# Getting It On Online: Heterosexual Men’s and Women’s Cybersex Experiences

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## Introduction

- **Cybersex** is a subset of online sexual activities that involve a real-time interaction between two people using an online device.
- A **script** is a sequence of behaviours that people learn is acceptable to perform in a specific social context.
- **Sexual scripts** are scripts that are applied to sexual behaviours. These scripts include aspects of cultural expectations regarding appropriate behaviours for men and women in sexual situations, people’s internal desires, and the actual sexual activities that occur.

## Methods

**Background Measures and Demographics**
- Relationship status:  
- Location:  
- Participants were asked about their cybersex experiences within three lifetime cybersex experience questionnaire (LCEQ):
  - Ethnicity:  
  - Language:  

**Participant Recruitment**
- Gender: 119 heterosexual men (29%) and 293 heterosexual women (71%).  
- Age: range 18 to 72,  
- Ethnicity: 71% Caucasian, 1% Aboriginal, 1% African American, 3% Asian, 4% Canadian, 3% multicultural, 5% other  
- Location: 78% Canadian, 25% USA, 6% Other  
- Language: 89% English, 4% French, 1% Spanish, 6% Other  
- Relationship status: 40% married/cohabiting, 33% committed relationship, 12% dating but not committed, 14% not dating but married  
- Average Internet use: 5.6 hours/day on weekdays (SD = 3.14), 3.4 hours/day on weekends (SD = 5.11)

## Results

**Specific Cybersex Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prevalence of Specific Cybersex Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Partner</strong> (n=302)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Watched someone behave sexually</td>
<td>Women (n=21)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaved sexually</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else described sexual fantasies/desires</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Described sexual fantasies/desires</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Described sexual activity back and forth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone described sexual acts they would do to you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Described sexual acts as if they were happening</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Created a story based on sexual fantasies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**
- Chi-square contingency tests yielded no significant gender differences in the specific cybersex activities for primary partner relationships.
- There was a trend towards more men than women reporting the activity: describe sexual acts as if they were happening and create a story based on sexual fantasies.
- There was a trend towards more women than men reporting the activity: behave sexually for another person.

**Known Non-partner** (n=170)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prevalence of Specific Cybersex Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watched someone behave sexually</td>
<td>Women (n=112)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaved sexually</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone else described sexual fantasies/desires</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Created a story based on sexual fantasies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**
- Chi-square contingency tests yielded no significant gender differences in the specific cybersex activities for known non-partner relationships.
- There was a trend towards more men than women reporting the activity: watch someone behave sexually, behave sexually, and describe sexual activity back and forth.
- There was a trend towards more women than men reporting the activity: someone else describe sexual acts to them and create a story based on sexual fantasies.

**Stranger** (n=137)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prevalence of Specific Cybersex Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watched someone behave sexually</td>
<td>Women (n=84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaved sexually</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone else described sexual fantasies/desires</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Described sexual fantasies/desires</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**
- Chi-square contingency tests yielded a significant gender difference in the specific cybersex activities for the stranger partner type.
- Significantly more men than men reported they had someone describe sexual acts performing this activity more frequently than men, p = .01, η² = .21.
- Significantly more women than men reported the activity: described sexual activity back and forth, p = .03, η² = .13.
- There was a trend towards more men reporting the activity: watch someone behave sexually, p = .05, η² = .17.
- There was a trend towards more women reporting the activity: describe sexual acts as if they were happening, p = .09, η² = .05.

## Discussion

### Gender Differences Hypotheses

- The two hypotheses proposed are not supported by the results in this study.
- There were no significant differences between men and women in specific cybersex activities with either enacting or receiving behaviours.

### Partner Type Research Question

- We qualitatively compared the results between each of the partner types to explore the research question.
- The stranger context was the only partner type with significant differences between men’s and women’s specific cybersex activities.

### General Discussion

- We found more similarities than differences between men’s and women’s reported cybersex activities, which suggests that gendered sexual scripts may not be common online.
- This supports the gender similarities hypothesis, which proposes that we place too much emphasis on finding psychological gender differences, when in fact men and women are “similar on most, but not all, psychological variables.”

- We found that who people have cybersex with seems to impact the resulting specific cybersex activities – that is, the type of partner matters.
- It is possible that more women than men reported two specific cybersex activities with a stranger because the anonymity in having cyberexes allows them to feel more comfortable or more willing to perform these specific cybersex activities.
- This adds to Shaughnessy and Byers’ (2014) study, which found that the level of anonymity in partner type can influence the amount and the desired frequency of cybersex engagement.

### Future Studies

1. Discover the extent to which anonymity affects women’s participation in specific cybersex activities.
2. Further explore whether gender sexual scripts exist in the stranger context.
3. Examine whether or not the observed trends of gender differences, and possible gendered sexual scripts, in specific cybersex activities can be replicated in other samples.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Krystelle Shaughnessy and the members of the INSITE Lab for their support and feedback.

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**References**