

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CLINICAL SEXOLOGISTS

A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY ON MALE AND FEMALE  
ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES RELATED TO THE CLITORIS

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BY  
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## DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This dissertation, submitted by Claudia E. Smith and John G. Smith, has been read and approved by three faculty members of the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists.

The final copies have been examined by the Dissertation Committee and the signatures, which appear here, verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given the final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## DEDICATION

To women everywhere who find their greatest delight when their men *descend*, and to the men who relish in the joy of *going down*.

As the poet so beautifully puts it:

*“Let me take my tongue  
from your mouth,  
easing it out  
over the red rolling  
waves of your lip.  
Then let me  
give it back to you,  
gliding it  
down...  
into the salty  
wet canyon  
between your  
stiffening peaks,  
down...  
across the tight  
trembling plain  
that crests and falls  
with quickening pace,  
down...  
to the swelling spring  
that calls  
for its caress.”*

(‘Descending’ by David Meuel)

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## VITA

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## ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to gather information on the attitudes and practices of males and females towards the clitoris across four cultural groups, namely Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics, and people from the Caribbean.

When inquiry is made into the sexual attitudes and practices across cultures, it is not done just for casual curiosity, but to provide a body of information which will inform the practice of sexuality counseling, education, and therapy.

The role of the clitoris in female sexual pleasure has been the subject of countless books and articles in recent times. Considering the claim that the clitoris exists only to help a woman experience the ecstasy of sexual pleasure, questions about the attitudes and practice of males and females related to this notoriously unique part of the female anatomy, are appropriate and necessary.

The fact that the study is a cross-cultural one makes it even more valuable since we are becoming more and more a global village.

Two hundred and forty persons representing all four cultural groups, participated in this study done through two separate questionnaires, one which sought data on female attitudes and practices, and another which sought data on male attitudes and practices.

Although the results of the study highlights the influence of culture on both male and female attitudes and practices, specifically among the non-Caucasian groups, it also suggests that males and females across all four cultural groups generally share a positive attitude towards sexual activities involving the clitoris, and confirms that an overwhelming majority of women do require clitoral stimulation in order to enjoy full sexual pleasure. The study also puts a spotlight on the work that is needed to confront

and change the negative aspects of sexual attitudes and practices. Further studies should provide more in-depth research in this fascinating field of cross-cultural sexual behaviors.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background

Having lived in the Caribbean from birth through our early twenties, and then for an eight year period much later, we know from social commentaries in reggae music and from the literature on Caribbean sexuality that Caribbean men have a reputation of focusing more on vaginal thrusting in their sexual engagements. From these same sources we learn too that a significantly large number of Caribbean women report that they would love to have more clitoral stimulation but find it impossible to receive this on account of the unwillingness of their partners to engage in practices other than vaginal intercourse.

What we did not know is whether or not the reputation and claims about the practices and attitudes of Caribbean men and women in relation to the clitoris had any similarity with the practices and attitudes of men and women of Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, or of other ethnic groups in North America.

### Purpose of the Study

The study of sexual behavior is of fundamental importance in the field of sexology. It provides vital data on what sexual practices people are engaged in, when, where, and how frequently. It also provides a body of information which becomes resource material for clinicians in their work with individuals and couples. However, when such enquiries focus on cross cultural sexual practices, the findings can be particularly beneficial to the field of sexology. For as cross-cultural researchers Williams and Best (1990) observed, all cross-cultural behavioral science addresses the general question: How much do human behaviors vary across cultures?

Unlike the North American scene where a comprehensive resource such as Sher Hite's study on male and female behavior is available for perusal of male and female sexual attitudes and practices, similar resources are hard to find either in Puerto Rico or the English speaking Caribbean. None of the English speaking countries for instance, are included in Francoeur's "International Encyclopedia of Sexuality," and although Puerto Rico is, the specifics of sexual attitudes and practices are not fully expounded. We were therefore curious to learn how men and women across other cultures felt about the clitoris and what their practices involving the clitoris were like. We wanted to know for instance: How much is the function of the clitoris valued by men and women in their sexual activities? What particular practices of clitoral stimulation bring women most pleasure? We considered such questions important, not just because of our familiarity with the Caribbean perspectives but because our present professional work context is North America, and here we interact with people of Caribbean, Hispanic, African American and Caucasian heritages.

### Hypotheses

We approached this study with a few hypotheses. One was that African-American, Caribbean, and Hispanic males would show overwhelming preference for vaginal intercourse compared to Caucasian males, because of the 'macho' image perpetuated in these cultures, and also because of a widely held view that any sexual practice inconsistent with the 'normal' practice of vaginal intercourse would be considered to be 'freaky' or 'weird;' something tethering on the edge of 'abnormal' and 'unmanly' behavior.

Another expectation we had entering this study was that Caucasian male and female respondents would be more open, and embracing of clitoral stimulation in their attitudes and practices, compared to Hispanic, Caribbean, and African-American respondents. We believed this would be so, based on the influence of the media and more exposure to sexuality education in North America compared to the other cultures. Our rationale for not including African Americans in this grouping was based on our belief that many African-American males and females continue to be greatly influenced by tradition and religion in their sexual practices and attitudes.

#### Limitations of the study

This study of male and female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris explored a major issue of sexual behavior. It is to be noted though that there are limitations to an undertaking of this nature. First, the sample size was small and so general conclusions about the topic cannot be definitively established. Second, the questionnaires were designed to gather limited information. A more elaborate study with follow-up questions would thus be able to ascertain information which this study did not do. Third, because participation in the study was voluntary and partially anonymous, we can only hope that respondents were truthful in their identity and responses.

#### Outcomes

From the research we undertook, we have identified the common features in attitudes and practices in relation to the clitoris among men and women of four cultural groups, and have given some explanation of what accounts for these commonalities.

We have also identified the distinctive features in attitudes and practices in relation to the clitoris among men and women of the same cultural groups, and have provided some reasons for these differences. These findings are based on the responses of 240 female and male respondents to a survey on male and female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### *The clitoris – socio-historical perspectives and anatomical overview*

The clitoris has been referred to in terms both endearing and distasteful, and has been assigned names such as - the little hill, pea, magic button, jewel cookie, the pearl, nubbin trigger, spark plug, clit, love button, bean, pea in a pod, kernel, happy button, hooked monk, knob, and sweet spot. The wide range of names used to describe the clitoris is perhaps an indication that it means different things to different people, or that there is still some mystery surrounding this part of the female sexual anatomy that has been described as a complex, fascinating and powerful organ (Hutcherson, 2002).

With regards to the origin of the name, Angier (1999) suggests that the word clitoris is a derivation of the verb *kleitoriazein*, meaning to titillate lasciviously, to seek pleasure. Chalker (2002) adds that the word clitoris has its origin in the Greek word *kleitoris*, meaning female genitals. Hutcherson (2002) states that clitoris is derived from the Greek word *kleitoris* meaning divine and goddess like. Rasmussen (2010) notes that possible etymological candidates for clitoris are a Greek word meaning “key”, “latch”, “hook”; a Greek verb meaning “to touch or titillate lasciviously”, “to tickle” (one German synonym for the clitoris is der Kitzler, “the tickler”) although this word is more derived from “clitoris”; and a Greek word meaning “side of a hill”, from the same root as “climax.”

Perrottet (2008) notes that the word clitoris first appeared in English in 1615, but also points out that the study of the clitoris was on-going long before the assignment of an English word. This view is supported by Stringer (2010) who notes that the clitoris had been known to the Greeks, Persians and Arabic writers on medicine and surgery long

before a name was universally accepted. For example the Romans named the clitoris, *landica*, Albucasis, an Arabic medical authority named it *tentigo* (*tension*), Hippocrates referred to it as *colum ella* (*little pillar*), and Avicenna called it the *albatra* or *virga* (*rod*) (Rasmussen, 2010).

One name mentioned as the discoverer of the clitoris is that of Gabrielo Fallopio, the person who was the first to identify the fallopian tubes. But Perrottet (2008) discounts this, arguing that Fallopio's study and finding were not published until 1561. For this reason Perrottet (2008), Stringer (2010), and Hall (2010), are among the researchers who credit the Italian anatomist Matteo Realdo Colombo as the first to describe the structure of the clitoris in 1559. Colombo referred to the clitoris as *sedes libidinis* (seat of lust) and *amoris dulcedo* (sweetness of love).

Across cultures, the clitoris has been perceived in various ways. Some like the Turks have had a fascination with the clitoris and went as far as to establish three distinct categories – small clitorises called “sesame,” medium clitorises called “lentils,” and large clitorises called “nohut” (Farhi, 2005). However, at the other extreme of fascination, we find the fear and suspicion which has demonized the clitoris and led over hundreds of years to the practice of clitoridectomy, chiefly in the countries of Africa, where it is suggested that an estimated 60,000,000 - 90,000,000 women have been circumcised (Lightfoot-Klein, 1991).

From an academic standpoint, the writings of Sigmund Freud have also led to confusion about the clitoris. According to Masters, Johnson and Kolodny (1988), Freud observed that there were two types of orgasm, vaginal and clitoral. The latter he defined as originating from masturbation or non-coital acts, and contended that this was evidence

of psychological immaturity, since the clitoris was the center of infantile sexuality in the female. For Freud, vaginal orgasms, those derived from coitus were authentic and mature, since they demonstrated that normal psychosexual development was complete. An even stronger view was Freud's notion that the elimination of clitoral sexuality is a necessary precondition for the development of femininity. This view resulted in many women being labeled as neurotic and pushed into psychoanalysis (Masters, Johnson, Kolodny, 1986). Freudian analyst Marie Bonaparte had her own opinion about the clitoris describing it as phallus, atrophied in comparison to the penis ... a rudimentary organ never destined to achieve the degree of activity to which the penis can lay claim (Winston, 2010).

In terms of location, the clitoris is to be found above the vaginal opening where the top of the inner lips meet beneath a fold of skin (Bechtel, 1998) or as (Fulbright (2011) puts it, cradled between the labia and extending between two to four centimeters on the outside of the body, and continuing internally back into the reproductive system (See Appendix 2). The clitoris is easily found by touch, for as the finger moves from the vaginal opening up toward the pubic hair, the smooth, hairless clitoris (See Appendix 1) will be directly in its path. It is also easily found by sight, as it can be clearly seen by a woman if she places a mirror between her legs and spreads apart the fleshier, hairy labia majora or outer lips as they are commonly called.

By way of appearance, the clitoris presents as a button-like lump near the anterior junction. This protrusion or the tip of the clitoris or "glans," which means a small round mass or body and tissue than can swell or harden, begins at the top in a wishbone shape and extends down around the vagina into surrounding hard tissue (Hutchins, 2008). The clitoris varies in size among women, giving credence to the fact that female genitals are

variations on the same theme, and that the genitals of no two women look exactly the same (Birch, 2001). Stewart (2002) argues that neither height nor weight influences the size of the clitoris but points out that women who have had children tend to have larger measurements, and that the glans will also enlarge if a woman takes excessive amounts of testosterone by mouth, by injection, or by topical application. Joannides (2012) notes that the size of the tip or glans of the clitoris range greatly in women; popping out to shake your hand in some, and being hardly visible in others, or as Sommer da Costa (2004) puts it, clitorises come in various shapes and lengths, some well hidden and others rather conspicuous. Blakemore (2001) agrees that in some women the clitoris may be quite noticeable while in others barely visible, but he also notes that the size of the clitoris has been assumed among some to relate to the sexual activity of the female, particularly through masturbation or indulgence in lesbian practices.

In reference to its structure, Australian urologist, Dr. Helen O'Connell noted that the clitoris is shaped more like a mountain than a hill, and rivals the penis in size (Mascall, 2006). However, Keesling (2005) has contradicted O'Connell's observation claiming that the clitoris is much smaller than the penis. Bechtel (1996) contends that the clitoris and penis are formed from the same embryonic tissue. Keesling (2005) claims that although much smaller than the penis, the clitoris contains erectile tissue and has a head and a shaft as well.

There are variations to the anatomical structure of the clitoris. One view is that it consists of three parts – glans, shaft and crura. This is the position of Zeldes (2011) who notes that many people confuse the glans of the clitoris, located under the skin where the inner lips join, with the entire clitoris, as it is the spot most sensitive to sexual

stimulation. But according to Cardell (2011), the clitoris consists of four parts: the head (glans), the only visible part of the clitoris; the clitoral hood, or the prepuce, a protective fold of tissue; the shaft, located below the clitoral head and extends from the head to beneath the hood; the crura, two small wings located below the shaft and invisible to the eye. Rankin(2010) notes that much of the clitoris is buried where it can't be seen, and that the clitoral hood, the flap of tissue which partially covers the glans of the clitoris, leaves only a very small portion of the clitoris exposed. This portion is the nerve-laden nub of tissue at the very top of the female genitals, just below the mons pubis.

The anatomical description by Bechtel (1996) that the external tip of the clitoris, or glans, connects to a pyramid-shaped mass of erectile tissues, is based on his subscription to the work of Dr. Helen O'Connell, who outlined her findings after a study of the clitoris using photography (See Appendix 3) to capture 3D structures of the clitoris with (MRI) magnetic resonance images and dissection of cadavers. Some writers have argued though, that there was research prior to O'Connell which opened up new thinking on the function of the clitoris. One name mentioned in this regard is that of Kermit Krantz who discovered in the 1950's the many wonders of the clitoris region while dissecting women's corpses (Salmansohn, 2001).

O'Connell posited that the "body" of the clitoris which connects to the glans, is about as big as the first joint of the thumb. It has two arms up to 9 centimeters long that flare backwards into the body, lying just a few millimeters from the ends of the muscles that run up the inside of the thigh. The clitoris surrounds the urethra on three sides, while the fourth is embedded in the front wall of the vagina (Williamson 1998). According to Bechtel (1996) the glans are mounted atop a shaft like the shaft of a penis. The shaft has

two corpora cavernosa- a pair of spongy cylinders lying side by side. Angier (2002) posits that the clitoris is usually spoken of as the homologue of the penis, arising from the same region of the fetal genital ridge as the shaft of the penis and is comprised of a bundle of 8000 nerve fibres, a higher concentration of nerve fibres than is found anywhere else on the body, including the finger tips and tongue, and is twice the number in the penis. In addition, it has been observed that there are more than 15,000 nerve endings throughout the pelvic area that the clitoris interacts with (Silverberg, 2011).

Whether the credit for the insight on the anatomical structure of the clitoris goes to O'Connell or to some earlier researcher, it is certain that the clitoris can never again be regarded as just a "little hill" or "pea." As Williamson (1998) contends, the clitoris is no "little hill" but in fact extends deep into the body with a total size at least twice as large as most anatomy text show, and tens of times larger than the average person realizes. Even though it is considered to be a complex organ (Hutcherson, 2002), there is no doubt that this organ once overlooked and under-rated, is now widely recognized as uniquely created for female sexual pleasure.

### ***The clitoris as the primary center of female sexual pleasure***

The most widely addressed issue in the literature focusing on the role and function of the clitoris, is the promotion of the clitoris as the primary center of female sexual pleasure. Even before we seek to understand how the clitoris factors in female sexual pleasure, we must first give consideration to what exactly constitutes female pleasure. Female sexual pleasure is achieved through a process which begins with sexual arousal, is sustained through some physical sexual activity, and can culminate in an orgasm. From

one of their research assignments on women's description of their feelings before, during and after an orgasm, Meston and Buss (2009) lists the following adjectives used by women to describe the pleasure they received through arousal and orgasm – incredible, powerful, fulfilling, satisfying, intense, exciting, euphoric, pleasurable, elated, rapturous, loving, tender, close, passionate, unifying, relaxing, soothing, peaceful, ecstatic, and wild.

