

Sex drive

the Good

&

the Bad

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The scientific research of sexuality in ancient China was different from that in the West. Instead of paying attention to reproduction and sexual enjoyment, Chinese researchers stressed health.

For thousands of years. Buddhism and Taoism had quarreled about the issue. Buddhism, sponsoring abstinence, claimed the semen was the basis of vital energy and should never be wasted. Any wasting of the semen would be harmful to health. One ancient medical text insisted, "A couple that is healthy is one in which the individuals do not sleep in the same bed. And the individuals who know how to maintain their health will not share a quilt with their mate. There is no medicine that can compare with sleeping alone."

Taoists, on the other hand, sponsored indulgence in sex. Adherents believed in the duality of nature, a balanced struggle between yin (the feminine) and yang (the masculine). The mingling of yin and yang during intercourse brought vitality and long life.

Military scientists also commented on this issue. A military text dating to some 2,000 years ago says, "Sex is a blade that cuts through bone. If the desire is not controlled, sex will destroy you."

Some medical scientists, basing their comments on research into the biological routines of the human body, gradually came to acknowledge the nature of sex and put forward opinions aimed at clarifying the issue amongst laymen. They said:

1. Sex is impossible to ban.

Confucius said, "Food and sexual desire are the natural needs of human beings."

Ge Hong, a medical scientist living more than 1,500 years ago, said, "People cannot live without yin and yang. With no intercourse between the two, people may suffer from spiritual depression. Then illness may occur, and lives will be shorter. "

2. Sexual acts should not be conducted at an early age.

According to an ancient classic. The Book of Rites, the right age for a man to marry is 30, while a woman should marry at 20 years of age.

In ancient times, a male was considered as adult at the age of 20, while a female was seen as a woman at 15. Only adults were allowed to marry.

3. Do not have sex at an old age.

Ancient medical scientists thought that as a man reached an advanced age, his penis withered, and that if he forced himself to have intercourse, he would not be able to ejaculate, thus causing serious internal damage. Furthermore, urination would be difficult and painful.

4. Do not indulge too frequently in sex.

An ancient poem warns, " Young women are charming. But they kill men. Though they do not cut their throats, they dry a man's marrow."

Duke Ping, a ruler of the State of Jin more than 2,000 years ago, frequently indulged in sexual pleasure. Once, Zi Chan, a senior official from the State of Zheng, visited Duke Ping and laid out for the ruler a code of daily conduct. He said a daily routine should include listening to official reports in the morning, visiting local officials and offices in the afternoon, approving state policies in the evening, and having a good rest through the night. However, Duke Ping preferred dallying with the women of the court and eventually fell ill.

The ancient Chinese had a philosophical saying, "Sex is your beginning, and sex will bring your end."

The right attitude toward sex is to know and follow the routine. The Yellow Emperor's Canon of Internal Medicine says, sexual desire and reproduction are biological instincts of human beings. Sexual and reproductive abilities depend on the vigor of the kidney, which develops from weak to strong and then to weak again during the life span of a person.

Generally, the vigor of the female kidney peaks at the age of 14 and is evidenced by menstruation. The vigor of the male kidney peaks at 16 and is evidenced by ejaculation. At this point, sexual maturity is reached, and reproduction can take place. At about 40, the vigor of the human kidney, both male and female, begins to fade, and sexual desire diminishes. Menopause occurs among women at or around the age of 49, while the sperm count of a man diminishes at or around the age of 64 — the vigor of the kidney nearly disappears, and humans lose their reproductive abilities.

The vigor of the kidney, the basis of other viscera, decides the levels of other functions throughout the body. Therefore, TCM suggests it is unnecessary to ban sexual activity, but it is also not wise to overindulge in it. Only by controlling the balance between restraint and overindulgence can one remain healthy.

Sun Simiao said, "Between the ages of 20 and 29, couples should make love once every four days. Between the ages of 30 and 39, they should indulge in sex once every eight days. Between the ages of 40 and 49, they should have intercourse once every 16 days. Between the ages of 50 and 59, once every 20 days is the limit. And after the age of 60 they should abstain from sexual activities, or indulge no more often than once each month."

Modern medicine agrees in a sense with the teachings of Sun. But there are no fixed schedules for sexual intercourse, because each individual has a unique health condition. Frequency depends on effects. For instance, if an individual is tired the day following intercourse, then he is acting too frequently. In general, young couples may have intercourse once or twice a week. Middle-aged couples may copulate about once a week, while older people, due to a waning desire and growing inability, should only have relations once every 15 to 30 days.

Again however, there are exceptions. Middle-aged people who are in very sound health may indulge themselves as if they were young.

A survey of 260 elderly people suggests sexual relations aid in adjusting the emotions of the older couples, giving them confidence in the face of diminishing social roles. One couple, both in their 100s, said they had continued sexual relations well into their 80s. Another couple said they made love once a week although they were in their 90s.

Banning sexual desire is harmful to older people, because the functions of their sex glands will decline, thus they will age more rapidly. Appropriate sexual intercourse postpones not only the atrophy of sexual organs but also the decrepitude of the brain.

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When making love, a couple should pay attention to proper methods and rhythms. Both should be in a happy mood, showing tenderness for the other and achieving orgasm.

Modern medical research suggests that harmonious sexual intercourse depends on whether a couple understands the physiology and psychology of the opposite sex. Man needs only two to six minutes from the beginning of intercourse to orgasm and ejaculation. However, it can take a woman from 10 to 30 minutes to reach orgasm. In addition, the erogenous zones of the male body are concentrated on the penis. Therefore direct intercourse is enough to stimulate an orgasm. However, the erogenous zones of the female body are located at the breasts, back, neck and thighs. Only by prolonged manipulation of these points can a woman be stimulated. Therefore, when making love, a man should control his desire and patiently and tenderly massage his partner's erogenous zones, and the woman should take an active role in ensuring her own satisfaction, allowing both man and woman to reach mutually satisfying climaxes.

Of course, it is important to emphasize health care and hygiene at all stages of sexual activity. Medical scientists throughout history have all believed diseases are closely linked to unclean sexual intercourse. So they have suggested several guidelines.

1. Do not make love when drunk.
2. Do not make love when exhausted.
3. Do not make love when angry.
4. Do not make love when the woman is menstruating, pregnant or nursing, or just after she has given birth.
5. Do not make love when ill.
6. Do not make love when weather changes drastically.
7. Do not make love late at night.
8. Do not make love after a long journey.

Sexual relations are more than just sexual intercourse, but also involve the psychological contentment of the man and woman. Men should pay more attention to their language and emotional exchanges with their partners.

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