

Why women lose their sex drive

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Physical and psychological factors could explain why many women are losing their sex drive, shows new study.

A lack of sexual desire is one of the most common sexual dysfunctions among women, and one in ten women are distressed by reduced libido.

[A new study](#) [6]has looked into the factors behind this trend among women aged between 19 and 58.

The study suggests that the male sex hormone testosterone may influence women's sexual desire and is further influenced by a wide range of both psychological and social factors.

“There's no simple explanation for why some women lack sexual desire. Testosterone may play a role in women's sexual desire, but we also show that psychological and social factors play a major role,” says lead-author Sarah Wåhlin-Jacobsen, a doctor, and PhD student at the Sexological Clinic at University Hospital of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Desire is nothing more than biology

The new study underlines the fact that sex and desire are about much more than just hormones and biology, says physician and professor of sexology Christian Graugaard from the Sexology Research Centre, University of Aalborg, Denmark.

“Sexuality is a complex affair, where the biological, psychological, and social factors all play a role,” he says.

“And this complexity should of course be reflected in both the evaluation and treatment of women who complain about the lack of desire,” says Graugaard, who was not involved in the study.

The new study is based on questionnaires of 428 pre-menopausal Danish women.

Measured testosterone among women

The women answered a number of questions about their relationships, psychological well-being, and sexual function—including whether or not they were experiencing a low sex drive.

“Low desire is not necessarily a problem for all women. It's only classified as a sexual dysfunction when the woman is distressed by having a low sex drive,” says Wåhlin-Jacobsen.

They compared the women's responses about their libido with the amount of testosterone in their blood.

Testosterone is often described as the male sex hormone, but it is also produced naturally in women's ovaries and adrenal glands, although in smaller quantities than in the male body.

“We know that the sex hormone testosterone is physiologically important for male sexual drive, but the importance of testosterone in women is far from clear,” says Graugaard.

Role of testosterone on women's sexual desire is unclear

Previous studies have indicated that testosterone affects both male and female sexual desire.

When Wåhlin-Jacobsen [published her first results](#) [7] two years ago, the Danish media concluded that “testosterone makes women want to have sex” and “lower testosterone makes women want to have less sex.”

In the previous study, Wåhlin-Jacobsen examined a group of women and discovered that there was a correlation between the level of testosterone and the women’s degree of sexual desire.

But in the new study, Wåhlin-Jacobsen focussed on the women that were distressed by this lack of sexual desire and those that were classified as sexually dysfunctional. This is when the role of testosterone on women’s libido became unclear.

“When we only looked at the group of women who had a lower sex drive and were distressed by it, it didn’t look as though the testosterone level had much significance. Here, the length of the relationship and symptoms of depression played a more significant role,” she says.

Sexual desire depends on your partner

The new study also shows that women’s sex drive may depend on the partner’s ability to deliver between the sheets.

If their partner had sexual problems, such as difficulties getting an erection, the woman was less likely to have problems with her own libido.

“It’s an interesting finding. Women who reported that their partner had sexual problems, had half the risk themselves of experiencing a reduced sex drive,” says Wåhlin-Jacobsen.

“Our hypothesis is that when the partner has sexual problems, then the woman doesn’t feel that her sexual needs are being satisfied. She experiences a kind of pent-up desire and therefore reports a high amount of desire,” she says.

Another explanation may be that the perception of what constitutes a low sex drive is very subjective and depends on how often you and your partner have sex.

The problem is all relative, says Wåhlin-Jacobsen.

“If the partner has a higher sexual drive, then she may find that she has a problem,” she says.

Mental state also plays an important role in women’s sexual desire.

It is well known that depression and other mental illnesses can suppress your sex drive, but minor mental health problems may also play a role in between the sheets, shows the new study.

[Read the full story in Danish on Videnskab.dk](#) [8]

 [The amount of testosterone is just one of the factors that could influence a woman's sex drive, shows new study. \(Photo: Shutterstock\)](#) [9]

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["Androgens and Psychosocial Factors Related to Sexual Dysfunctions in Premenopausal Women", 2017, Journal of Sexual Medicine](#) [6] ["Is there a correlation between androgens and sexual desire in women?" 2015, Journal of Sexual Medicine](#) [7] ["Masturbation Frequency and Sexual Function Domains Are Associated With Serum Reproductive Hormone Levels Across the Menopausal Transition ", 2015, Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1210/jc.2014-1725>](#) [13]

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Catherine Jex

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