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# AGE ASPECTS OF THE MALE SEXUAL ACTIVITY

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In contrast to all the other basic functions the sexual activity is notable for the most strongly pronounced dependencies from the age of a person. This is distinctly marked in the female procreative function which is framed between the ages of menarche and menopause. However, even recreative manifestations in the man are under the influence of the age, and weekly nocturnal emissions (wet dreams), which represent a quite natural substitutional valve mechanism for a 30-year old participant of a geological expedition, could not be considered normal for a 7-year old boy; in the last this sexological phenomenon becomes alarming just because of its age discrepancy, as well as the complete absence of wet dreams in the 22 years young man, who has neither intercourse experience nor masturbation. In order to be able always to dive out from a tangle of such problems, a sexologist should master the natural rules governing the sexual age dynamics.

Nevertheless, until now the sexological literature was not very superabundant in treating this problem. Solitary publications to this effect either deal with extremely limited set of parameters, or are too subjective. So, Kinsey et al., presenting the curve showing the frequency of male sexual outlet in relation to age, derived from several thousands of investigations (3, Fig. 34, p.221), confine it to *total* characteristic, taking only one single parameter, namely the frequency of ejaculations per week, without relating to its sources (masturbation, nocturnal emissions, coitus, petting, etc.). Yet in chapter 23 of the "Report" there are given so-called Clinical tables, made separately for unmarried, married and previously married healthy white U.S. population. The table content and the basic statistical indices characterize the frequency of ejaculations per week in different age groups with periods of 5 years. In these tables the population is divided accord-

ing to social groups, educational level, religious and rural-urban background.

In 1949 another curve of sex activity in man and woman (the Chart of average sex life) was published for the first time by R. L. Dickinson (1. Fig. 125 b). It is rich in details, very important for the practicing sexologist, but, unfortunately, these details are based only on the author's personal impressions, taken from his long clinical experience, and are not supported by the generally required scientific methods of objective verification. Intended for utilization as a visual aid in the pedagogical process, the curve was reproduced in different sexological manuals in many languages as a demonstrative training appliance.

In order to combine the advantages of Kinsey's and Dickinson's curves, but without their shortcomings, the proper objective investigation was carried out at the department of sexopathology of the Moscow Scientific Research Institute of Psychiatry of the Ministry of Health of the RSES. So long as in the process of clinical investigation, in each Case History were fixed more than 10 parameters, which characterized the age dynamics (Table 1), the main problem was to pick up from the studied contingents the individuals, who come closest to the standards of sexual norm. With this aim, from 1035 case records were picked out those whose sexual activity during their whole life was far beyond any doubts as to quality and "quantity" of their sexual manifestations. These were: firstly—case records marked as receiving counsels and advices on sexual matters without any personality or somatic drawbacks, discovered by anamnestic and physical investigations, and secondly—cases of sexual disturbances, acutely caused by some rude external etiologic damaging factor (mostly—traumatic or infectious), where up to the moment of this external disaster there

