

People who consider olfaction important and actively sniff other's odors have stronger sexual desire

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A trio of researchers, two from Southern Medical University, in China, and the third from Technische Universität Dresden in Germany, has found a connection between people who place high importance on olfaction and body odor sniffing and a strong sexual desire. In their paper published in the journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Zi-lin Li,

Thomas Hummel and Lai-quan Zou, describe questionnaires they gave to three different groups of college students regarding the role of olfaction in their lives and what they learned from the answers they received.

Prior research has suggested that body odor plays a role in human sexuality, both in the odors that can be determined simply by sniffing and through pheromones. But as the research trio noted, little research has focused on the level of importance people place on body odors, particularly as they relate to sexual desire. To learn more, they sent out questionnaires to Chinese college students asking how much they valued body [odor](#) as a sexual signal and other sexually oriented questions. They received back 1,903 completed forms.

The researchers found that those students who reported giving high value to [olfaction](#) or who actively sniffed other people also reported having a stronger sexual desire than others who responded. Intrigued by their findings, the researchers then sent out similar [questionnaires](#) to students in India and the U.S. They received back 313 completed forms from India and 249 from the U.S. In analyzing the second sets of questionnaire data, they found the same association—students who highly valued olfaction or who tended to sniff others, also reported having a stronger than average sexual desire.

The researchers also found that women tended to place more emphasis on smell than men, and as expected reported lower levels of sexual desire in general. There were also some [cultural differences](#)—men in India reported stronger sexual desire than those in China and the U.S., and they also reported placing more importance on olfaction.

The researchers suggest their work confirms that their initial suspicions were correct—people who place a high value on what others smell like, and who go around actively sniffing them (most generally those of the opposite gender), tend to have higher [sexual desire](#).

More information: Zi-lin Li et al, Sniffing of Body Odors and Individual Significance of Olfaction Are Associated with Sexual Desire: A Cross-Cultural Study in China, India, and the USA, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* (2022). [DOI: 10.1007/s10508-022-02398-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-022-02398-1)

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