While men would be able to identify with most if not all of the words used by women to describe their own pleasure from arousal and orgasm, it is noted that there is a distinct difference in the process through which male and females attain arousal and achieve orgasm. In pinpointing this difference, Bechtel (1996) notes that men are genitally aroused, whereas women are generally aroused, and adds that while a man's orgasm can be attained quickly through the stroking of the penis, a woman's orgasm is far more complicated, since it is slower and gentler, and requires greater emotional buy-in and increased physical stimulation. Kerner (2004) supports this position as he points out that men are designed for efficiency, are aroused easily and orgasm quickly, in contrast to female arousal and orgasm which is complicated and requires persistent stimulation, concentration, and relaxation, unlike anything a man requires.

In addressing the subject of pleasure to her female audience, Hutcherson (2006) asserts that women deserve, and should feel entitled to sexual pleasure; the full spectrum of feelings from sweet, simple satisfaction to utter indescribable bliss. She cautions though, that how this bliss is achieved in sexual activity varies among women since pleasure is different, completely, and mysteriously for each woman. In supporting this view, Goddard and Brungardt (2000) note that all orgasms are not created equally, and point out that female orgasms can seem like a little bunch of localized muscle spasms or

feel like they might send a woman through the roof; or as Allison (2001) suggests, can present as mild as a peaceful sigh or be extremely intense, making a woman lose track of her surroundings. The stimulation of the clitoris and the part this plays in a woman achieving orgasm, (See Appendix 4) has also been described as the pleasurable, rapid release from vasocongestive and myotonic pleasure; a kind of anti-act after the action of foreplay, a letting go, a surrender and return to the normal; an awful joy, full of pleasure and tension in almost equal measure; a cool bath bathing the burn (Tisdale, 1994).

Yet the issue of the precise area of stimulation which is responsible for producing the pleasure that can culminate in orgasm for a woman is still under discussion. Some staunchly advocate that it is vaginal intercourse with its focus on penile thrusting which heightens arousal and leads to orgasm. Others have described the place of other parts of the body in the process of arousal and orgasm. Yet the majority of those who have written on the subject hold the view that because of its structure and as a result of its responsiveness to stimulation, it is the clitoris which is the key agent in female sexual pleasure.

So how does the clitoris factor into female arousal and orgasm? According to Fulbright (2007) the clitoris is considered one of the prized hot spots of the female anatomy because up to seventy five percent of women need some form of clitoral stimulation in order to be sexually satisfied. In a commentary on the same research done through the University of Chicago, Paget (2001) emphasizes that this same constituency can only climax on a consistent basis by either manual or oral clitoral stimulation. Outside of this research, Livoti and Topp (2004) contend that for 99.99 percent of women, an orgasm involves direct or indirect stimulation to the clitoris. Kinsey (2010)

has observed that there are many females who are incapable of maximum arousal unless the clitoris is sufficiently stimulated, and Michaels (2005) posits that a large number of women can have orgasms from clitoral stimulation alone.

The importance of the clitoris in sexual pleasure is attributable, according to Silverberg (2011) to the more than 8000 nerve endings found in the tip of the clitoris, and the more than 15,000 nerve endings of this organ which runs throughout the pelvic area. With this kind of anatomical structure of tissues, muscles, blood vessels, nerve endings and glans impacting the vulva, urethra, and the vagina, it is no wonder that the clitoris has been referred to as the only organ in the female body that has sexual pleasure as its sole purpose (Goddard et al, 2000) and also as a complex network, a pleasure dome, the Xanadu at the heart of female sexuality (Kerner, 2004). For Tisdale (1994) the clitoris is the “seat of female sexual pleasure.” Morris (2004) considers the clitoris the most sensitive spot on the entire female body, and points out that the function of the clitoris is purely sexual, in that it becomes enlarged (longer, more swollen, more erect) and even more sensitive during copulation (See Appendix 4).

Described also as the most sensitive erogenous zone of the female and critical in female sexual pleasure, the clitoris when stimulated produces sexual excitement and clitoral erection, and its continuing stimulation is responsible for the intense outcome of female orgasm (Rasmussen, 2010). Herbenick (2009) considers the clitoris a powerhouse of sensation and pleasure, and notes that when women talk about enjoying stimulation of the clitoris they often mean the glans clitoris which is tightly packed with nerve endings and is consequently often very sensitive to touch. For Allison (2001), the distinctive role of the clitoris in female sexual pleasure, occurs when this highly sensitive organ swells

with blood (See Appendix 3) during sexual arousal through either manual or oral stimulation. Case (2007) agrees, noting that in addition to the nerve endings, the erectile tissue of which the clitoris glans is made, consists of many spaces, arteries and veins which become filled with blood then swell and become firmer as a woman is sexually aroused.

It has been observed that a variety of stimulation levels contribute to the heightened sense of arousal which many women experience. At points in stimulation the clitoris becomes erect and very noticeably pronounced and at other times it seems to disappear. Yet it has been noted too, that even though the clitoris might seem to disappear, it simply retracts under the hood of the shaft to shield its sensitivity to touch, and that even in this new position, arousal does not lessen (Heiman,1993). Addressing the sensitivity of the clitoris, Case (2007) observes that it is the enormous sensitivity of the clitoris to touch on the section that is visible, as well as the corresponding effect of such stimulation on the invisible section inside the body, which has led to the view that a woman's erection happens inside her body and can't be clearly seen, as it can on a man.

It is this biological reality which led a group of researchers to assert that when they speak of the clitoris, they are referring to a whole complex organ, consisting of the glans, shaft and hood, clitoral legs, inner lips, hymen, several bodies of erectile tissue including the clitoral bulbs, urethral sponge, perineal sponge, muscles, nerve endings, and networks of blood vessels (Downer, 1991). Basing her views on O'Connell's research which showed that the clitoral nerves are actually embedded in the anterior vaginal wall, Yronwode (1999) goes as far as to posit that this could well explain the increased responsiveness which many women claim to have on the upper wall, just below the

urethra; the area often referred to by some as the “G-spot.” In supporting this position, Heart (2011) emphasizes that the female genitalia is interconnected with an intricate web of muscles, nerves, and blood vessels, and that when one is stimulated, such as the glans of the clitoris, the other erectile tissue including the urethral and perineal sponges, share the excitement and swell.

Komisarul (2010) argues that this pleasure is achieved either exclusively through clitoral stimulation or through an integrated approach where clitoral stimulation, either through fingering or oral techniques, combined with stimulation of the vagina and repeated contact of the penis with sensitive clitoral nerve spots during thrusting, produces the cumulative product which is an orgasm. However, it has been argued by Sommer da Costa (2004) that the women most likely to benefit from this association of thrusting with a high attainment of sexual pleasure, are those women whose clitorises lie in the lower end nearer to the vagina and can easily reach orgasm from thrusting because of the penis’ fretting against the clitoris.

While acknowledging that many women do in fact find vaginal penetration exquisitely pleasurable, Koedt (1970) states unapologetically that orgasms take place in the sexual organ equipped for sexual climax, the clitoris. Chalker (2000) concurs and writes that it is the clitoris with its bulbs encompassing the muscles of the vagina, and not the vagina itself, which is the source of this pleasure, and contends that the vagina is more useful to men than it is to women. In supporting this view, Barbach (2000) illustrates by recalling the experience of a woman who had initial difficulty believing that it was the clitoris and not the vagina which was the primary seat of her sexual excitement, until for the first time she explored her own body with her fingers and found it to be true.

Blue (2002) observes that oral sex can produce incredible intense, powerfully focused orgasms, and that for a significant number of women, these orgasms are stronger and more satisfying than orgasms from intercourse. Meston and Buss (2009) add that women usually achieve orgasms through clitoral stimulation much more easily than through sexual intercourse, and point to surveys which show that only about 60 percent of orgasmic women are able to have an orgasm through intercourse alone. They conclude that it is simply the case that many women need more stimulation of the clitoris to achieve an orgasm than is provided by intercourse. This view is supported by Thomas (2011) who asserts that intercourse does not provide enough clitoral stimulation for female orgasm no matter how long and enthusiastically a man keeps thrusting.

Fulbright (2007) posits that clitoral orgasm, also known as the vulval orgasm and characterized by involuntary rhythmic contractions of the pubococcygeus muscle, is widely popular because it is most reliable, easily obtainable, and most insatiable of the female orgasms, and that about ninety percent of women can achieve it from direct stimulation. It has been noted by some sources that clitoral stimulation has wide attraction across age groups within the USA, and one study has even confirmed that among Americans aged 50 and older, 56% of men reported that they provided clitoral stimulation to their partners; 49% of women reported receiving clitoral stimulation, and 95% of men and 82% of women report enjoying it (Reinisch, 1990).

Even so it is acknowledged that not every woman responds positively to clitoral stimulation, and that the individual who is not excited by clitoral stimulation is no less a woman or less sexual because of their disinterest in clitoral pleasure (Fulbright, 2007). Examples of this are women who cannot tolerate either mild or intense stimulation of the

clitoris as well as women who experience immense sexual pleasure through massaging of the breast, thighs, or other body parts and not the clitoris. Also identified as not being among those enjoying the pleasures derived from clitoral stimulation, are women who fail to achieve orgasm because their prior sex life has not given them sufficient practice in the stimulation of the clitoris and surrounding areas (Janus, 1993).

It has been argued that in the debate about which part of the female genitalia responds best to stimulation, consideration needs to be given to women who derive optimal pleasure from the combined stimulation of cervix, vagina and clitoris. It has been noted that for these women, the difference in the sensory quality of stimulation in all these areas and the resultant orgasm, is due to the different nerves receiving sensory activity from each region – the pudendal nerve, in the case of the clitoris; the pelvic nerve, in the case of the vagina; and the hypogastric, pelvic, and vagus nerves in the case of the cervix (Komisarul, 2006). This has led to the conclusion that clitoral orgasms create the most sensation in the lower one-third of a woman's vagina, because clitoral orgasm is triggered by the body's pudendal nerve and because the clitoris is centrally attached to the urethra and vagina (Fulbright, 2007). Herbenick and Schick (2011) underscore the conclusion reached by O'Connell when they contend that there is constant interplay among clitoris, vagina, and urethra in producing female sexual pleasure.

From the above sources, the consensus is that either through stimulation of the clitoris itself or in conjunction with the stimulation of other parts of the female genitalia, the clitoris plays an important role in female arousal and orgasm for most women. The authors, both male and female, are unified in their view that given the pleasure potential of the clitoris in female sexual satisfaction, women need to learn about their bodies and

what gives them pleasure, while men need to learn the art of helping their partners experience the clitoral pleasures which they need and seek. Most importantly they contend that by its design the clitoris is the unquestionable center of female sexual pleasure, or as Goddard and Brungardt (2000) states, the importance of the clitoris is certainly indisputable whether or not we call all orgasms clitoral.

### **North American male attitudes and practices related to the clitoris**

The primary source of information on male and female attitudes within the USA related to the clitoris is the Hite Report. The Hite Report on Male Sexuality is based on the 1974 and 1975 study of male sexual attitudes and behaviors by Shere Hite. The instrument used was a questionnaire responded to by 7,239 men throughout the USA; representing all the states and the District of Columbia; and reflecting the views of male respondents aged 14-97. The racial background of the study population was 83.6 % Caucasian, 11.9 % African Americans, and 4.5% of other, comprised of all other racial/ethnic group (Hite, 1981).

In executing her study on male sexuality, Shere Hite posed a number of specific questions to which participants were asked to respond. A review of some of the questions asked, and answers given, shed significant insight on the issue of male attitudes towards the clitoris. More than any other research on male sexuality, Hite's findings highlight men speaking in their own voice. One question was, "How do you feel about the clitoris?" Hite notes that the answers by respondents to this question included jokes and satirical remarks (Hite, 1981). The following are some examples of the comments from respondents:

*“The clitoris is the blasting cap on a stick of dynamite. It is the trigger mechanism which puts everything else into motion.”*

*“It is just a part of her that I caress now and then, but nothing to rave over.”*

*“It’s the key to a lot of enjoyment for her and every man should know how to use it to the woman’s advantage. I think it’s too much overlooked by most men.”*

*“If that is the point she wants stimulated, I will stimulate it. But I don’t have any special feeling about it any more than I have any special feeling about any other body part that isn’t in plain sight. It’s like asking me how I feel about her liver.”*

The Hite Report also highlighted a wide range of responses to the question, “What does the clitoris look like?” Hite points out that the responses reflected discomfort and unfamiliarity, and sometimes even hostility by the male respondents (Hite, 1981). The following sample from the answers given illustrate Hite’s conclusion:

*“I don’t know much about a woman’s clitoris, but I’d like to know more. I don’t know exactly where it is or what exactly it looks like. It’s never been important to any of my lovers yet. I would like to know more about it though. I wish one of them would make a point of educating me on it.”*

*“I’ve never seen one because the lights are off or my eyes are closed.”*

*“It looks like a nipple with a foreskin.”*

*“A glistening pink jewel in its case of mahogany plush.”*

In commenting on the answers to the question, “Where is the clitoris?” Hite (1981) says that the answers given were generally vague. This is illustrated in the following sample of answers:

*“To tell the truth, I am not quite sure where a woman’s clitoris is.”*

*“It’s above the vagina towards the belly button.”*

*“Tucked in there amid the folds at the north end of the vulva.”*

*“It’s at the upper end of the outer lips, near the pelvic bone.”*

*“Just inside her pussy.”*

The answers to another question offered very revealing insight into the respondents’ attitude towards the clitoris. “Do you feel knowledgeable and comfortable stimulating a woman clitorally?” Hite (1981) reports a wide range of views from the respondents. She notes that while some men were enthusiastic about stimulating their partner to orgasm, most men who had engaged in clitoral stimulation expressed doubts about their expertise and effectiveness, and that a few considered it something they shouldn’t have to do. The following are some of the answers given:

*“I work at satisfying her to a state of blissful exhaustion. It’s good for my ego!”*

*“I always feel awkward about it when I’m doing it. I mean, I know This is what gives women orgasms, but do other men really do this?”*

*“Yeah, I’ve heard about clitoral stimulation – I guess I should do it- But I just don’t know, no girl has ever asked me to do it. What if I did it wrong or she didn’t want me to do it?”*

Two other questions about clitoral stimulation which produced revealing answers were, “How do you feel if a woman stimulates herself to orgasm in your presence?” and “How do you feel if a woman stimulates herself during intercourse with you?” Hite reports that many men had never experienced a woman stimulating herself and added that many men were shocked by the idea that their partner could masturbate to orgasm at all, even when alone (Hite, 1981). The following are some of the comments made by respondents:

*“It has never happened. I would feel very threatened.”*

*“I would feel inadequate if she did that.”*

*“It could add an exciting dimension, but I wouldn’t want her to do it regularly, and never during intercourse.”*

*“It is a beautiful sight. My job is to accompany her and to help her along the way.”*

*“Clitoral stimulation is OK, but it’s carrying it too far when she uses a vibrator.”*

*“I would feel good if a woman stimulated herself to orgasm with me. But of course, not during intercourse.”*

The final issue in the Hite Report related to male attitudes to the clitoris was highlighted in the questions, “Do you enjoy cunnilingus with a woman? What do you like and/or dislike about it?” Hite (1981) concluded that although many men were enthusiastic about cunnilingus, they had mixed feelings about it based on notions of subservience to a woman, and concerns about the cleanliness of a woman’s genitals. The following were included among the opinions of the respondents:

*“Cunts are really ugly. They look unfinished.”*

*“Cunts look exquisite, haunting, dangerous, fascinating, infinitely desirable, edible, threatening, ominous, powerful.”*

*“You can rub and scrub and clean it well, but you can’t get rid of that codfish smell.”*

*“Nobody in his right mind will do it unless the person is a dog and/or low-class animal. Human beings are high-class animals, not beasts.”*

*“I love the way my wife’s genitals taste and smell. The way her pussy looks and feels, the heat and velvety wetness of it.”*

To summarize what we learn from the Hite Report about male attitudes to the clitoris, it can be said that the report shows that there was no uniformity in the attitudes of the male

respondents towards the clitoris. While the report does not address the factors which have helped shaped the opinions of the respondents, their wide ranging opinions can be attributed to many sources of influence affecting male views about the sexual stimulation and pleasure of women. Hite (1981) considered the varied and sometimes odd attitude of many of the male respondents as an injustice and concludes: “sex provides efficiently for male orgasm, and inefficiently and irregularly for female orgasm; sex is defined so that the woman expects to help the man orgasm every time, but the man is not realistically informed about how to help the woman orgasm, and the woman is told it is wrong to stimulate herself.”