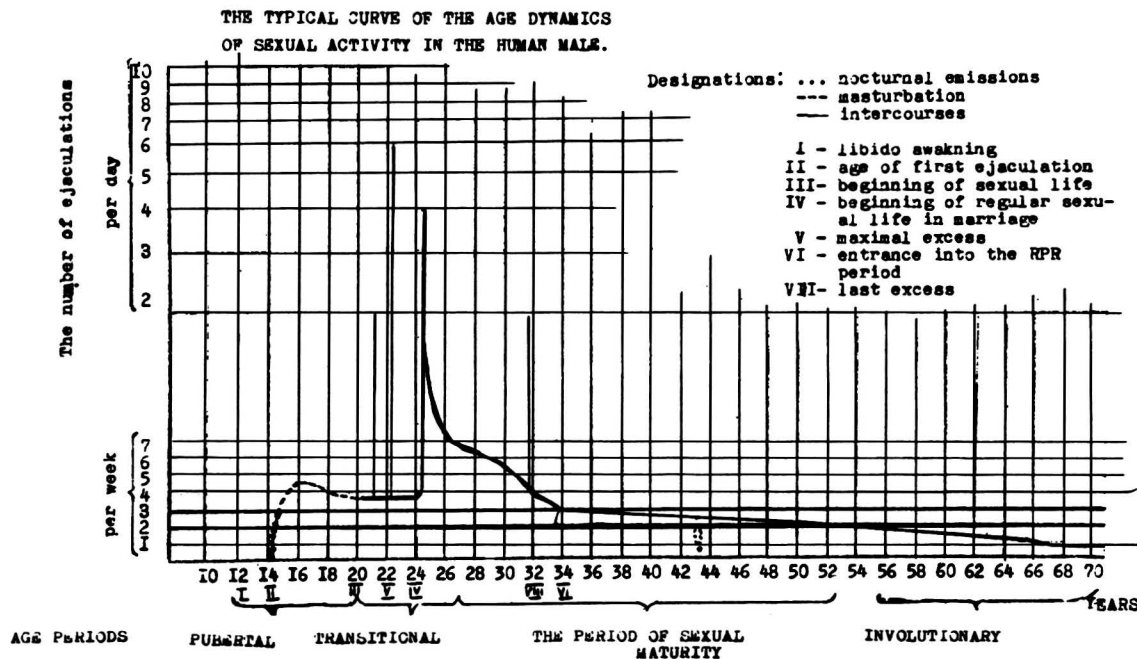
**TABLE 1**  
**THE BASIC PARAMETERS OF THE AGE SEXUAL**  
**MANIFESTATIONS IN THE HUMAN MALE\***

Sexual manifestations	Mean frequency and its mean deviation M ± m	Notes
Libido awakening	12.8 ± 0.24	
First ejaculation	14.2 ± 0.13	During: nocturnal emissions—51%, masturbation—45%, coitus—4%
The beginning of masturbation	14.3 ± 0.10	Never masturbated 26.5%
Duration of masturbation period	5.5 ± 0.37	
Maximal masturbation activity (the frequency of masturbations per week)	4.4 ± 0.46	
The beginning of premarital sexual life	18.9 ± 0.25	
The beginning of regular sexual life in marriage	24.6 ± 0.30	
The first sexual excess	21.1 ± 0.33	
The maximal excess (the age)	22.5 ± 0.32	
The maximal excess (the number of repetitive sexual intercourses per day)	5.9 ± 0.19	
The last excess	31.6 ± 0.64	
The entrance into the RPR period (2-3 intercourses per week)	34.1 ± 0.69	RPR is taken into consideration only in married persons
The duration of the RPR-period	16.6 ± 1.27	

\*If no special reserves are mentioned the mean frequency implies the years of age.

have never occurred any sexual difficulties. Some of these individuals were characterized by moderate manifestations of sexual activity during their life, however they were included in the group on condition of: a) the absence of sexological complaints both from the individual himself and from his wife up to the beginning of the acute sexual damage; b) the absence of objective symptoms of endocrine development retardation.

There were found 147 patients, who answered all mentioned criteria. For each of them was formed the individual curve, showing age dynamic of sexual activity. Afterwards, several parameters were unfolded into variation rows and were subjected to usual statistical computations. The results are given in the Table 1. Thereafter the calculated points were put on the system of co-ordinates, which resulted in the following summarized curve (Fig. 1).



As can be seen from this curve, the entire age diapason of the male sexual manifestations may be divided into 4 periods: pubertal, transitional, the period of mature sexuality and involuntional one.

Every period has its own characteristic features. In the *pubertal period* the libido (sexual drive) wakes up and then the first ejaculations come (the most frequently — during nocturnal emissions), giving the push to the beginning of masturbation (in the majority of cases—73.5%). The main tendency of the pubertal period—the yearning for self-establishment of all sides of personality—also concerns the sexual sphere and in most cases is manifested by the beginning of sexual relations (in the majority of cases—at the age of about 19).

The *transitional period* is characterized by irregular, accidental sexual relations. The alternation of sexual excesses with more or less prolonged sexual abstinences, having place on a background of surrogate (masturbation, daylight ejaculatory pollutions, petting) or vicarious (nocturnal emissions) forms of sexual activity, is the most typical feature of this period. It comes to the termination in the majority of young men with marriage. The transitional period however puts its mark even on the initial period of married life by numerous sexual excesses of honeymoon.

