

Men who identify as feminists are having more—and more varied—sex

April 5 2021, by Max Stick



Credit: Armin Rimoldi from Pexels

In 2015, Justin Trudeau surprised many by [claiming a feminist identity](#). Numerous [celebrities and entertainers](#) have recently asserted themselves as feminists, and [some have even chastised those who reject feminism](#).

While more and more men from across social divides have [begun supporting feminist values and asserting a feminist identity](#), many are scrutinized for talking the talk but not walking the walk.

Feminism is predicated on support for [gender equality](#). Men may associate with feminism to [help distance themselves from outdated gender roles](#), bringing them in line with current sociopolitical trends.

In a recent article I co-authored with sociologist [Tina Fetner](#), we looked at whether [feminist men care about equality in the bedroom, the most intimate environment where the gender oppression may play out](#).

Specifically, we were interested in how the sex lives of feminist men differed from non-feminist men: Did their personal politics mean they acted differently when having sex with women?

Beyond simply claiming a progressive [identity](#), what sort of behaviors accompany a feminist identity? Do feminist men actually live up to their identity in various aspects of their lives?

Surveying men

Seeking answers to these questions, we analyzed a sub-sample of self-identifying heterosexual men from a larger survey on sex and sexuality in Canada. [The Sex in Canada survey](#) is a nationally representative survey of Canadian adults. It asks questions not only about sexuality, but also about personal sexual behaviors, sexual history and political and social values.

Of all the straight Canadian men surveyed, we found that only about 22 percent of men actually identified as feminist. Most men, around 60 percent, said they were not feminists, and about 18 percent were "not sure." And, as with feminist women in [previous studies](#), feminist men were more likely to have higher levels of education.

Feminism = more sex

Taking a look at how recently men engage in certain sex acts, we found feminist men had more sex than non-feminist men. Specifically, feminist men reported having intercourse and both performing and receiving [oral sex](#) with women partners more recently than non-feminist men.

While feminist men reported giving oral sex to their partners more recently, they also engaged in intercourse and received oral sex more recently than non-feminist men, suggesting they do not sacrifice their own pleasure. Instead, we believe feminist men continue to benefit from traditional approaches to sex that emphasize sex acts pleasurable for men.

Taking a deeper look at this, we examined men's most recent sexual encounter to further test if intimate encounters differed between groups. Feminist men, and those who said they were unsure of their feminist stance, were more likely than non-feminists to have intercourse and engage in breast touching or nipple stimulation.

Feminist men and even those who were not sure, reported giving oral sex to their female partners at higher rates than non-feminists. This is critical as research consistently finds that clitoral stimulation through [oral sex is an important and pleasurable act that brings women to orgasm](#).

Gender equality in private and public

All too frequently we see men say one thing and do another; we tend to focus primarily on public attitudes and behaviors. We have little knowledge of what goes on beyond closed doors.

Although men who claim a feminist identity may not be more equitable

in their everyday public interactions with women, our findings suggest that identifying as a feminist matters in private settings.

In private sexual encounters, feminist men and those ambivalent toward feminism, perform sexual behaviors targeting women's pleasure at a higher rate than those disavowing [feminism](#), suggesting these men may care about their partners as expressed through the performance of equality in sexual pleasure.

Many men claiming a feminist identity also declare support for gender equality. Our results indicate this purported support coincides with a commitment to gender equality in sexual interaction. Feminist men help transcend sexual (interaction) inequality by bridging the gender gap in orgasms.

While this is a good sign, we encourage further conversation and research addressing inequality in private heterosexual relations.

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