Turning to how the clitoris is incorporated in the sexual practices of North American men, the responses to Hite’s invitation to respondents to provide details of their specific practices in providing clitoral stimulation to their partners, included the following:

*“I make a fist and rotate it over the pubic bone... I move my hand pretty fast. I also do it left handed (this individual indicated that he was right-handed).”*

*“I gently pull her pubic hair, stroking gently and rhythmically- I prefer to use my thumb, which is softer, in a circular movement on the clitoris... I use my own lubrication on my index and middle finger so I can rub the labia minora.”*

*“I apply pressure to her clitoris (and the area around it) with the palm of my hand than with my fingers ...I tend to move the skin around over the underlying structures, sometimes pulling the skin upwards toward the navel.”*

*“Using two fingers, I stroke along and over the clitoris in a circular motion usually in a rhythm- easing off and then applying more pressure.”*

*“While using the vibrator on her clitoris, I also use my fingers in her vagina.”*

Hite (1981) also notes that other respondents described alternate ways than the use of the tongue, fingers or vibrators in providing clitoral stimulation for their partners:

*“Sometimes I hold my penis in my hand and stimulate her clitoris with the head.”*

*“I let her hold my penis in her hand and use it to fiddle with her clitoris.”*

In addition to the material from the Hite Report, the tips offered to men in many books on female sexual pleasure, can also give insight into some of the effective techniques used to give clitoral stimulation to women. For example, one source, a male author who shares with his readers his own experiences of giving clitoral pleasure to a woman, advises that there should be a gentle pinching of the clitoris, using the index and ring fingers in circular motion to stroke the clitoris and vaginal opening, and the use of the tongue to caress the clitoris, the inner lips, and the entire vaginal opening (Pollard, 2011).

In the same vein, Cattrall and Levinson (2002) advise men who want to give maximum satisfaction to their women through clitoral stimulation, to feel the clit twitch, then use the tongue to draw a circle on it, wait for it to twitch again, then continue to draw light circles on the tip of the clit, or alternately to use the sequence of a left-right flick, pause, an up-down flick, pause, and then a circle. For her part, Borg (2010) advocates principal use of the tongue, working it slowly in circles around the clitoral shaft, first with slow and gentle movements then faster until orgasm comes. Men are even told that one side of the clitoris is more sensitive than the other, and are encouraged to discover which side it is for their lover, and to alternate their caressing to give maximum pleasure (Valdez, 2011). Another eminent writer urges her male readers to use lubricants liberally in genital play, and reminds them of the extraordinary range of moves and

positions to effectively deliver clitoral pleasure to their partners. Examples include: the 'Jr. Dreidel,' the 'Double Duty,' 'Touring the Dance Floor,' 'The Y- Knot,' 'The World is Your Oyster,' and 'The Sculptor' (Paget, 2000).

### **North American female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris**

Hite (1981) reports that the answers given by female respondents to questions about their attitude to clitoral stimulation, is an indication that women consider clitoral stimulation vitally important to their sexual pleasure. One respondent expressed her view on the importance of clitoral stimulation in this way:

*“My partners seem to be slow to understand this (clitoral stimulation) is what I enjoy most, and therefore I rarely have an orgasm with my partners because they mount me before I’ve been satisfied.”*

Even so, Hite (1981) reports that the overall attitude of many women to clitoral stimulation was shaped by a number of factors. One significant factor was the female belief that their male partners displayed no genuine interest in ensuring that a woman’s need took priority over their own. The following responses highlight this concern:

*“Most of my partners never gave a thought to what pleased me and totally ignored anything I said. They invariably knew what was best for me. I tried a few times to ask for what helped me but was ignored or ridiculed.”*

*“Most men didn’t seem to be aware that what brought them to climax wasn’t what brought me to climax.”*

*“He stimulates me for three seconds and then just goes ahead and penetrates – he thinks women are just like men. Sex is so much easier and automatic for them. I feel cheated to be a woman as far as sex is concerned.”*

*“He was furious the last time I asked him to stimulate me as it stopped his readiness to ‘dive in.’ ”*

Another issue Hite reports that impacts female attitudes towards clitoral stimulation has

to do with women feeling that they were being a burden by desiring clitoral stimulation.

The following comments by some of the respondents say it well:

*“I still have an uneasy feeling that I am inconveniencing him. I really need more foreplay than what my husband gives me and I have told him so frequently, but he usually doesn’t bother. He seems very orgasm oriented – that is, his orgasm; that’s all that’s important to him.”*

*“I don’t bother with it. It decreases my pleasure if my partner seems the least put out or obliging.”*

*“I feel guilty about taking time for myself in activities such as clitoral stimulation, erotic massage, and cunnilingus simply because these activities are not specifically stimulating to my partner. I feel selfish.”*

The fact that many men seemed not to know the location or role of the clitoris was another issue raised by women in the Hite Report. On this issue they said:

*“They are uninformed and they don’t seem to want the information about the clitoris.”*

*“My lover, who was an obstetrician, was not well informed.”*

*“It was like they were foreigners. Often they cared but were ignorant.”*

*“I like it, but I don’t think my husband even knows where the clitoris is, and I’m too embarrassed to tell him.”*

*“He’s always in the wrong place and I’m too embarrassed to show him exactly where.”*

In terms of the practices of females involving the clitoris, Hite (1981) reports the following comments from women in the survey on how they liked receiving clitoral stimulation:

*“Soft and delicate but constant...”*

*“I stand in front of my spouse who is seated. He uses his finger or the vibrator on my clitoris with a slow moving action.”*

*“My partner rests her hand palm facing into my pubic area, with one or two*

*fingers on my clitoris with gentle pressure.”*

*“Lying sideways he puts his penis between my legs near the clitoris and then moves back and forth.”*

*“I lie on my back one leg hooked over my partner’s shoulder with him brushing his penis and balls across my clitoris.”*

*“He lies on top of me holding his penis and rubbing it against my clitoris.”*

*“I stand in the shower with my partner ‘sudsing’ me clean between the legs.”*

*“I suck my partner and massage my clitoris at the same time.”*

*“My husband works a dildo in and out of my vagina while I press a vibrator to my clitoris.”*

From another source, Kirkham (2010) reports that women in a survey made the following comments on how they enjoyed receiving clitoral stimulation:

*“He plays with my clitoris with his thumb and at the same time puts his pointer finger inside my vagina.”*

*“He starts slowly and as I get more and more lubricated, he rubs harder and harder on my clitoris.”*

*“He rubs it very gently using two fingers, and usually that doesn’t take very long for me to get off.”*

*“My husband touches me all over down there – my clitoris, my opening, my groin – until I simply can’t take it anymore. Then he starts directly stimulating my clitoris.”*

### **Caribbean male attitudes and practices related to the clitoris**

Turning from the North American scene to the Caribbean, the available literature that addresses the issue of male attitudes to the clitoris is quite insightful. For Albuquerque (2000), male sexual attitude in general is most powerfully reflected in the sight of men throughout the islands, standing on street corners with one hand resting authoritatively on their crotch. What this familiar pose conveys, Albuquerque (2000)

contends, is that the ‘bamboo is ready,’ meaning that the man is ready for vaginal intercourse.

For a great majority of Caribbean men, their endowment with a large penis is the sole requirement for satisfying a woman. Albuquerque (2000) recognizes that this tendency of the Caribbean man to celebrate his sexual power is perpetuated in novels and music, the former often presenting the Caribbean man as virile and capable of leaving his female partner spent, weak-kneed and satisfied after every sexual encounter.

But there is acknowledgement too that this overtly aggressive approach to sex and the feeling that the man has to be the one in control, makes many a Caribbean man believe that his penis is a tool or weapon to do damage, and leads to an overdose of sex without sensuality or foreplay (Sex and the Caribbean Man: Jamaica Observer, 2002). This is well illustrated in a letter (Jamaica Gleaner: Doctor’s Advice, March 21, 2010) where a female contributor laments that her lover seems to have no interest in giving her pleasure, for even though they make love three or four times per week, he ignores her clitoris entirely and focuses only on vaginal penetration and thrusting until he climaxes. It has even been pointed out that the reasons Caribbean women give for faking orgasms, include the need to escape the pain of rough vaginal intercourse, as well as the belief in the fact that if they make loud noises during intercourse, their male partners will finish quickly (Mejias, 1998).

What the aforementioned references highlight, is that many Caribbean men regard the penis as a symbol of power, thus their preference for vaginal intercourse. One very forthright opinion as to why Caribbean men tend to shy away from cunnilingus is that they are taught to believe they do not need to go down on a woman to please her or get

her off – their dicks should be enough and only men who are not good enough in bed resort to using their tongue to do so. Put simply, it makes them less of a man in the sack (Going Down on Women: The Black Man’s Dilemma).

Other issues identified in the literature on the attitudes of Caribbean men towards the clitoris, is the unfamiliarity with its location, with its function, and how it can be stimulated. The following are two examples which illustrate this point. In a letter (Jamaica Gleaner: Doctor’s Advice: Clueless on Clitoris, December 15, 2007) one male contributor acknowledged that he knew the clitoris existed, but asked for the doctor’s help because he didn’t know where to find it especially in the dark. In another letter (Jamaica Gleaner - Doctor’s Advice: Would Cunnilingus Help Her? May 23, 2010) a female contributor relates how a female friend had encouraged her to try cunnilingus but goes on to state that though she felt her husband would be willing to do it so as to please her, he didn’t know how to do it.

Even though there is a scarcity of research on the attitudes of Caribbean men towards the clitoris, much can be garnered from letters to newspapers and from the treasure-house of the Caribbean music industry. From these two sources, and particularly through a good interpretation of the dialect used in song, it is strongly suggested that Caribbean men have a strong dislike for stimulating the clitoris with their mouths. But as Crystal Evans (2010) has said, there is rampant hypocrisy among Caribbean men, many of whom she says, even sing songs condemning the stimulation of the clitoris but then in their private lives, do in fact engage in clitoral stimulation of their sex partners, not just with their fingers, but with their mouths.

In terms of the way the clitoris is incorporated in the sexual practices of Caribbean men, some useful insights are reported in website source, Jamaican Sex Stories. Some of the comments found there included:

*“I push my tongue into her pussy, suck her clitoris, then keep my tongue moving back and forth on it.”*

*“I spread her pussy lips apart and lick her clit while alternating between massaging her nipples and putting my fingers in her pussy.”*

*“I usually approach her from the back, place her in a doggie-style position, then use my middle and index fingers to rub her clit side to side. When she gets hot then I use my tongue to cool her down.”*

*“I spread syrup on her clit and then lick it away slowly.”*

*“I use the head of my cock to tease her clit, push it in her pussy, pull it back out and then get back to flicking it across her clit until she comes.”*

### **Caribbean female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris**

The ignorance shown by a married woman in her early 30's who stated that neither she nor her husband (also in his early 30's) knew if cunnilingus was dangerous to their health, is not to be considered as typical of Caribbean women (Jamaica Gleaner – “Doctor’s Advice: Would Cunnilingus Help Her?” May 23, 2010). While their male partners have been slow to gravitate to the practices involved in clitoral stimulation, Caribbean women have not been timid in demanding clitoral stimulation from their lovers. Caribbean women are said to be increasingly rejecting their male partner’s focus on quick penetration and rapid orgasm after a few thrusts (known throughout the Caribbean as “slam bam no orgasm” type of lovemaking) from their men (Mejias, 1998). To emphasize, Dr. Everold Hosein, addressing a Caribbean conference on sexuality in Trinidad, highlighted the enormous suffering experienced in relationships in the

Caribbean because of the absence of sexual pleasure in many relationships, and remarked that Antiguan women who do not receive the desired pleasure from their men, simply move on to another partner to secure the pleasure they seek (Mejias, 1998).

This demand for clitoral stimulation has put tremendous pressure on Caribbean men. An example of this is seen in the concern of a man who wrote to the popular Jamaican newspaper counselor, Aaron Dumas, seeking help because even though he told his girlfriend he wouldn't perform cunnilingus on religious grounds, she was insistent that he did, because that was what she was accustomed to getting in her previous relationship (Dumas, 2010).

Many social commentators see the pressure being put on Caribbean men to engage in clitoral stimulation within the wider lenses of a conservative sexual culture, which even though it has denounced the practice of oral sex, has deemed it OK for a woman to perform oral sex on a man but still frowns upon the idea of a man doing the same for a woman (Johnson, 2007). With a growing number of younger Caribbean women demanding more than penile penetration and thrusting, and in an age where the sexual practices of North America and Europe have increased potential to influence behavior in the Caribbean through the media, migration and tourism, the issues of power, religion, etc, which once shaped both male and female attitudes towards the clitoris, are certain to undergo much transformation.

The following comments reported in website source, Jamaican Sex Stories, give voice to how Caribbean women are finding satisfaction through clitoral pleasuring:

*“I like my man to finger my pussy first, get me all hot and wet and then complete the job with a bathing tongue making my clit as stiff as his cock.”*

*“I usually lie on my back with my legs spread, alternate between massaging my clit, putting my fingers in my vagina before inviting him to do the same thing.”*

*“I love when my partner starts to finger me in public usually at a dance, or when we are driving together. I whine my hips to help his fingers excite my clit, then I rub my fingers around in my own pussy juice.”*

*“I sit on a chair with him kneeling on the floor in front of me, my legs up on his shoulder, his face buried on my clit.”*

### **Puerto Rican male attitudes and practices related to the clitoris**

As noted earlier, resources on the attitude of Puerto Rican men to the clitoris were rather scanty. While this is so, the ‘machismo’ socialization which Puerto Rican males are nurtured in, would suggest that a woman’s desire for her own sexual pleasure would be secondary in sexual relations. Carey (2008) notes that in the Puerto Rican culture where women are perceived as being inferior to men, it is the male partner who has control over the frequency, initiation, and actual sexual practices allowed. In highlighting the prevalence and impact of the ‘machismo’ mentality on sexual practices, Carey (2008) highlights the admission by some male participants in her study on Puerto Rican sexual attitudes, that they were not comfortable discussing sex with a sexual partner, before, during, or after sex. Even so, a newer generation of Puerto Ricans, influenced by films and greater access to erotic literature, are engaging in sexual practices which include focus on the clitoris. In an interview with this researcher, a 45 year old Puerto Rican resident in Pennsylvania remarked that an increasing number of his male friends are getting into oral sex, and described how he uses his saliva to moisten his partner’s clitoris, then uses a combination of fingers to rub her clitoris, before using his tongue to

stroke her clitoris and the entire genital area to produce waves of orgasm (Rodriguez, 2012).

**Puerto Rican female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris**

Much of the information on attitudes towards the clitoris among Puerto Rican women come from academic research papers. In many cases, the word clitoris is not even mentioned in these papers, but from the general comments related to female sexuality, it is possible to draw inferences to attitudes towards clitoral stimulation.

