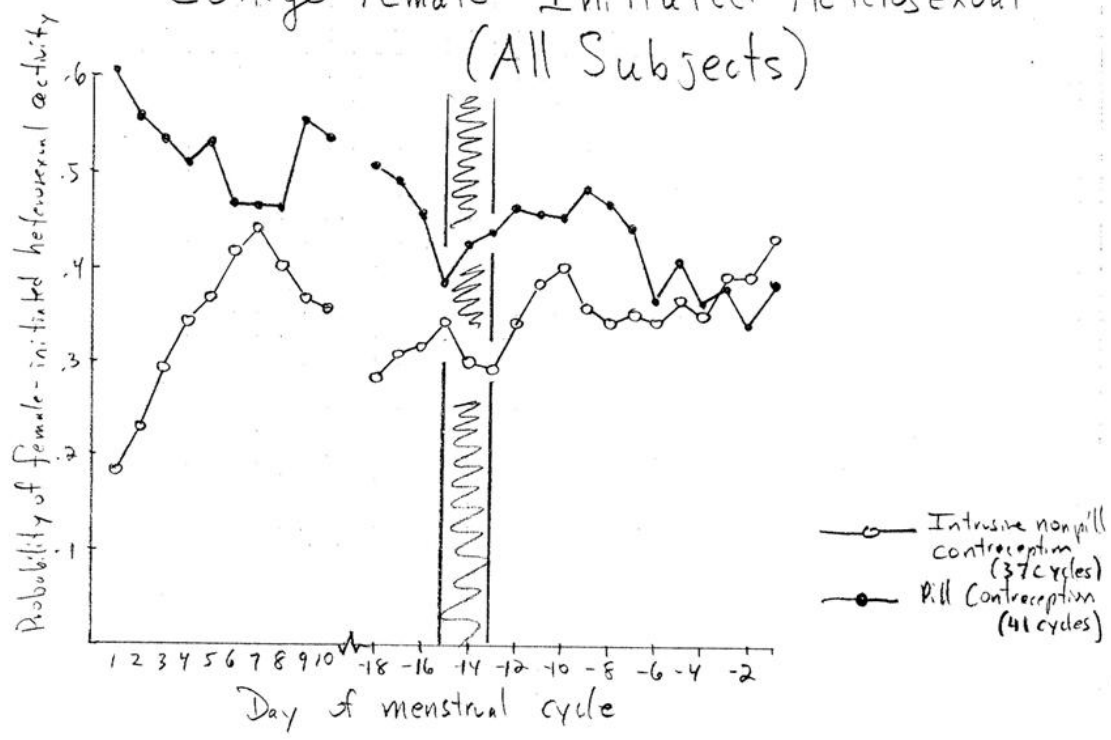
College Autosexual (All Subjects)