The *period of mature sexuality* is characterized by the establishment of such a sexual activity level, which is closely corresponding to the individual's sexual constitution, to his system of values and to life conditions. The very possibility to have intercourse practically at any moment (in the nowadays society it is yet more usually a male who determines this moment) plays the role of the most decisive psychological mechanism contributing to establishing of such sexual activity level. Although, as might appear for superficial meaning, in permanent availability of coitus lies too short a way to sexual excesses, it is really just this factor which cut out to be a limiting force: in most cases of circumstantial relations of transitional period the young man, when in bed with a sexual partner, first tends to reward himself for the previous period of sexual abstinence, and then strives up to the bounds to utilize the favorable opportunity to create a sort of antidote against uncomfortable abstinent symptoms for the nearest future. During the marriage, quite to the opposite, it is exactly the very fact of the exclusion of prolonged periods of sexual abstinence, which represents the most efficient psychological restraining counterforce.

And, at last, the *involuntional period* is characterized by gradual diminution of sexual activity and abatement of interest to the sexual sphere.

There are certain sexual phenomena, which can be regarded as specific ones for each period (although they can be observed during the other periods as well, but in these cases, if their frequency goes beyond critical level, they become either a manifestation of pathology or of compensatory mechanisms). Such

phenomena are: for the pubertal period—pollutions and masturbation, for the transitional period—excesses, for the period of mature sexuality—*relative physiological rhythm* (RPR) and for the involuntional period—sexual abstinence.

*The relative physiological rhythm of sexual activity (PRP) as a typical phenomenon of mature sexuality period.*

As one can see from the typical curve of the age dynamics of the sexual activity in the human male (Fig. 1), the major part of mature sexual period constitutes the zone, corresponding to 2-3 copulations per week (according to the data in Table 1 it takes more than 16 years). It's also evident that especially this frequency of copulations is the most stable during the whole man's life (for on the stretches of time, corresponding to 3-4, 4-5, 5-6 and 6-7 copulations per week fall no more than 1.5-3 years). One could suppose that similar stability arises from the basic psychophysiological tendency of the mature sexuality period—to establish such level of sexual activity, which most closely fits to the true vital requirements depending on the constitutional and other somato-biological parameters of the individual. This level was designated as the relative physiological rhythm—RPR.

The first premarital sexual relations in most cases are casual, circumstantial, episodic and irregular. This is confirmed by P. Hertoft's investigations.<sup>2</sup> As was shown by the Danish sexologist, in 37.4% the premarital sexual relations are limited to only one single sexual contact, in 20.7% they break off after 2-5 intimal meetings, and even in the cases, when a couple maintains close contacts for a rather long time, their meetings take place relatively rarely (usually once in a week and less).

It is interesting to compare P. Hertoft's data with I. G. Petrenko's ones. I. G. Petrenko collected the data on the sexual behavior of male and female medical students in 21-25-age group. As well as Hertoft did, Petrenko mentioned that "the sexual act for a young man is yet for a long time an accidental occurrence." At the same time Petrenko shows the definite tendency to establishing more lasting, regular and stable relations as far as the age of the persons increases: if among those young men who start sexual life between 12 and 16 years, it becomes regular only in 9%, in the group of those who begin sexual life between 17-20 years—it becomes regular in 27.9%, and in the group, where the sexual life starts after 20 years—in 82.2%.

The close correspondence of the RPR index and the average statistical, physiological and hygienic "norm" is confirmed first of all by the data on a spermiogenesis periodicity.<sup>4</sup> According to Kinsey<sup>3</sup> the predominant means of sexual intercourse frequency are: for the age before 30—3.27 copulations per week, and for the ages after 30—2.34.

However, *conditionality* of the quantitative characteristic of the RPR index is demonstrated by the fact,

that some males (according to the records of All-union Scientific-methodological Centre on Sexological Problems) usually practice only excessive coitus, during many years performing not less than 2 copulations per twenty-four-hours. After having finished the first coitus they become, as a rule, more animated and vivid (if there was light somnolence, it disappears) and very soon after the first ejaculation comes the strongest erection (mostly much more intensive than the first one), all the sexual sensations become more impressive and acute. In such individuals the usual signs of sexual satisfaction (tiredness, indifference to the erotic stimuli, somnolence, etc.) usually appear not earlier

than after 2-3 repetitive intercourses, and all this is typical for them not only during the young age, but along the entire sexual life up to the advanced years.

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