A crucial element identified in the literature is the impact of socialization of children on sexuality. It has been said that boys are trained early to be dominant while girls are taught to be docile. According to Montesinso (2004), a wife is not expected to enjoy sex herself or to seek it – she is there to please her husband, ready to respond to the male requirement and not to assume responsibility for her own pleasure. Enck-Wanzer (2010) adds that in the Puerto Rican society, women were brainwashed into believing that the sex act was dirty and immoral and that its only function was for the making of children. Emphasizing the impact of this kind of socialization process on women's sexual expression, Villanueva (1997) contends that women who are socialized into believing that their sexual satisfaction is of lesser importance than that of their male partners, will repress their sexual feelings and desires, and inevitably experience tremendous guilt.

Villanueva provides valuable information of female attitudes to their own sexuality in her doctoral dissertation: *The Social Construction of Sexuality – Personal Meanings, Perceptions of Sexual Experience and Female's Sexuality in Puerto Rico*. Not only through the literature review which she conducted as part of her dissertation, but also

through the case studies of twelve women whom she engaged in detailed reflection on their sexual journeys, she reveals five important issues:

1. that all the women in the study reported that they had few sources of sexual information growing up.
2. that all the women believed that their bodies had to be protected from men, and that their bodies were seen only as sexual objects.
3. that without exception, the women involved in the study were raised to believe that sex was something the man should enjoy, but not an experience which women could enjoy too.
4. that the women in the study defined their sexual relationships in terms of men's sexual needs and questioned to what extent they could feel empowered to define sex as pleasurable for themselves.
5. that vaginal intercourse was the sexual activity desired and demanded by their male partners.

While these views are admittedly of a small sample of women, they certainly raise curiosity about what a larger constituency of Puerto Rican women might perhaps be thinking today about their own sexual pleasure, and of the role of the clitoris in achieving such pleasure.

More recent literature does indicate that perhaps a change is underway in the attitudes of Latino women towards sexual pleasure, in general, and clitoral pleasure in particular. As one source notes, within recent years Puerto Rican women have been challenged to know, accept, and love their bodies - breasts, vulva and clitoris so as to be able to communicate to their partners what they want, what they like, and above all, to

feel comfortable with themselves (Gonzales, 2000). The outcome of this is reported in the findings of a 2011 survey of Puerto Ricans aged 21-64, which found that the practice of genital pleasuring had escalated to approximately the same level reported among Caucasians in the United States of America (Ortiz, et al, 2011). A Puerto Rican woman who consented to an interview while on a recent visit to New Jersey, expressed the opinion that Puerto Rican women are asserting themselves more these days in seeking clitoral pleasure, and notes that in cases where their male partners are still hesitant or unwilling to respond to their needs, they are privately engaging in self-pleasuring, utilizing their fingers and vibrators which they can purchase either in Puerto Rico or when they travel to the United States of America (Martinez, 2012).

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In order to learn about the attitudes and practices of Caucasian, Hispanic, African-American, and Caribbean males and female related to the clitoris, we decided to conduct a survey among males and females from these cultural groups, analyze the findings, and offer some explanation for similarities and differences revealed.

### Instruments

Two questionnaires were utilized in this study, one for males (See Appendix 5) and the other for females (See Appendix 6). Questions were of the close-ended multiple choice type. This format of questioning is reputed to limit response options, and prohibit detail and depth. However, we felt that sufficient detail would be available in the supplied answers to allow us to make conclusions appropriate to the intention and scope of our study. The respondents were required to select single or multiple choices by checking the box associated with their answer(s) of choice. These two types of questions were distinguished by a circular check box in the case of single selection choices, and by a square check box for multiple selection choices.

### Female Questionnaire

The female questionnaire consisted of 18 statements. The first two were meant to gather very basic information on ethnicity and age range. The purpose of the statement requesting information on the age range of the respondents was not for specific analysis of data, but to help ensure a balance in the age range of respondents. Statements 3 & 4

were designed to inquire into the respondents' ability to define the clitoris and identify its location, while statement 5 was designed to ascertain the sources from which respondents acquired information about the clitoris.

Statement 6 was designed to provide information on the frequency of a female's examination of her clitoris. Statement 7 solicited information on the possible issues which might influence a female's examination of her clitoris, while statement 8 explored the concerns which might prevent a female from asking her partner to stimulate her clitoris.

Statements 9, 10, and 11 were focused particularly on female attitudes to the clitoris, and were designed to find out how females from the four cultural groups felt about requesting clitoral stimulation from their partners, how they felt about their partner's understanding of their need for clitoral stimulation, and their views on self-pleasuring.

The next six statements, 12 – 17 were focused on learning about the practices employed by females in relation to the clitoris, namely, at what point in a sexual encounter they prefer having their clitoris stimulated; what particular method of clitoral stimulation they enjoy; the level of pleasure derived; whether or not they masturbate, and how; and their experience of an orgasm as a consequence of clitoral stimulation.

Statement 18 inquired into the female respondents' level of satisfaction with clitoral stimulation provided by their partners.

### Male Questionnaire

The male questionnaire consisted of 17 statements. The first two were meant to gather very basic information on ethnicity and age range. As was the case with the female questionnaire, the purpose of the statement requesting information on the age range of the

respondents was not for specific analysis of data, but to ensure a balance in the age range of respondents. Statements 3 & 4 were designed to inquire into the respondents' ability to give a definition for the clitoris and identify its location, while statement 5 was designed to ascertain the sources from which respondents acquired information about the clitoris.

Statements 6 and 8 were designed to identify how male respondents felt about a female who masturbates, while statement 7 inquired into how males felt about the thought of engaging in cunnilingus. Statements 9 – 12 were designed to solicit information on male beliefs about the importance of clitoral stimulation, the appropriateness of a man's stimulation of his partner's clitoris, possible concerns which prevent men from stimulating their partner's clitoris, and what a male feels when his female partner masturbates in his presence.

The next five statements, 13 – 17 were focused on learning about the practices employed by males in relation to the clitoris, namely, their role in initiating clitoral stimulation during sexual encounters; the point in a sexual encounter at which they typically stimulate their partner's clitoris; what particular method they use to stimulate their partner's clitoris; and the frequency in which clitoral stimulation occurs in their sexual activities.

### Participants

Two hundred and forty persons between the ages of 20-60 years participated in the survey. In order to secure balanced age representation among the study population, we proactively recruited the following:

Caucasian:	30 males	30 females
African-Americans:	30 males	30 females
Hispanic:	30 males	30 females
Caribbean:	30 males	30 females

Survey participants within the USA were drawn from at least fifteen states, namely Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Arkansas, Texas, Illinois, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, and California. Responses outside the USA came from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, Belize, and Antigua.

### Procedure

The survey was completed online and through hard-copy distribution to the public. Participants were recruited by LinkedIn colleagues who promoted it among their clients, through Facebook connections, through the help of professionals living in Puerto Rico and several English speaking Caribbean countries, and from among our own friends and acquaintances. A survey request letter (See Appendix 8) accompanied each questionnaire and each participant who completed a hard copy of the questionnaire, was clearly instructed not to provide their name. Stamped self-addressed envelopes were provided to facilitate the return of questionnaires.

Respondents completing the questionnaires online did so through a form on Claudia's website: [www.innovationsrscs.com/survey.html](http://www.innovationsrscs.com/survey.html). A full page of instructions for completing and submitting the forms was provided on the website. All participants were

instructed to contact either of the researchers by telephone if they had questions or concerns about the questionnaire.

At the end of the seventh week following the first distribution of the questionnaires, the quota of 120 female responses was reached and the online female questionnaire was discontinued. The final male survey was received on September 4 and the online male questionnaire was discontinued at that time.

With the closing of the online questionnaires, the process started to analyze the submissions. First, all 120 female forms were divided into cultural groupings and the responses to each statement were totaled and put in measurable form for ease in doing the analysis. A total report of the female responses was then prepared, also in measurable form for analytical purposes. A similar process was followed for the 120 male survey forms.

The analysis of the data was then broken down into two segments. The first was a brief cross-cultural analysis to highlight noticeable differences or similarities in the data. This was done for the four female and male cultural groups. The second segment consisted of an expanded discussion based on the observations noted in the first segment. The data was also referenced against the material encountered in the literature review, and where appropriate, explanations were offered about what the data suggests about male and female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### Caucasian Female Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

another name for the G-Spot (3)  
the opening through which pee flows  
an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (27)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

above the vaginal opening (30)  
inside the vagina  
next to the anus

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:*** (check all that apply)

school mates or friends (7)  
books, magazines, movies (12)  
family members (3)  
my partner (6)  
a medical professional (3)  
classroom instruction (10)

**4. *I:***

have never examined my clitoris (3)  
frequently examine my clitoris (5)  
examine my clitoris occasionally (22)

**5. *Issues which have influenced my examination of my clitoris are:***  
(check all that apply)

fear of touching myself (1)  
having been warned not to by parents  
feeling awkward about it (3)  
never felt the need to (8)  
thought it was important to do (20)

**6. Concerns which prevent me from asking my partner to stimulate my clitoris are:** (check all that apply)

the sight  
the size (1)  
the taste  
the smell (1)  
the fear of being seen as a freak  
religious views  
general discomfort (4)  
none (25)

**7. I feel comfortable requesting clitoral stimulation from my partner:**

all the time (20)  
sometimes (9)  
none at all (1)

**8. I feel my partner:**

does not understand my need for clitoral stimulation (3)  
fully appreciates my need for clitoral stimulation (26)  
thinks only about his own sexual needs and satisfaction (1)  
is not interested in learning

**9. I believe that engaging in clitoral self-pleasuring is:**

important and healthy (25)  
unnecessary and selfish (1)  
sinful  
OK but over-rated (4)

**10. I enjoy receiving clitoral stimulation:** (check all that apply)

as part of foreplay (14)  
simultaneously with vaginal or anal penetration (10)  
after I orgasm  
all of the above (15)

**11. Stimulating my clitoris:**

gives me intense pleasure (26)  
does nothing to enhance my pleasure  
gives me some pleasure occasionally (4)

**12. I receive pleasure when my clitoris:** (check all that apply)

- is stroked with a finger (19)
- is stroked by a vibrator (18)
- is stimulated by the rubbing of the head of the penis (23)
- is licked (17)
- is both licked and stroked (25)

**13. I engage in self-pleasuring (masturbation):**

- occasionally (18)
- often (9)
- none at all (3)

**14. Stimulating my clitoris gives me an orgasm:**

- most of the time (15)
- sometimes (6)
- never
- every time (9)

**15. I am only able to orgasm:**

- when my clitoris is stimulated (6)
- through vaginal intercourse (1)
- by a combination of clitoral stimulation and vaginal intercourse (22)
- through caressing of areas of the body other than the clitoris and vagina (1)

**16. I:**

- am satisfied with the way my partner stimulates my clitoris (24)
- wish my partner would ask me how I want to have my clitoris stimulated
- wish my partner would spend more time stimulating my clitoris (6)

## Hispanic Female Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

- another name for the G-Spot (5)
- the opening through which pee flows (4)
- an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (21)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

- above the vaginal opening (26)
- inside the vagina (3)
- next to the anus (1)

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:*** (check all that apply)

- school mates or friends (5)
- books, magazines, movies (15)
- family members (3)
- my partner (9)
- a medical professional (7)
- classroom instruction (11)

**4. *I:***

- have never examined my clitoris (6)
- frequently examine my clitoris (11)
- examine my clitoris occasionally (13)

**5. *Issues which have influenced my examination of my clitoris are:***  
(check all that apply)

- fear of touching myself (2)
- having been warned not to by parents (1)
- feeling awkward about it (3)
- never felt the need to (5)
- thought it was important to do (20)

**6. Concerns which prevent me from asking my partner to stimulate my clitoris are:** (check all that apply)

the sight  
the size  
the taste  
the smell (1)  
the fear of being seen as a freak (2)  
religious views  
general discomfort (3)  
none (24)

**7. I feel comfortable requesting clitoral stimulation from my partner:**

all the time (10)  
sometimes (15)  
none at all (5)

**8. I feel my partner:**

does not understand my need for clitoral stimulation (6)  
fully appreciates my need for clitoral stimulation (21)  
thinks only about his own sexual needs and satisfaction (2)  
is not interested in learning (1)

**9. I believe that engaging in clitoral self-pleasuring is:**

important and healthy (18)  
unnecessary and selfish (2)  
sinful (2)  
OK but over-rated (8)

**10. I enjoy receiving clitoral stimulation:** (check all that apply)

as part of foreplay (16)  
simultaneously with vaginal or anal penetration (7)  
after I orgasm (1)  
all of the above (11)

**11. Stimulating my clitoris:**

gives me intense pleasure (22)  
does nothing to enhance my pleasure  
gives me some pleasure occasionally (8)

**12. I receive pleasure when my clitoris:** (check all that apply)

- is stroked by a finger (19)
- is stroked by a vibrator (8)
- is stimulated by the rubbing of the head of the penis (16)
- is licked (11)
- is both licked and stroked (16)

**13. I engage in self-pleasuring (masturbation):**

- occasionally (17)
- often (4)
- none at all (9)

**14. Stimulating my clitoris gives me an orgasm:**

- most of the time (13)
- sometimes (10)
- never (1)
- every time (6)

**15. I am only able to orgasm:**

- when my clitoris is stimulated (2)
- through vaginal intercourse (3)
- by a combination of clitoral stimulation and vaginal intercourse (24)
- through caressing of areas of the body other than the clitoris and vagina (1)

**16. I:**

- am satisfied with the way my partner stimulates my clitoris (24)
- wish my partner would ask me how I want to have my clitoris stimulated (1)
- wish my partner would spend more time stimulating my clitoris (5)

## African-American Female Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

- another name for the G-Spot (3)
- the opening through which pee flows (2)
- an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (25)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

- above the vaginal opening (29)
- inside the vagina (1)
- next to the anus

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:*** (check all that apply)

- school mates or friends (12)
- books, magazines, movies (19)
- family members (3)
- my partner (6)
- a medical professional (6)
- classroom instruction (12)

**4. *I:***

- have never examined my clitoris
- frequently examine my clitoris (16)
- examine my clitoris occasionally (14)

**5. *Issues which have influenced my examination of my clitoris are:***  
(check all that apply)

- fear of touching myself
- having been warned not to by parents
- feeling awkward about it (2)
- never felt the need to (2)
- thought it was important to do (26)

**6. Concerns which prevent me from asking my partner to stimulate my clitoris are:** (check all that apply)

the sight (1)  
the size (1)  
the taste (2)  
the smell (2)  
the fear of being seen as a freak  
religious views  
general discomfort  
none (28)

**7. I feel comfortable requesting clitoral stimulation from my partner:**

all the time (18)  
sometimes (9)  
none at all (3)

**8. I feel my partner:**

does not understand my need for clitoral stimulation (3)  
fully appreciates my need for clitoral stimulation (22)  
thinks only about his own sexual needs and satisfaction (2)  
is not interested in learning (3)

**9. I believe that engaging in clitoral self-pleasuring is:**

important and healthy (25)  
unnecessary and selfish  
sinful  
OK but over-rated (5)

**10. I enjoy receiving clitoral stimulation:** (check all that apply)

as part of foreplay (11)  
simultaneously with vaginal or anal penetration (6)  
after I orgasm  
all of the above (20)

**11. Stimulating my clitoris:**

gives me intense pleasure (25)  
does nothing to enhance my pleasure  
gives me some pleasure occasionally (5)

**12. I receive pleasure when my clitoris:** (check all that apply)

- is stroked by a finger (20)
- is stroked by a vibrator (14)
- is stimulated by the rubbing of the head of the penis (16)
- is licked (18)
- is both licked and stroked (24)

**13. I engage in self-pleasuring (masturbation):**

- occasionally (11)
- often (18)
- none at all (1)

