

New study suggests fair division of chores leads to better sex life

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Credit: Lynn Greyling/Public Domain

Looking for more and better sex? If you're a man, you might consider doing the dishes once in a while.

A new study out of the University of Alberta reveals that couples enjoyed more frequent and satisfying sex for both partners when [men](#) made a fair contribution to housework. The same study also found there's no relationship between the amount of housework male partners

completed and the sexual functioning of a couple.

The new study contradicts a widely reported 2012 US study entitled *Egalitarianism, Housework, and Sexual Frequency in Marriage* (Kornrich et al. 2012) that stated that when men perform what is regarded traditionally as female housework, things like doing the dishes, cooking and laundry, the couple had less sex.

"(That study) didn't ring true," said Dr. Matt Johnson, a family ecology professor in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta. "It didn't fit with my intuition and background experiences as a couple's therapist."

Johnson poured over data from a five-year study of 1,338 German couples to see if the amount of housework the male partner did was a predictor of a couple's sex life. He didn't find any connection. He also looked men's perception of whether they made a fair contribution to housework, and how that was related to their sex life.

"In any relationship, the amount of housework is going to mean something different based on the couple's context, based on their own expectations for what each partner should be doing, and their comparison levels of what happens with other couples they know," Johnson explained.

He found that when men perceived their contributions to the division of labour as fair, the couple engaged in more frequent sex and both male and female partners were more satisfied with their [sex life](#).

Johnson acknowledged there are [cultural differences](#) between Germany and the US and explained that Germany tends to have more [traditional gender roles](#) than the US. And men, on average, tend to do less housework there, based on some studies, than in North America.

"There are cultural differences but if the logic held from the prior studies, we would have expected to have a more pronounced negative impact of [housework](#) on sexuality in Germany because it's a bit more traditional. But that wasn't the case at all," said Johnson.

He added that the findings are important for [couples](#) seeking to maintain sexual intimacy while balancing the demands of daily life.

"Rather than avoiding chores in the hopes of having more [sex](#), as prior research would imply, men are likely to experience more frequent and satisfying passion for both partners between the sheets when they simply do their fair share."

More information: The paper, entitled Skip the Dishes? Not so Fast! Sex and Housework Revisited, has been published in online first format and will appear in print in a future issue of the *Journal of Family Psychology*: psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2015-46448-001/

Provided by University of Alberta

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