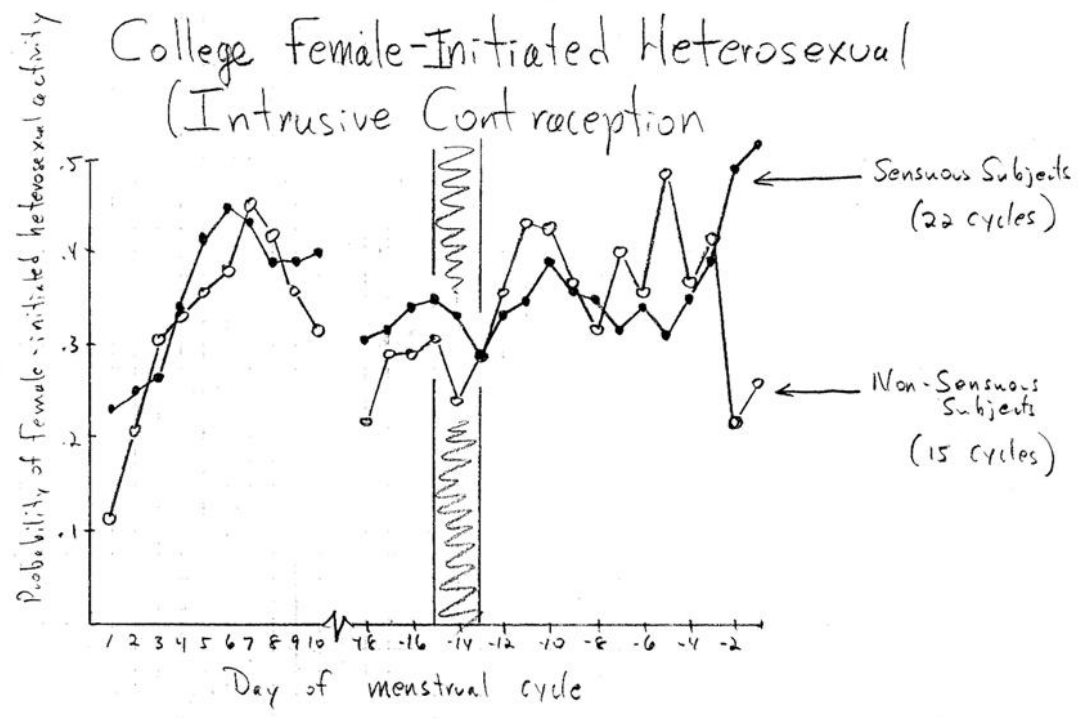
College Autosexual (Intrusive Contraception)

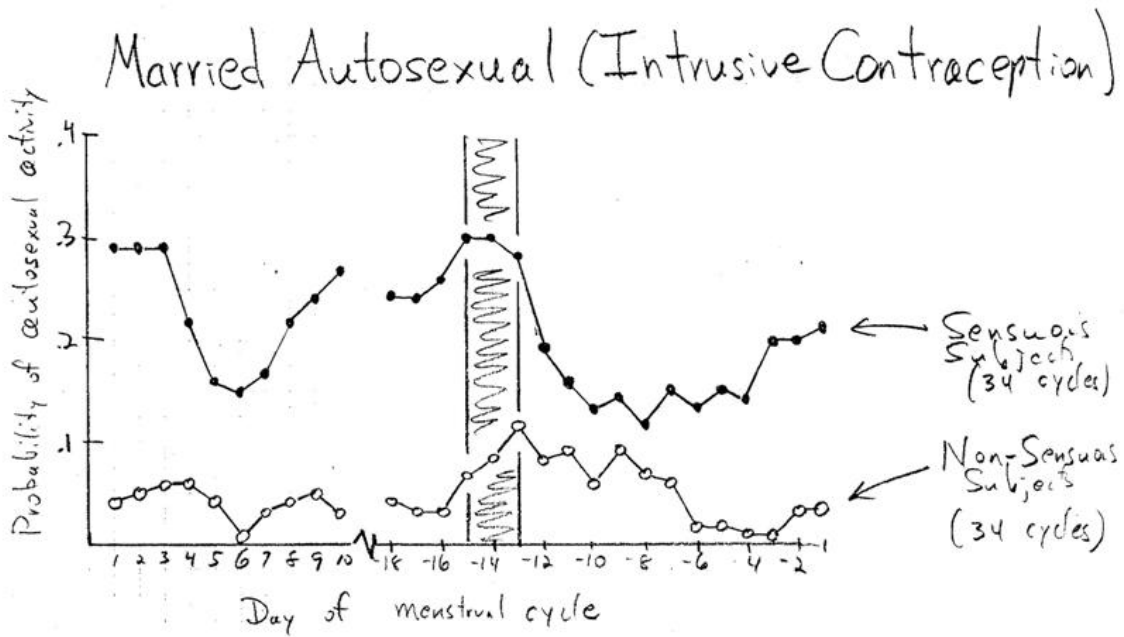
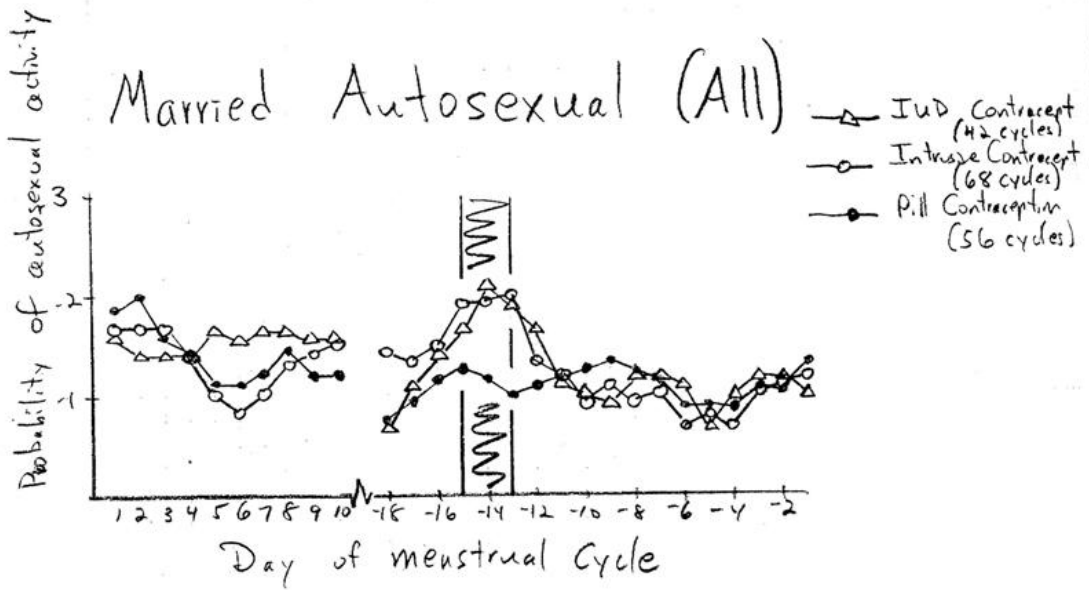