**14. Stimulating my clitoris gives me an orgasm:**

- most of the time (10)
- sometimes (3)
- never
- every time (17)

**15. I am only able to orgasm:**

- when my clitoris is stimulated (9)
- through vaginal intercourse
- by a combination of clitoral stimulation and vaginal intercourse (19)
- through caressing of areas of the body other than the clitoris and vagina (2)

**16. I:**

- am satisfied with the way my partner stimulates my clitoris (16)
- wish my partner would ask me how I want to have my clitoris stimulated (6)
- wish my partner would spend more time stimulating my clitoris (8)

## Caribbean Female Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

another name for the G-Spot  
the opening through which pee flows (3)  
an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (27)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

above the vaginal opening (29)  
inside the vagina (1)  
next to the anus

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:*** (check all that apply)

school mates or friends (9)  
books, magazines, movies (18)  
family members (2)  
my partner (10)  
a medical professional (5)  
classroom instruction (8)

**4. *I:***

have never examined my clitoris (6)  
frequently examine my clitoris (13)  
examine my clitoris occasionally (11)

**5. *Issues which have influenced my examination of my clitoris are:***  
(check all that apply)

fear of touching myself (1)  
having been warned not to by parents (2)  
feeling awkward about it (2)  
never felt the need to (8)  
thought it was important to do (18)

**6. Concerns which prevent me from asking my partner to stimulate my clitoris are:** (check all that apply)

the sight  
the size  
the taste  
the smell  
the fear of being seen as a freak (1)  
religious views (2)  
general discomfort (3)  
none (25)

**7. I feel comfortable requesting clitoral stimulation from my partner:**

all the time (14)  
sometimes (9)  
none at all (7)

**8. I feel my partner:**

does not understand my need for clitoral stimulation (2)  
fully appreciates my need for clitoral stimulation (25)  
thinks only about his own sexual needs and satisfaction (3)  
is not interested in learning

**9. I believe that engaging in clitoral self-pleasuring is:**

important and healthy (17)  
unnecessary and selfish  
sinful (2)  
OK but over-rated (11)

**10. I enjoy receiving clitoral stimulation:** (check all that apply)

as part of foreplay (23)  
simultaneously with vaginal or anal penetration (9)  
after I orgasm (1)  
all of the above (5)

**11. Stimulating my clitoris:**

gives me intense pleasure (19)  
does nothing to enhance my pleasure (1)  
gives me some pleasure occasionally (10)

**12. I receive pleasure when my clitoris:** (check all that apply)

- is stroked with a finger (15)
- is stroked by a vibrator (11)
- is stimulated by the rubbing of the head of the penis (11)
- is licked (9)
- is both licked and stroked (15)

**13. I engage in self-pleasuring (masturbation):**

- occasionally (13)
- often (9)
- none at all (8)

**14. Stimulating my clitoris gives me an orgasm:**

- most of the time (7)
- sometimes (6)
- never (2)
- every time (15)

**15. I am only able to orgasm:**

- when my clitoris is stimulated (6)
- through vaginal intercourse (4)
- by a combination of clitoral stimulation and vaginal intercourse (19)
- through caressing of areas of the body other than the clitoris and vagina (1)

**16. I:**

- am satisfied with the way my partner stimulates my clitoris (22)
- wish my partner would ask me how I want to have my clitoris stimulated (3)
- wish my partner would spend more time stimulating my clitoris (5)

## Total Female Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

- another name for the G-Spot (11)
- the opening through which pee flows (9)
- an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (100)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

- above the vaginal opening (114)
- inside the vagina (5)
- next to the anus (1)

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:*** (check all that apply)

- school mates or friends (33)
- books, magazines, movies (64)
- family members (11)
- my partner (31)
- a medical professional (21)
- classroom instruction (41)

**4. *I:***

- have never examined my clitoris (15)
- frequently examine my clitoris (45)
- examine my clitoris occasionally (60)

**5. *Issues which have influenced my examination of my clitoris are:***  
(check all that apply)

- fear of touching myself (4)
- having been warned not to by parents (3)
- feeling awkward about it (10)
- never felt the need to (23)
- thought it was important to do (84)

**6. Concerns which prevent me from asking my partner to stimulate my clitoris are:** (check all that apply)

- the sight (1)
- the size (2)
- the taste (2)
- the smell (4)
- the fear of being seen as a freak (3)
- religious views (2)
- general discomfort (10)
- none (102)

**7. I feel comfortable requesting clitoral stimulation from my partner:**

- all the time (62)
- sometimes (42)
- none at all (16)

**8. I feel my partner:**

- does not understand my need for clitoral stimulation (14)
- fully appreciates my need for clitoral stimulation (94)
- thinks only about his own sexual needs and satisfaction (8)
- is not interested in learning (4)

**9. I believe that engaging in clitoral self-pleasuring is:**

- important and healthy (85)
- unnecessary and selfish (3)
- sinful (4)
- OK but over-rated (28)

**10. I enjoy receiving clitoral stimulation:** (check all that apply)

- as part of foreplay (64)
- simultaneously with vaginal or anal penetration (32)
- after I orgasm (2)
- all of the above (51)

**11. Stimulating my clitoris:**

- gives me intense pleasure (92)
- does nothing to enhance my pleasure (1)
- gives me some pleasure occasionally (27)

**12. I receive pleasure when my clitoris:** (check all that apply)

- is stroked with a finger (73)
- is stroked by a vibrator (51)
- is stimulated by the rubbing of the head of the penis (66)
- is licked (55)
- is both licked and stroked (80)

**13. I engage in self-pleasuring (masturbation):**

- occasionally (59)
- often (40)
- none at all (21)

**14. Stimulating my clitoris gives me an orgasm:**

- most of the time (45)
- sometimes (25)
- never (3)
- every time (47)

**15. I am only able to orgasm:**

- when my clitoris is stimulated (23)
- through vaginal intercourse (8)
- by a combination of clitoral stimulation and vaginal intercourse (84)
- through caressing of areas of the body other than the clitoris and vagina (5)

**16. I:**

- am satisfied with the way my partner stimulates my clitoris (86)
- wish my partner would ask me how I want to have my clitoris stimulated (10)
- wish my partner would spend more time stimulating my clitoris (24)

## *Comparative Analysis of Female Responses*

### Statement 1: *The clitoris is:*

The majority of respondents from across all cultural groups (Caucasian 90%, Caribbean 90%, African American 83% and Hispanics 70%) selected the correct definition for the word clitoris. With the exception of Caribbean females, a lesser percentage (Hispanic 17%, African American 10%, Caucasian 10%) identified the clitoris as being another name for the G-spot.

### Statement 2: *The clitoris is located:*

Caucasian females had 100% accuracy in identifying the location of the clitoris. Both Caribbean and African-American females had 97% responses correctly identifying the location of the clitoris with Hispanics having 87% with accurate location for the clitoris. Hispanics, African Americans and Caribbean all had 3% of responses identifying the location of the clitoris as being 'inside the vagina' There were also 3% of responses from Hispanic females which indicated that the clitoris is next to the anus.

### Statement 3: *I learned about the clitoris from:*

Across all four cultural groups, the main source of information for learning about the clitoris was reported as 'books, magazines, movies.' Other sources in descending order of total percentages were 'classroom instruction,' 'school mates or friends,' 'my partner,' 'medical professional,' with the least source of information identified as 'family members.'

### Statement 4: *I:*

Caucasian females reported a distinctly higher percentage in the frequency of clitoral examination with 73% reporting occasional examination. Among the other three groups there was a closer range in percentages with African Americans having 47%, Hispanics 43% and Caribbean 37%. The remaining responses were inconsistently divided among 'frequently examine' and 'have never examined my clitoris.' For the former response, African Americans topped the percentages with 53%, followed by Caribbean 43% and Hispanics 37%. Respondents from only three groups indicated that they had never examined their clitoris with 20% from both Caribbean and Hispanics and 10% from African Americans.

**Statement 5: *Issues which have influenced my examination of my clitoris are:***

A majority of respondents from all groups indicated that they thought it was important to examine their clitoris. Of a total of 124 responses 84 thought it was important to do, 23 never felt the need to, 10 felt awkward about it, 4 had a fear of touching herself, and 3 had been warned not to by parents. For the respondents who 'felt it was important to do,' 26 were African Americans, followed in descending order by Hispanics and Caucasians 20, and Caribbean with 18. Of the respondents that 'never felt the need to' Caucasian and Caribbean had 8, Hispanic 5, and African American 2.

**Statement 6: *Concerns which prevent me from asking my partner to stimulate my clitoris are:***

A majority of respondents in all cultural groups indicated that there were no concerns which prevented them from asking their partner to stimulate their clitoris. Of a total of 115 responses, African Americans had 28 responses, Caucasians and Caribbean both had 25 responses, with Hispanics having 24 responses. Of the remaining concerns the least concern was 'sight' with 1 selection across all four groups.

**Statement 7: *I feel comfortable requesting clitoral stimulation from my partner:***

Caucasian females topped the responses of women who were comfortable with requesting clitoral stimulation from their partners at 67%, followed by African American 60% with Hispanics and Caribbean women at 33% and 30 % respectively. While there was some consistency across all four groups with feeling comfortable 'sometimes' in requesting clitoral stimulation, Caribbean women 23% and Hispanics 17% did not feel comfortable at all with requesting clitoral stimulation from their partner.

**Statement 8: *I feel my partner:***

Across all four cultural groups the belief that her partner fully appreciates the need for clitoral stimulation received the highest percentage of responses (Caucasian 87%, Caribbean 83%, African Americans 73% and Hispanics 70%). The percentages for other selections was divided almost evenly between the belief that the partner 'does not understand the need for clitoral stimulation' and 'thinks only about his own sexual needs and satisfaction,' with the highest percentage for the former topping at 10% for Caribbean and the latter at 3% for Caucasians. Both African Americans and Hispanics had 7%.

Statement 9: *I believe that engaging in clitoral self-pleasuring is:*

Both African-American and Caucasian women had comparatively high percentages in responses (83%) indicating a belief that engaging in clitoral stimulation is 'important and healthy.' Hispanics and Caribbean respondents had a noticeably less percentage at 60% and 57% respectively. For all four female groups the alternate choices received very low percentages with the exception of Caribbean females, a significant number (36%) of whom said masturbation was 'OK but over-rated.'

Statement 10: *I enjoy receiving clitoral stimulation:*

Among respondents in all cultural groups, the preferred choice for receiving clitoral stimulation was 'as part of foreplay' with a majority of Caribbean females preferring this. Fewer females in all four cultures expressed a preference for clitoral stimulation following orgasm. Given that 51 out of an aggregate of 149 chose 'all of the above' as a response to this statement, it is fair to suggest that females across all cultures are receptive to clitoral stimulation by whatever method that works.

Statement 11: *Stimulating my clitoris:*

The overwhelming majority of African-American (83%) and Caucasian (86%) females reported receiving intense pleasure from clitoral stimulation. Although a majority of Hispanic (73%) and Caribbean (64%) females also reported receiving intense pleasure from clitoral stimulation, these two groups also reported the highest percentages of females who said clitoral stimulation only gave some pleasure occasionally.

Statement 12: *I receive pleasure when my clitoris is:*

The use of finger(s), tongue, and penis received high scores across all four cultural groups, with no one method showing any distinct advantage. The use of a vibrator attained the lowest score across all cultural groups with the highest preference for it indicated by Caucasian, followed by Hispanics, African Americans, and lastly by Caribbean respondents who reported 2 choices for this method out of an aggregate of 60 choices.

Statement 13: *I engage in self-pleasuring:*

Across all four cultures the majority of females report that they engage in masturbation either occasionally or often. However, there are females in all cultures who do not engage in masturbation, with Hispanic and Caribbean females recording the highest numbers in this category.

Statement 14: *Stimulating my clitoris gives me an orgasm:*

The responses to this statement from all cultural groups revealed that female orgasms which resulted from clitoral stimulation varied even within each cultural group. In all groups there were females who had an orgasm 'every time' they engaged in clitoral stimulation, but there were those who only had an orgasm either 'most of the time' or 'some times' as a result of clitoral stimulation. Of the 120 females who participated in the survey, there were three, 2 Caribbean and 1 Hispanic, who reported never having an orgasm as a result of clitoral stimulation.

Statement 15: *I am only able to orgasm:*

A majority of females in all four cultural groups reported being able to orgasm only through a combination of clitoral stimulation and vaginal intercourse. A small percentage in each culture reported that they were only able to orgasm when the clitoris was directly stimulated. An even smaller percentage (Caribbean 13%, Hispanic 10%, and Caucasian 3%) reported that they were only able to orgasm exclusively by vaginal intercourse.

Statement 16: *I:*

Satisfaction with the way their partners stimulated their clitoris was strongest among Caucasian (60%), Hispanic (60%), and Caribbean (73%) females. Even so, there were females in all four cultural groups that voiced discontent with the way their male partners approached or practiced clitoral stimulation. Strongest discontent was seen in the significant percentage of African-American females who either wished that their partners would spend more time stimulating their clitoris 27%, and the 20% who wished that their partners would ask them to indicate how they wanted their clitoris stimulated.

## Caucasian Male Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

another name for the G-Spot (3)  
the opening through which pee flows  
an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (27)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

above the vaginal opening (30)  
inside the vagina  
next to the anus

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:* (check all that apply)**

school mates or friends (11)  
books, magazines, movies (17)  
family members (2)  
my partner (15)  
classroom instruction (13)  
a medical professional (3)

**4. *A woman who masturbates:* (check all that apply)**

has emotional problems (1)  
is lacking sexual fulfillment from her partner (2)  
is selfish  
is sexually aware and knows what she wants (28)

**5. *I find the thought of licking my partner's clitoris:* (check all that apply)**

unmanly  
disturbing (1)  
cool (12)  
disgusting (1)  
exciting (25)

**6. *I believe that my partner's engagement in self-pleasuring is:***

important and healthy (24)  
unnecessary (2)  
sinful (1)  
OK but over-rated (3)

**7. I believe that vaginal intercourse:**

- is the best way for a woman to receive sexual fulfillment (5)
- is not as fulfilling for a woman as clitoral stimulation (5)
- supplements clitoral stimulation for a woman's full sexual pleasure (20)

**8. A man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so that she can have an orgasm:**

- knows little about satisfying a woman (2)
- has an inadequate penis
- is aware and responsive to his partner's sexual needs (28)

**9. Concerns which prevent me from stimulating a woman's clitoris are:**  
(check all that apply)

- the sight
- the size (1)
- the taste (2)
- the smell (2)
- not performing well (2)
- the fear of being seen as a freak
- religious views (1)
- none (24)

**10. When my partner masturbates:**

- I feel left out (3)
- I feel she is thinking only of her own needs (1)
- I still feel connected to her (26)

**11. Clitoral stimulation in my relationship:**

- is usually initiated by me (10)
- is usually initiated by my partner (4)
- is initiated by either one of us (16)

**12. I stimulate my partner's clitoris with:** (check all that apply)

- my finger(s) (25)
- my tongue (26)
- a vibrator (14)
- my penis (21)

**13. I allow my partner to direct how she wants her clitoris stimulated:**

- every time (12)
- most times (11)
- some times (6)
- none at all (1)

**14. I normally stimulate my partner's clitoris:**

- as part of foreplay (15)
- simultaneously with vaginal intercourse (1)
- after she has an orgasm
- all of the above (13)
- none of the above (1)

**15. Clitoral stimulation is included in my sexual activities with my partner:**

- almost all the time (20)
- most times (8)
- occasionally (1)
- rarely
- none at all (1)

