

Thank you for your interest in this research study. Data collection for this study is now complete and data analysis is ongoing. Below is a brief summary of the study and results available to date.

Methodology Information

Participants who completed this study were randomly assigned to one of two online surveys focused on either (a) experiences with cybersex (online sexual communications between at least 2 people), or (b) motivations for online sexual activities. All participants completed questions about background and personal history, sexual satisfaction, response tendency, and experiences with a variety of online sexual activities, some of which included specific types of partners and others that involved activities on one's own. Participants who reported a cybersex experience answered a number of questions about their experience. Participants who did not report a cybersex experience but did report experience with other types of online sexual activities (e.g., viewing/posting erotica or pornography) answered questions about those experiences. Some participants completed more than one survey. In total, over 800 people completed at least one of our surveys. Most were living in Canada (about 70%) or the USA (about 20%), although some lived in a variety of other Western countries. Most were in a committed relationship.

Results

We expect to publish several manuscripts based on these data. To date, we have published two journal articles and given several conference presentations. First, we examined and published data related to heterosexual men's and women's desired and actual experiences with cybersex (Shaughnessy & Byers, 2014). In this study, we were particularly interested in the relationship context and gender differences in cybersex. We found that most (78.5%) of the heterosexual men and women who completed the surveys reported having had at least one cybersex experience in their lifetime. Our results suggest that cybersex occurs most often with a primary partner. That is, most (82%) had engaged in cybersex with a primary romantic partner and 37% had only engaged in cybersex with this type of partner. Significantly fewer participants reported cybersex experience with someone known who was not a partner (46%), or with a stranger (37%), and this was true for both men and women. Participants also reported desiring and engaging in more frequent cybersex with a primary romantic partner compared to someone known who was not a partner and then a stranger. Although men reported desiring more frequent cybersex with all types of partners compared to women, they only engaged in more frequent cybersex with a stranger. These findings collectively suggest that cybersex is similar to offline partnered sexual activities; that is, unlike what typically is depicted in the media, many people have cybersex with their offline romantic and sex partner, not with a stranger.

In a second publication we used our data to determine how best to assess people's cybersex experiences (Shaughnessy & Byers, 2013). There are two possibilities: ask them a question such as *have you ever engaged in cybersex*; or, ask them about their experience with a range of behaviours that are examples of cybersex. Our participants completed both types of measures.

We found that most participants (72%) reported their cybersex experience on both types of measures, but over one quarter (27%) were inconsistent in their responses—that is, they did not indicate that they had engaged in cybersex but nonetheless reported that they had engaged in one or more specific behaviours that fit with the definition of cybersex. Participants who were not consistent in their responses were more likely to have only ever engaged in cybersex with their primary romantic partner compared to having engaged in cybersex with a stranger. Overall, the findings from this study suggested that cybersex is best measured by asking people about their experiences with multiple, specific online sexual behaviours and with multiple types of partners.

We are working on several other manuscripts from your responses to these questionnaires. For example, we are examining these same questions in the responses of our participants who identified as a sexual minority. We are also examining participants' motivations for engaging in cybersex and how these motivations relate to which type of partner they engage in cybersex with. Finally, we are examining the extent to which cybersex experience and other on-line sexual experiences are associated with sexual satisfaction. As these results become available, we will update this information page.

Shaughnessy, K., & Byers, E. S. (2014). Contextualizing cybersex experience: Heterosexually identified men and women's desire for and experiences with cybersex in three types of relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior*. doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.12.005

Shaughnessy, K., & Byers, E. S. (2013). Seeing the forest through the trees: Using cybersex as a case study of single versus multi-item measures of sexual behaviour. *Canadian Journal of Behaviour Science*, 45(3), 220-229. doi: [10.1037/a0031331](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031331)