College Female - Initiated Heterosexual (All Subjects)

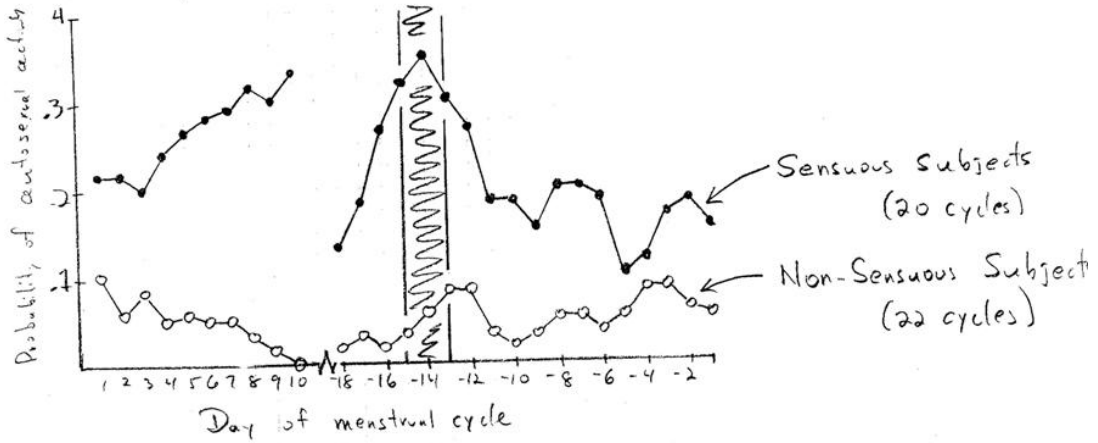


College Female - Initiated Heterosexual (Intrusive Contraception)