## Hispanic Male Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

another name for the G-Spot (6)  
the opening through which pee flows  
an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (24)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

above the vaginal opening (30)  
inside the vagina  
next to the anus

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:*** (check all that apply)

school mates or friends (20)  
books, magazines, movies (18)  
family members (4)  
my partner (22)  
classroom instruction (9)  
a medical professional

**4. *A woman who masturbates:*** (check all that apply)

has emotional problems  
is lacking sexual fulfillment from her partner (4)  
is selfish (1)  
is sexually aware and knows what she wants (30)

**5. *I find the thought of licking my partner's clitoris:*** (check all that apply)

unmanly  
disturbing  
cool (11)  
disgusting  
exciting (28)

**6. *I believe that my partner's engagement in self-pleasuring is:***

important and healthy (23)  
unnecessary  
sinful  
OK but over-rated (7)

**7. I believe that vaginal intercourse:**

- is the best way to give a woman sexual fulfillment (9)
- is not as fulfilling for a woman as clitoral stimulation (2)
- supplements clitoral stimulation for a woman's full sexual pleasure (19)

**8. A man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so that she can have an orgasm:**

- knows little about satisfying a woman (1)
- has an inadequate penis
- is aware and responsive to his partner's sexual needs (29)

**9. Concerns which prevent me from stimulating a woman's clitoris are:**  
(check all that apply)

- the sight (1)
- the size (1)
- the taste (2)
- the smell (4)
- not performing well (1)
- the fear of being seen as a freak
- religious views
- none (27)

**10. When my partner masturbates:**

- I feel left out (5)
- I feel she is thinking only of her own needs
- I still feel connected to her (25)

**11. Clitoral stimulation in my relationship:**

- is usually initiated by me (8)
- is usually initiated by my partner (7)
- is initiated by either one of us (15)

**12. I stimulate my partner's clitoris with:** (check all that apply)

- my finger(s) (24)
- my tongue (27)
- a vibrator (7)
- my penis (21)

***13. I allow my partner to direct how she wants her clitoris stimulated:***

every time (8)  
most times (16)  
some times (6)  
none at all

***14. I normally stimulate my partner's clitoris:***

as part of foreplay (13)  
simultaneously with vaginal intercourse (5)  
after she has an orgasm (2)  
all of the above (10)  
none of the above

***15. Clitoral stimulation is included in my sexual activities with my partner:***

almost all the time (15)  
most times (13)  
occasionally (2)  
rarely  
none at all

## African-American Male Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

another name for the G-Spot (7)  
the opening through which pee flows  
an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (23)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

above the vaginal opening (27)  
inside the vagina (3)  
next to the anus

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:* (check all that apply)**

school mates or friends (19)  
books, magazines, movies (22)  
family members (4)  
my partner (16)  
classroom instruction (10)  
a medical professional (1)

**4. *A woman who masturbates:* (check all that apply)**

has emotional problems  
is lacking sexual fulfillment from her partner (5)  
is selfish  
is sexually aware and knows what she wants (27)

**5. *I find the thought of licking my partner's clitoris:* (check all that apply)**

unmanly  
disturbing (1)  
cool (15)  
disgusting (1)  
exciting (20)

**6. *I believe that my partner's engagement in self-pleasuring is:***

important and healthy (16)  
unnecessary (1)  
sinful (1)  
OK but over-rated (12)

**7. I believe that vaginal intercourse:**

- is the best way for a woman to receive sexual fulfillment (14)
- is not as fulfilling for a woman as clitoral stimulation (1)
- supplements clitoral stimulation for a woman's full sexual pleasure (15)

**8. A man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so that she can have an orgasm:**

- knows little about satisfying a woman (6)
- has an inadequate penis (2)
- is aware and responsive to his partner's sexual needs (22)

**9. Concerns which prevent me from stimulating a woman's clitoris are:**

(check all that apply)

- the sight (4)
- the size (1)
- the taste (4)
- the smell (8)
- not performing well (1)
- the fear of being seen as a freak (1)
- religious views
- none (20)

**10. When my partner masturbates:**

- I feel left out (1)
- I feel she is thinking only of her own needs (4)
- I still feel connected to her (22)

**11. Clitoral stimulation in my relationship:**

- is usually initiated by me (2)
- is usually initiated by my partner (11)
- is initiated by either one of us (17)

**12. I stimulate my partner's clitoris with: (check all that apply)**

- my finger(s) (28)
- my tongue (19)
- a vibrator (6)
- my penis (15)

***13. I allow my partner to direct how she wants her clitoris stimulated:***

every time (**10**)  
most times (**14**)  
some times (**6**)  
none at all

***14. I normally stimulate my partner's clitoris:***

as part of foreplay (**20**)  
simultaneously with vaginal intercourse (**5**)  
after she has an orgasm (**3**)  
all of the above (**2**)  
none of the above

***15. Clitoral stimulation is included in my sexual activities with my partner:***

almost all the time (**10**)  
most times (**16**)  
occasionally (**4**)  
rarely  
none at all

## Caribbean Male Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

another name for the G-Spot (2)  
the opening through which pee flows  
an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (28)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

above the vaginal opening (30)  
inside the vagina  
next to the anus

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:* (check all that apply)**

school mates or friends (15)  
books, magazines, movies (21)  
family members (2)  
my partner (11)  
classroom instruction (3)  
a medical professional (2)

**4. *A woman who masturbates:* (check all that apply)**

has emotional problems  
is lacking sexual fulfillment from her partner (7)  
is selfish  
is sexually aware and knows what she wants (24)

**5. *I find the thought of licking my partner's clitoris:* (check all that apply)**

unmanly (1)  
disturbing (6)  
cool (9)  
disgusting (2)  
exciting (19)

**6. *I believe that my partner's engagement in self-pleasuring is:***

important and healthy (22)  
unnecessary (4)  
sinful  
OK but over-rated (4)

**7. I believe that vaginal intercourse:**

- is the best way for a woman to receive sexual fulfillment (13)
- is not as fulfilling for a woman as clitoral stimulation (3)
- supplements clitoral stimulation for a woman's full sexual pleasure (14)

**8. A man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so that she can have an orgasm:**

- knows little about satisfying a woman (4)
- has an inadequate penis (1)
- is aware and responsive to his partner's sexual needs (25)

**9. Concerns which prevent me from stimulating a woman's clitoris are:**  
(check all that apply)

- the sight (1)
- the size (6)
- the taste
- the smell (4)
- not performing well
- the fear of being seen as a freak (5)
- religious views
- none (19)

**10. When my partner masturbates:** (check all that apply)

- I feel left out (4)
- I feel she is thinking only of her own needs (7)
- I still feel connected to her (20)

**11. Clitoral stimulation in my relationship:**

- is usually initiated by me (7)
- is usually initiated by my partner (7)
- is initiated by either one of us (16)

**12. I stimulate my partner's clitoris with:** (check all that apply)

- my finger(s) (24)
- my tongue (18)
- a vibrator (2)
- my penis (16)

***13. I allow my partner to direct how she wants her clitoris stimulated:***

every time (8)  
most times (10)  
some times (11)  
none at all (1)

***14. I normally stimulate my partner's clitoris:***

as part of foreplay (15)  
simultaneously with vaginal intercourse (5)  
after she has an orgasm  
all of the above (10)  
none of the above

***15. Clitoral stimulation is included in my sexual activities with my partner:***

almost all the time (15)  
most times (7)  
occasionally (5)  
rarely (3)  
none at all

## Total Male Responses

**1. *The clitoris is:***

another name for the G-Spot (18)  
the opening through which pee flows  
an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure (102)

**2. *The clitoris is located:***

above the vaginal opening (117)  
inside the vagina (3)  
next to the anus

**3. *I learned about the clitoris from:* (check all that apply)**

school mates or friends (65)  
books, magazines, movies (78)  
family members (12)  
my partner (64)  
classroom instruction (35)  
a medical professional (6)

**4. *A woman who masturbates:* (check all that apply)**

has emotional problems (1)  
is lacking sexual fulfillment from her partner (18)  
is selfish (1)  
is sexually aware and knows what she wants (109)

**5. *I find the thought of licking my partner's clitoris:* (check all that apply)**

unmanly (1)  
disturbing (8)  
cool (47)  
disgusting (4)  
exciting (92)

**6. *I believe that my partner's engagement in self-pleasuring is:***

important and healthy (85)  
unnecessary (7)  
sinful (2)  
OK but over-rated (26)

**7. I believe that vaginal intercourse:**

is the best way for a woman to receive sexual fulfillment (41)  
is not as fulfilling for a woman as clitoral stimulation (11)  
supplements clitoral stimulation for a woman's full sexual pleasure (68)

**8. A man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so that she can have an orgasm:**

knows little about satisfying a woman (13)  
has an inadequate penis (3)  
is aware and responsive to his partner's sexual needs (104)

**9. Concerns which prevent me from stimulating a woman's clitoris are:**  
(check all that apply)

the sight (6)  
the size (9)  
the taste (8)  
the smell (18)  
not performing well (4)  
the fear of being seen as a freak (6)  
religious views (1)  
none of the above (90)

**10. When my partner masturbates:** (check all that apply)

I feel left out (17)  
I feel she is thinking only of her own needs (12)  
I still feel connected to her (93)

**11. Clitoral stimulation in my relationship:**

is usually initiated by me (27)  
is usually initiated by my partner (29)  
is initiated by either one of us (64)

**12. I stimulate my partner's clitoris with:** (check all that apply)

my finger(s) (101)  
my tongue (90)  
a vibrator (29)  
my penis (73)

***13. I allow my partner to direct how she wants her clitoris stimulated:***

every time (38)  
most times (51)  
some times (29)  
none at all (2)

***14. I normally stimulate my partner's clitoris:***

as part of foreplay (63)  
simultaneously with vaginal intercourse (16)  
after she has an orgasm (5)  
all of the above (35)  
none of the above (1)

***15. Clitoral stimulation is included in my sexual activities with my partner:***

almost all the time (60)  
most times (44)  
occasionally (12)  
rarely (3)  
none at all (1)

### *Comparative Analysis of Male Responses*

Statement 1: *The clitoris is:*

A majority of respondents (Caucasian 90%, Hispanic 80%, African American 77%, and Caribbean 93%) selected the correct definition for the word, clitoris. The lesser percentage for all four cultural groups (African American 23%, Hispanics 20%, Caribbean 7%, and Caucasian 3%) identified the clitoris as ‘another name for the G-Spot.’

Statement 2: *The clitoris is located:*

100% of Caucasian, Hispanic, and Caribbean respondents and 90% of African-American respondents, correctly identified the location of the clitoris.

Statement 3: *I learned about the clitoris from:*

Respondents in all four cultural groups identified their top three sources for information on the clitoris (in descending order) as: books, magazines, movies, school mates, and their partners. They also identified the three least common sources for clitoral information (in descending order) as: classroom instruction, family members, and medical professionals.

Statement 4: *A woman who masturbates:*

The majority of respondents in all cultural groups attributed a female’s practice of masturbation to her being sexually aware and knowledgeable about what she wants. A significantly lesser number (fairly spread across all groups) considered a female’s practice of masturbation to be related to her lacking sexual fulfillment from her partner.

Statement 5: *I find the thought of licking my partner’s clitoris:*

Respondents across all cultural groups identified their top two adjectives to describe the thought of licking their partner’s clitoris (in descending order) as ‘exciting,’ followed by ‘cool.’ The three adjectives that received the least selections were (in descending order): ‘disturbing,’ ‘disgusting,’ and ‘unmanly.’

Statement 6: *I believe that my partner's engagement in self-pleasuring is:*

Across the cultural groups (Caucasian 80%, Hispanic 77%, and Caribbean 72%) a significant majority of males considered their partner's engagement in self-pleasuring to be 'important and healthy.' For African Americans, 53% of whom considered it 'important and healthy' while 41% considered it 'OK but over-rated.'

Statement 7: *I believe that vaginal intercourse:*

Across all four cultural groups the view that vaginal intercourse supplements clitoral stimulation for a female's full sexual pleasure, received the highest percentage response. The response that had the second highest percentage for all four groups was that 'vaginal intercourse is the best way for a woman to receive sexual fulfillment.' Caucasian and Hispanic respondents reported the widest gap between these two opinions, Caucasian 60% and 17% respectively, and Hispanics 63% and 30%, respectively. In contrast, there was only slight difference between the same top two opinions for African-American and Caribbean respondents, with 50% of African-American, and 47% of Caribbean respondents reporting their view that vaginal intercourse supplements clitoral stimulation for a woman's full sexual pleasure, while 47% of African-American, and 43% of Caribbean respondents reported that 'vaginal intercourse is the best way for a woman to receive sexual satisfaction.'

Statement 8: *A man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so that she can have an orgasm:*

A majority of respondents in all cultural groups (Hispanic 97%, Caucasian 93%, Caribbean 83% and African American 73%) expressed the view that a man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so that she can have an orgasm is 'aware and responsive to his partner's sexual needs.' The only responses that associated a man's involvement in his partner's clitoral activities with his 'having an inadequate penis,' came from 7% of African-American, and 1% of Caribbean respondents.

Statement 9: *Concerns which prevent me from stimulating a woman's clitoris are:*

There were 142 total responses to this statement which invited one or more selections of possible concerns which prevented respondents from stimulating their partner's clitoris. Of the selections made, 'religious views' received 1, 'not performing well' 4, the 'sight' and 'fear of being seen as a freak' 6 each, the 'taste' 8, the 'size' 9, the 'smell' 18, and 'none of the above' 90. This latter selection was uniformly chosen across all cultural groups; receiving 24 Hispanic choices, 24 Caucasian choices, 20 African-American choices, and 19 Caribbean choices.

Statement 10: ***When my partner masturbates:***

Across all cultural groups, a majority of respondents indicated that they felt connected to their partner when she masturbated. Of the 17 selections that reported 'feeling left out' while their partner masturbated, Hispanics and African Americans (5 each) scored the highest, while of the 12 selections that said they felt that by masturbating, their partner 'was thinking only of her own needs,' the 7 Caribbean selections were the highest.

Statement 11: ***Clitoral stimulation is included in my relationship:***

A slight majority of males in all four cultural groups reported that they shared initiating clitoral stimulation with their partners. Among males who did not select this option, Caucasian and Hispanic males, more than their Caribbean and African-American counterparts took credit for initiating clitoral stimulation. In contrast, African-American males credited their partners for initiating clitoral stimulation.

Statement 12: ***I stimulate my partner's clitoris with:***

The use of finger(s), tongue, and penis received high scores across all four cultural groups, with no one method showing a distinct advantage. The use of a vibrator attained the lowest score across all cultural groups with the highest preference for it indicated by Caucasian, followed by Hispanic, African-American, and lastly by Caribbean respondents who reported 2 choices for this method out of an aggregate of 60 choices.

Statement 13: ***I allow my partner to direct how she wants her clitoris stimulated:***

Respondents from all cultural groups indicated no significant difference between those who allow their partner to direct 'every time' how she wants to have her clitoris stimulated versus those who allow their partner to direct 'most times' how she wants her clitoris stimulated. A small percentage (3%) of both Caucasian and Caribbean respondents indicated they do not afford their partner the choice of deciding how she wants her clitoris stimulated.

Statement 14: ***I normally stimulate my partner's clitoris:***

The responses from all cultural groups revealed that males stimulate their partner's clitoris at different points in a sexual encounter. While most males in all four cultural groups selected 'as part of foreplay,' others selected 'simultaneously with vaginal intercourse,' and a lesser number of males chose 'after she has an orgasm.' When the numbers of those who chose 'all of the above' is added to the equation, it shows that

there is much variety in the timing of when clitoral stimulation is done in the sexual encounter.

Statement 15: *Clitoral stimulation is included in my sexual activities with my partner:*

The strongest score from all of the possible responses to this statement came from 67% of Caucasian respondents who indicated the inclusion of clitoral stimulation in their sexual activities, 'almost all the time.' The selections 'almost all the time' and 'most times' had the highest percentages, respectively, for Caucasians, Hispanics, and Caribbean respondents, but was reversed for African-American respondents. 10% of Caribbean respondents reported that clitoral stimulation is 'rarely' included in their sexual activities, and only 1 out of 120 respondents reported that clitoral stimulation is 'never' included in his sexual activities with his partner.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### Attitudes of Male Respondents

The data from the 120 male respondents in this cross-cultural survey has provided important information on male attitudes related to the clitoris in three respects.

First, the data indicates that across all four cultural groups studied, a high percentage of men (See Appendix 3) have a good grasp of what the clitoris is, and where it is located. Even though relatively small numbers in all four cultural groups were unable to distinguish between the clitoris and the urethra, and considered the clitoris the same as the perineum, the significantly larger number who correctly defined the clitoris and identified its anatomical location, was positive and encouraging.

Second, the data provided useful information on the sources from which men in all four cultural groups acquired information about the clitoris. Caucasian, African-American and Caribbean respondents named books, magazines, movies as their main source of information on the clitoris. This indicates the influence of the media not only on areas such as politics and religions but on issues of sexuality and sexual behavior. Television, cinemas, magazines, and the internet are clearly on the frontline in providing any information on sexual issues the curious person seeks, and this information is easily accessible across cultures.

The recognition of peers as a primary source of information on the clitoris was also highlighted by the study. The significance of this is made even more telling when one considers that across all cultural groups, it is reported that a very small percentage of men attain information on the clitoris from either family members or medical professionals. A

significant number of men in all four cultural groups reported their partners as being a source of information on the clitoris. This could indicate either a curiosity on the part of the males or that their female partners have been assuming the responsibility of communicating to their men, what it is that gives them sexual pleasure.

Third, the study gives us some sense of the mind-set which drives male attitudes and practices towards the clitoris. Generally speaking, the study reveals the presence of a positive attitude towards the clitoris among males in all four cultural groups. For example, a very high percentage of respondents expressed the view that a woman who masturbates is sexually aware and knows what she wants. Also, the vast majority of men chose the terms 'cool' and 'exciting' to describe their feelings about engaging in cunnilingus; considered their partner's engagement in self-pleasuring as important and healthy; and expressed the view that the man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so that she can have an orgasm, is aware and responsive to his partner's sexual needs. Additionally, across all cultural groups, most men reported that they were not deterred from stimulating a woman's clitoris on account of its sight, size, the taste or smell of the region of the vulva.

There are however aspects of the data where contrasts among the cultural groups are more clearly seen. For example, among African-American male respondents, only a slightly higher percentage considered their partner's engagement in self-pleasuring important and healthy over those who considered it to be 'OK but over-rated.' Similarly, a significantly high percentage of African-American and Caribbean males considered vaginal intercourse the best way for a woman to receive sexual fulfillment, compared to Hispanic and Caucasian men who considered vaginal intercourse as supplemental to

clitoral stimulation in providing a woman with full sexual pleasure. Both instances described above speak undoubtedly to the role of culture in shaping sexual attitudes.

#### Practice of Male Respondents

In terms of actual sexual behavior involving the clitoris, the data shows only one noteworthy difference in practice among the male respondents. This is the seeming aversion to the use of vibrators by Hispanic, African-American, and Caribbean men. The study shows that in the stimulation of their partner's clitoris, men from these three cultures utilize finger(s), tongue, and penis as much as Caucasian male report, but not vibrators. Here again this points to a cultural reality, the 'macho' image among Hispanic men and the 'stud' image among men of African descent, both of whom have been directly or indirectly encouraged in their attitude and behaviors by statements, challenges, and the behaviors of others held in high regard in their cultural settings. Apart from this issue, the study shows that across all four cultural groups, clitoral stimulation is a regular feature in sexual activities, that men are not reluctant to initiate clitoral stimulation, and that it is often done as part of fore-play.

#### Attitudes of Female Respondents

The female respondents in the survey also provided information on the same three aspects of attitudes to the clitoris by which the male responses were examined.

First, the results show that an overwhelming majority of women in all cultural groups were aware of what the clitoris is and where it is located.

Second, the study shows the majority of women in all groups received information on the clitoris from books, movies, or magazines. However, unlike the data from the male

survey which shows that males derived their information of the clitoris primarily from books, movies, magazines and also from peers, the results of the female study show that women in all four cultures obtained information about the clitoris from a wider range of sources including classroom instruction, medical professionals, and their partners, in addition to their school mates and friends. Across all four cultural groups females rated family members as the least source for learning about the clitoris.

Third, the data reveals much about the mindset of the female respondents. Clitoral stimulation is done regularly by the majority of women in all four cultural groups, and they do it not only because they think it is important to do, but because for the vast majority of women in the study from all cultural group, it is the most reliable way of achieving an orgasm. Only 8 out of 120 females in the study indicated that they are able to achieve an orgasm exclusively through vaginal intercourse. The data also shows that across all cultural groups females have not allowed concerns about the size, shape, or other kinds of objections about the clitoris to deter them from asking their partners to stimulate their clitorises, and they are generally comfortable in requesting such stimulation.

In terms of how females in all cultural groups viewed clitoral self-stimulation, African Americans and Caucasians overwhelmingly considered engaging in clitoral self-stimulation to be important and healthy. In contrast, while a slim majority of Hispanic and Caribbean females also viewed engaging in clitoral stimulation as important and healthy, a smaller yet significant number also considered clitoral self-stimulation to be 'OK but over-rated.' A possible explanation of this is that those females expressing such views may have been forced to resort to such positions on account of the disinterest

shown by their male partners. The opinions from a third of the male respondents which indicated that the preferred method of providing satisfaction for their female partners was through vaginal penetration, and the 21% of the total male respondents that viewed clitoral stimulation as 'OK but over-rated,' seems to add validity to this explanation.

### Practice of Female Respondents

From the female participants in this study we learn that across all four cultural groups, women derive much pleasure from clitoral stimulation. Only 1 female out of 120, reported that clitoral stimulation had no effect on her achieving sexual pleasure, and only 3 out of 120 females indicated that they had never had an orgasm as a result of the stimulation of their clitoris. The overwhelming majority report that they do receive pleasure from clitoral stimulation.

Across all cultures we learn that there is no uniformed time or stage in which clitoral stimulation is preferred by women. In all of the four cultures there are females who prefer to receive it as part of foreplay, while others prefer it simultaneously with either vaginal or anal penetration. What is noticeable from the results though is that clitoral stimulation after orgasm is seemingly not favored by females in all cultural groups.

Nothing of significance was seen in the data to establish that a preferred way of receiving clitoral stimulation exists among females in one culture versus the others. Across all cultures, females equally report enjoying the pleasure of having their clitoris stroked by a finger, by a vibrator, by the rubbing of the head of the penis, by the licking movements of the tongue, and by a combination of licking and stroking. Across all cultures most female respondents expressed satisfaction with the way their partners

stimulate their clitoris, but the combined number of females who either wished that their partners would ask them how they would want to have their clitoris stimulated, or wished that their partners would spend more time stimulating their clitoris, roughly a third of the total respondents, is an indication that there is a significant number of females who are currently not satisfied with their sexual experiences but appear to be willing to suppress their needs and desires.

### Implications of the Study

This cross-cultural study on male and female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris is admittedly limited by the size of its study population. Even so, the results of the study have highlighted issues which have implications for families, sexuality professionals, classroom educators, medical professionals, as well as individuals in relationships.

The low rating accorded family members as a source of information on the clitoris by both males and females across all cultures, suggests that there is a widespread lack of conversation about sexuality issues in the home. In an environment which is supposed to be safe, one would expect the home to be a place where factual information is handed down across the generations. But this does not appear to be the case. It is the absence of this which leaves children and teenagers to grow up relying on information from potentially unreliable sources. The task of changing this situation so that there is increased conversation on sexuality issues in the home will be a challenging one in which sexuality counselors, educators, and therapists will have to play a major role.

Another implication which this study presents, is the way in which it challenges sexuality counselors, educators, and therapists to be sensitive to the way culture informs both sexual attitudes and practices. This will enable counselors and therapists to better navigate the therapeutic process when their clients are in cross-cultural relationships, and it will ensure that educators who prepare sex education curriculum and other teaching material will effectively acknowledge cultural differences in doing their work.

Since the influence of the media in providing information on sexuality issues has been endorsed by this study, it presents we believe, a challenge to authors and film makers to be factual and realistic in their work. Scenes in pornographic films which depict a man thrusting his partner almost endlessly, and without any direct stimulation of her clitoris, or any effort to inquire what she wants, serves only to perpetuate the notion that such practices are the norm for male sexual behavior.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to inquire into the attitudes and practices of Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, and Caribbean males and females in relation to the clitoris. One hypothesis with which we approached this study was that culture would inform much of the attitudes and practices of African-American, Hispanic, and Caribbean males and females and that this would be reflected in the difference in responses compared to Caucasian respondents. Another was that compared to African – American, Hispanic, and Caribbean males and females, Caucasian males and females would show more openness in their attitudes to the clitoris and creativity in their practices based on the influence of the media and exposure to sexual education in North America.

The results of the study confirmed our hypotheses to some extent but presented some surprises which we did not anticipate. Females across all four cultural groups displayed a positive view of clitoral stimulation with an understanding of its place in their pursuit of sexual satisfaction. Even so, females in all four cultural groups had their own preferences on how to achieve maximum benefit from clitoral stimulation, and while across all cultures the majority of females appeared to be enjoying clitoral stimulation, close to one fifth of them reported their wish that their male partners would spend more time stimulating their clitoris.

Similarly, a majority of males in all cultural groups knew about the clitoris and how it contributes to female sexual pleasure. A majority of males in all four cultural groups appeared open and willing to fulfill the needs of their partners. Even so, a small minority maintained that vaginal intercourse was the best way for a woman to achieve sexual satisfaction. This highlights, we believe, the reality that powerful beliefs about

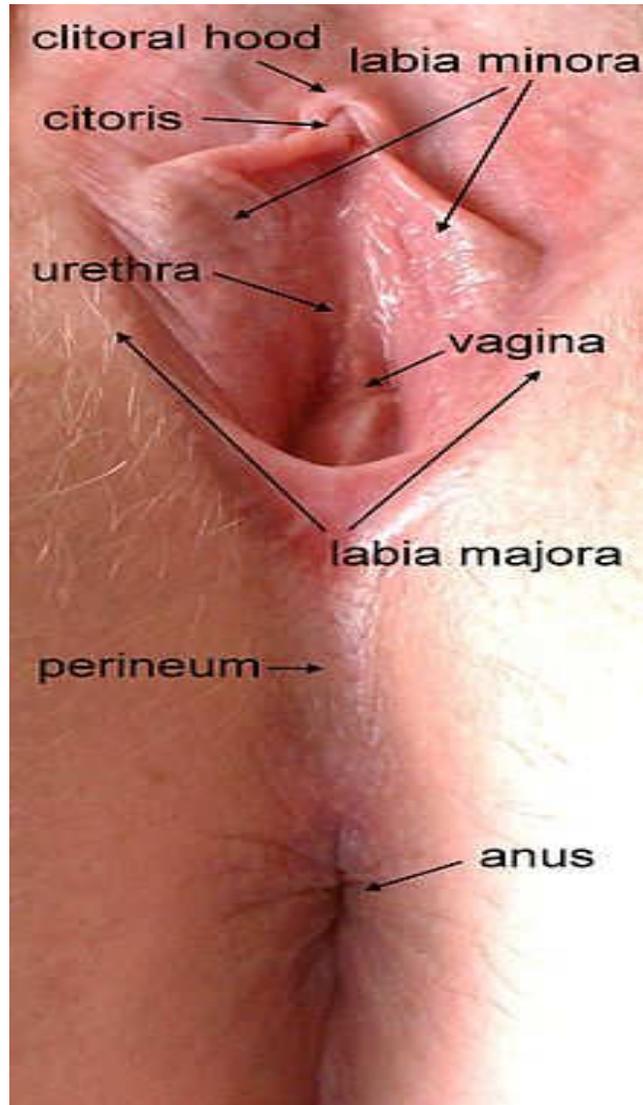
male sexual prowess still exist especially among Caribbean, Hispanic, and African-American males, and that this makes it difficult for males to be responsive to the needs of their female partners as it relates to clitoral stimulation.

Yet the findings from this study have confounded some of our hypotheses, especially as it relates to culture. One that stands out is that religious views did not inform the attitudes and practices of Caribbean and Hispanic respondents in the way we thought they would. A majority of males in both cultures have shown their openness to engage in cunnilingus and did not seem deterred in doing so by either the long-standing expectations of what constitutes 'normal' male behavior, or by religious views. This was a surprise to us, and perhaps confirms what Hatfield & Rapson (1996) describes as the tendency to think that once people have been socialized by their cultures, their personalities and characters are fixed forever. This study shows that this is not so. For instance, although we do not have research results to substantiate our claim, we can recall conversations twenty or so years ago with both male and female classmates and colleagues in the English speaking Caribbean in which terms such as 'cool,' and 'exciting,' would definitely not be used by males to describe licking a woman's clitoris, and similarly, females would not be proud to brag about receiving clitoral stimulation as part of their sexual experience. The views of respondents in this study show that such attitudes and practices have changed and continue to change. Who knows what some similar study of this topic and populations might reveal five years from now?

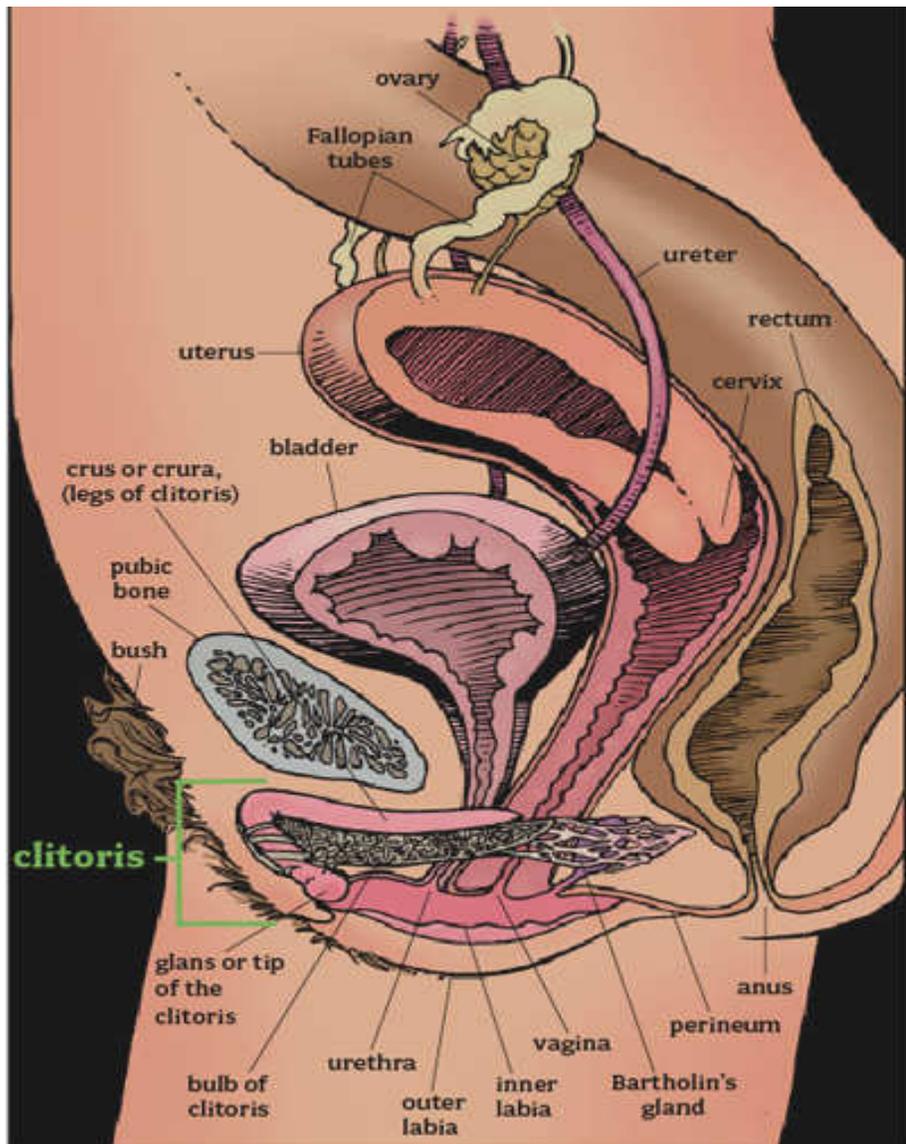
This study makes it clear that there is no monopoly on attitudes or practices related to the clitoris in any one culture. Across all cultures studied, a majority of males and females consider clitoral stimulation an important part of their sexual practice, and in all

four cultures females are equally passionate about their need for clitoral stimulation, and males are responding to these needs utilizing a variety of techniques to provide their partners with the satisfaction that they need. We believe that factors such as access to sexual education and media influence are responsible for this more open and accepting approach to clitoral stimulation among Caucasian males and females. Yet even as we also find some resistance and adherence to traditional views among Caribbean and Hispanic males and females, we also believe that in time the impact of media and education will also influence the attitudes and practices of males and females in these cultures. As is the case with most research, this study raises more questions than it answers. Our hope is that others will join us in pursuing the study of cross-cultural sexual behavior, which is of ultimate benefit to sexologists, clients, and the wider field of sexology.