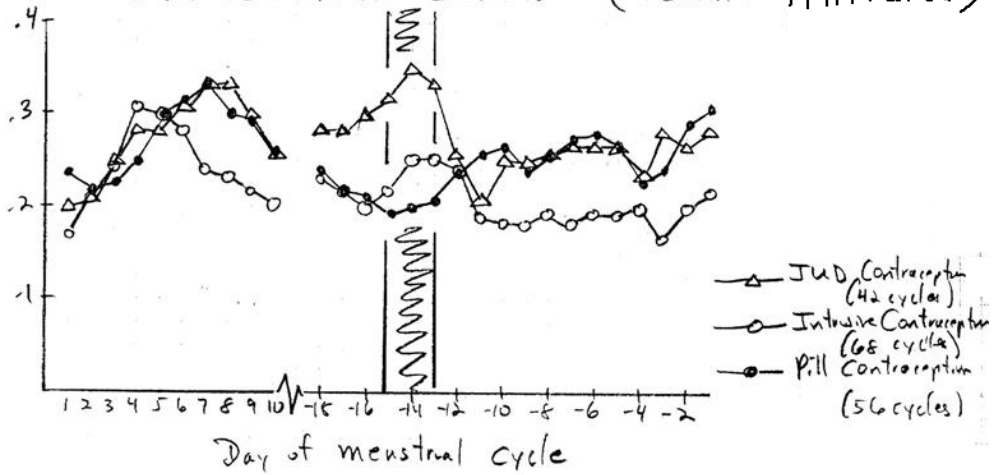


Married Autosexual (IUD Contraception)

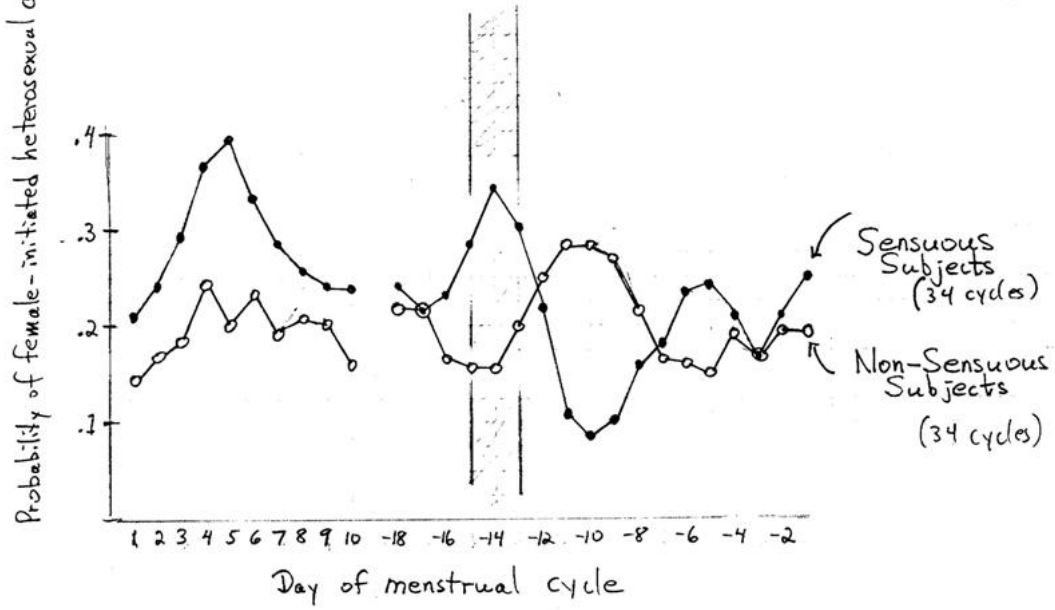


Probability of female-initiated heterosexual activity

Married Heterosexual (Female-Initiated)



Married Heterosexual (Intrusive Contraception)



Married Female-Initiated Heterosexual (IUD Subjects)