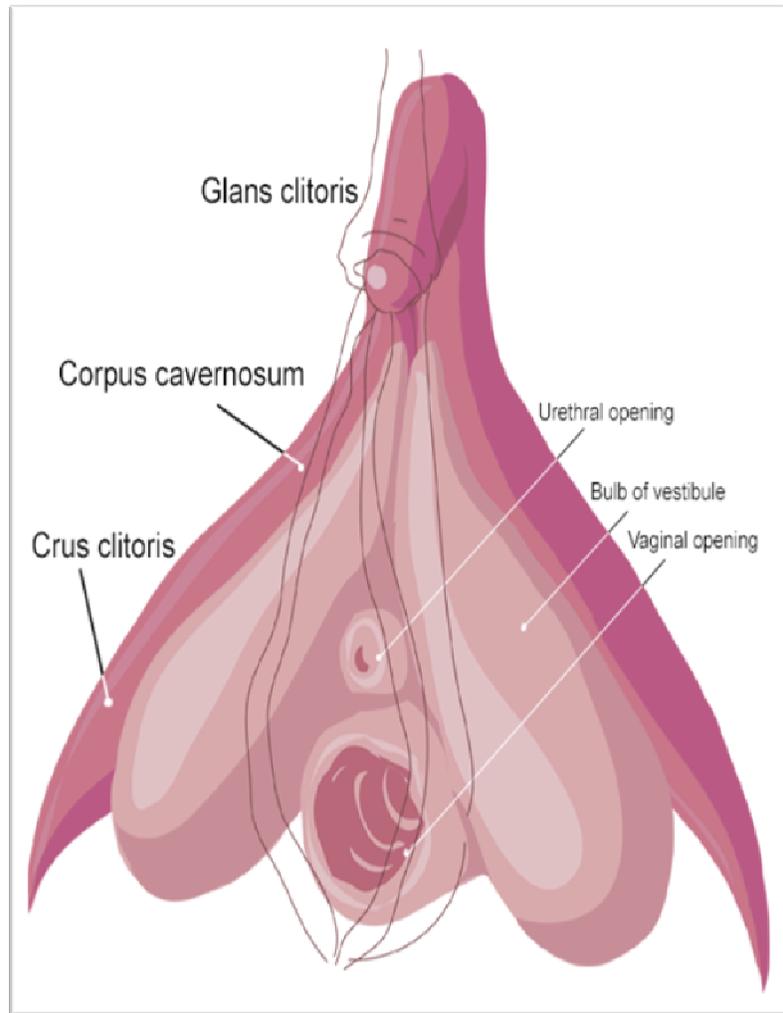
**Appendix 1: View of Vulva**



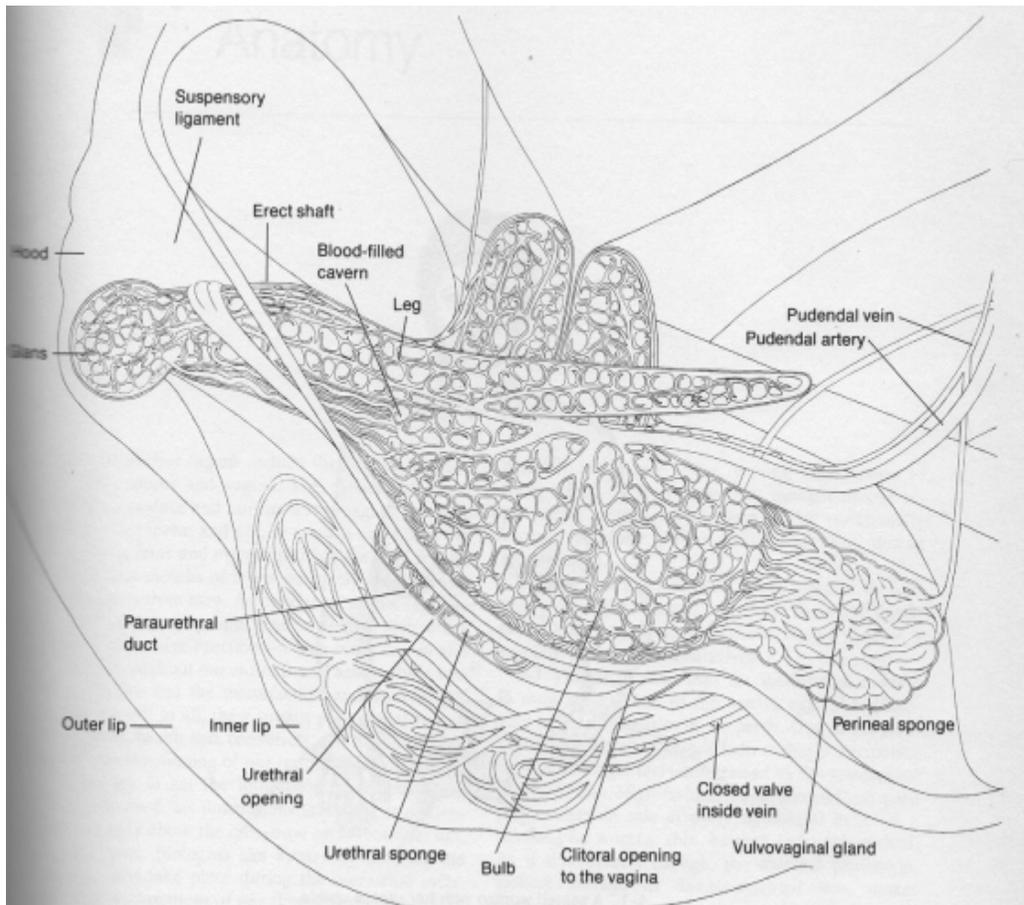
Appendix 2: View of clitoris in relation to female reproductive system



**Appendix 3: View of interior clitoral structure**



**Appendix 4: View of clitoris when engorged**



## Appendix 5: Male Questionnaire

1. **My ethnic background is:**
  - Caucasian
  - Hispanic
  - African American
  - Caribbean
  
2. **My age range is:**
  - 20 - 24 years
  - 25 - 40 years
  - 41 - 60 years
  
3. **The clitoris is:**
  - another name for the G-Spot
  - the opening through which pee flows
  - an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure
  
4. **The clitoris is located:**
  - above the vaginal opening
  - inside the vagina
  - next to the anus
  
5. **I learnt about the clitoris from:** *(check all that apply)*
  - school mates or friends
  - books/magazines/movies
  - family members
  - my partner
  - classroom instruction
  - a medical professional
  
6. **A woman who masturbates:** *(check all that apply)*
  - has emotional problems
  - is lacking sexual fulfillment from her partner
  - is selfish
  - is sexually aware and knows what she wants
  
7. **I find the thought of licking my partner's clitoris:** *(check all that apply)*
  - unmanly
  - disturbing
  - cool
  - disgusting
  - exciting

8. **I believe that my partner's engagement in self-stimulation is:**
- important and healthy
  - unnecessary
  - sinful
  - OK but over-rated
9. **I believe that vaginal intercourse:**
- is the best way to give a woman sexual fulfillment
  - is not as fulfilling for a woman as clitoral stimulation
  - supplements clitoral stimulation for a woman's full sexual pleasure
10. **A man who stimulates his partner's clitoris so she can have an orgasm:**
- knows little about satisfying a woman
  - has an inadequate penis
  - is aware and responsive to his partner's sexual needs
11. **Concerns which prevent me from stimulating a woman's clitoris are:**  
*(check all that apply)*
- the sight
  - the size
  - the taste
  - the smell
  - not performing well
  - the fear of being seen as a freak
  - religious views
  - none of the above
12. **When my partner masturbates:** *(check all that apply)*
- I feel left out
  - I feel she is thinking only of her own needs
  - I still feel connected to her
13. **Clitoral stimulation in my relationship:**
- is usually initiated by me
  - is usually initiated by my partner
  - is initiated by either one of us
14. **I stimulate my partner's clitoris with:** *(check all that apply)*
- my finger(s)
  - my tongue
  - a vibrator
  - my penis

15. **I allow my partner to direct how she wants her clitoris stimulated:**

- every time
- most times
- some times
- one at all

16. **I normally stimulate my partner's clitoris:**

- as part of foreplay
- simultaneously with vaginal intercourse
- after she has an orgasm
- all of the above
- none of the above

17. **Clitoral stimulation is included in my sexual activities with my partner:**

- almost every time
- most times
- occasionally
- rarely
- none at all

## Appendix 6: Female Questionnaire

1. **My ethnic background is:**
  - Caucasian
  - Hispanic
  - African American
  - Caribbean
  
2. **My age range is:**
  - 20 - 24 years
  - 25 - 40 years
  - 41 - 60 years
  
3. **The clitoris is:**
  - another name for the G-Spot
  - the opening through which pee flows
  - an area outside the vagina that provides sexual pleasure
  
4. **The clitoris is located:**
  - above the vaginal opening
  - inside the vagina
  - next to the anus
  
5. **I learned about the clitoris from:** *(check all that apply)*
  - school mates or friends
  - books/magazines/movies
  - family members
  - my partner
  - a medical professional
  - classroom instruction
  
6. **I:**
  - have never examined my clitoris
  - frequently examine my clitoris
  - examine my clitoris occasionally
  
7. **Issues which have influenced my examination of my clitoris are:**  
*(check all that apply)*
  - fear of touching myself
  - having been warned not to by parents
  - feeling awkward about it
  - never felt the need to
  - thought it was important to do

8. **Concerns which prevent me from asking my partner to stimulate my clitoris are:** *(check all that apply)*
- the sight
  - the size
  - the taste
  - the smell
  - the fear of being seen as a freak
  - religious views
  - general discomfort
  - none
9. **I feel comfortable requesting clitoral stimulation from my partner:**
- all the time
  - some times
  - none at all
10. **I feel my partner:**
- does not understand my need for clitoral stimulation
  - fully appreciates my need for clitoral stimulation
  - thinks only about his own sexual needs and satisfaction
  - is not interested in learning
11. **I believe that engaging in clitoral self-stimulation is:**
- important and healthy
  - unnecessary and selfish
  - sinful
  - OK but over-rated
12. **I enjoy receiving clitoral stimulation:** *(check all that apply)*
- as part of foreplay
  - simultaneously with vaginal or anal penetration
  - after I orgasm
  - all of the above
13. **Stimulating my clitoris:**
- gives me intense pleasure
  - does nothing to enhance my pleasure
  - gives me some pleasure occasionally

14. **I receive most pleasure when my clitoris:** (check all that apply)
- is stroked by a finger
  - is stroked by a vibrator
  - is stimulated by the rubbing of the head of the penis
  - is licked
  - is both licked and stroked
15. **I engage in self-stimulation (masturbation):**
- occasionally
  - often
  - none at all
16. **Stimulating my clitoris gives me an orgasm:**
- most of the time
  - sometimes
  - never
  - every time
17. **I am only able to orgasm:**
- when my clitoris is stimulated
  - through vaginal intercourse
  - by a combination of clitoral stimulation and vaginal intercourse
  - through caressing of areas of the body other than the clitoris and vagina
18. **I:**
- am satisfied with the way my partner stimulates my clitoris
  - wish my partner would ask me how I want to have my clitoris stimulated
  - wish my partner would spend more time stimulating my clitoris

## **Appendix 7: Survey Invitation (Online Version)**

As part of our coursework towards the completion of our doctoral degree in clinical sexology at the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists, we are undertaking a joint project of sexuality research, titled: “A cross cultural study of male and female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris.”

This study will be centered on four cultural groups, namely Caucasians and African Americans living in North America, Hispanics (specifically Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic), and people from the English speaking Caribbean. It will focus on men and women between the ages of 20 and 60 who are currently active in heterosexual relationships.

Through this study we hope to discover what are any common or distinctive features in attitudes and practices among males and females in these cultural groups. Please choose either the male or female questionnaire based on your sex. The choice of questionnaires should appear once you point your cursor to the survey tab. There will be 18 statements on the female questionnaire and 17 on the male questionnaire. There are two types of statements in each questionnaire. One type will ask you to select from the provided answers, the *one* which best describes your attitude or practice. The other type will ask you to check *as many of the statements that apply* from a list of suggested responses. Please make sure to respond to ALL statements.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please click on the button to submit your form. Please be assured that there is no way for us to identify your questionnaire once you submit it. Your participation will make it possible for us to gather data for this study of human sexual behavior. If you are interested in learning the results of the survey, please contact us at [info@innovationsrscs.com](mailto:info@innovationsrscs.com). Thanks in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

Yours truly,

John G. Smith  
Claudia E. Smith

## **Appendix 8: Survey Invitation (Hard-copy Version)**

As part of our coursework towards the completion of our doctoral degree in clinical sexology at the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists, we are undertaking a joint project of sexuality research, titled: “A cross cultural study of male and female attitudes and practices related to the clitoris.”

This study will be centered on four cultural groups, namely Caucasians and African Americans living in North America, Hispanics (specifically Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic), and the English speaking Caribbean. It will focus on men and women between the ages of 20 and 60 who are currently active in heterosexual relationships.

Through this study we hope to discover what are any common or distinctive features in attitudes and practices among males and females in these cultural groups. Please choose either the male or female questionnaire based on your sex. Please DO NOT write your name on the form. There will be 18 statements on the female questionnaire and 17 on the male questionnaire. There are two types of statements in each questionnaire. One type will ask you to select from the provided answers, the *one* which best describes your attitude or practice. The check boxes for these questions are the round ones. The other type will ask you to check *as many of the statements that apply* from a list of suggested responses. The check boxes for these questions are the square boxes. Please make sure to respond to ALL statements.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please fold it, place it in the self-addressed envelope and put it in the mail. Your participation will make it possible for us to gather data for this study of human sexual behavior. If you are interested in learning the results of the survey, please contact us at [info@innovationsrscs.com](mailto:info@innovationsrscs.com). Thanks in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

Yours truly,

John G. Smith  
Claudia E. Smith

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