

**Substance/medication use.** Another major differential diagnosis is whether the erectile problem is secondary to substance/medication use. An onset that coincides with the beginning of substance/medication use and that dissipates with discontinuation of the substance/medication or dose reduction is suggestive of a substance/medication-induced sexual dysfunction.

**Another medical condition.** The most difficult aspect of the differential diagnosis of erectile disorder is ruling out erectile problems that are fully explained by medical factors. Such cases would not receive a diagnosis of a mental disorder. The distinction between erectile disorder as a mental disorder and erectile dysfunction as the result of another medical condition is usually unclear, and many cases will have complex, interactive biological and psychiatric etiologies. If the individual is older than 40–50 years and/or has concomitant medical problems, the differential diagnosis should include medical etiologies, especially vascular disease. The presence of an organic disease known to cause erectile problems does not confirm a causal relationship. For example, a man with diabetes mellitus can develop erectile disorder in response to psychological stress. In general, erectile dysfunction due to organic factors is generalized and gradual in onset. An exception would be erectile problems after traumatic injury to the nervous innervation of the genital organs (e.g., spinal cord injury). Erectile problems that are situational and inconsistent and that have an acute onset after a stressful life event are most often due to psychological events. An age of less than 40 years is also suggestive of a psychological etiology to the difficulty.

**Other sexual dysfunctions.** Erectile disorder may coexist with premature (early) ejaculation and male hypoactive sexual desire disorder.

## Comorbidity

Erectile disorder can be comorbid with other sexual diagnoses, such as premature (early) ejaculation and male hypoactive sexual desire disorder, as well as with anxiety and depressive disorders. Erectile disorder is common in men with lower urinary tract symptoms related to prostatic hypertrophy. Erectile disorder may be comorbid with dyslipidemia, cardiovascular disease, hypogonadism, multiple sclerosis, diabetes mellitus, and other diseases that interfere with the vascular, neurological, or endocrine function necessary for normal erectile function.

## Relationship to International Classification of Diseases

Erectile response is coded as failure of genital response in ICD-10 (F2.2).

## Female Orgasmic Disorder

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### Diagnostic Criteria

**302.73 (F52.31)**

- A. Presence of either of the following symptoms and experienced on almost all or all (approximately 75%–100%) occasions of sexual activity (in identified situational contexts or, if generalized, in all contexts):
  - 1. Marked delay in, marked infrequency of, or absence of orgasm.
  - 2. Markedly reduced intensity of orgasmic sensations.
- B. The symptoms in Criterion A have persisted for a minimum duration of approximately 6 months.
- C. The symptoms in Criterion A cause clinically significant distress in the individual.
- D. The sexual dysfunction is not better explained by a nonsexual mental disorder or as a consequence of severe relationship distress (e.g., partner violence) or other significant

stressors and is not attributable to the effects of a substance/medication or another medical condition.

Specify whether:

**Lifelong:** The disturbance has been present since the individual became sexually active.

**Acquired:** The disturbance began after a period of relatively normal sexual function.

Specify whether:

**Generalized:** Not limited to certain types of stimulation, situations, or partners.

**Situational:** Only occurs with certain types of stimulation, situations, or partners.

Specify if:

**Never experienced an orgasm under any situation.**

Specify current severity:

**Mild:** Evidence of mild distress over the symptoms in Criterion A.

**Moderate:** Evidence of moderate distress over the symptoms in Criterion A.

**Severe:** Evidence of severe or extreme distress over the symptoms in Criterion A.

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## Diagnostic Features

Female orgasmic disorder is characterized by difficulty experiencing orgasm and/or markedly reduced intensity of orgasmic sensations (Criterion A). Women show wide variability in the type or intensity of stimulation that elicits orgasm. Similarly, subjective descriptions of orgasm are extremely varied, suggesting that it is experienced in very different ways, both across women and on different occasions by the same woman. For a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder, symptoms must be experienced on almost all or all (approximately 75%–100%) occasions of sexual activity (in identified situational contexts or, if generalized, in all contexts) and have a minimum duration of approximately 6 months. The use of the minimum severity and duration criteria is intended to distinguish transient orgasm difficulties from more persistent orgasmic dysfunction. The inclusion of “approximately” in Criterion B allows for clinician judgment in cases in which symptom duration does not meet the recommended 6-month threshold.

For a woman to have a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder, clinically significant distress must accompany the symptoms (Criterion C). In many cases of orgasm problems, the causes are multifactorial or cannot be determined. If female orgasmic disorder is deemed to be better explained by another mental disorder, the effects of a substance/medication, or a medical condition, then a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder would not be made. Finally, if interpersonal or significant contextual factors, such as severe relationship distress, intimate partner violence, or other significant stressors, are present, then a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder would not be made.

Many women require clitoral stimulation to reach orgasm, and a relatively small proportion of women report that they always experience orgasm during penile-vaginal intercourse. Thus, a woman’s experiencing orgasm through clitoral stimulation but not during intercourse does not meet criteria for a clinical diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder. It is also important to consider whether orgasmic difficulties are the result of inadequate sexual stimulation; in these cases, there may still be a need for care, but a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder would not be made.

## Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

Associations between specific patterns of personality traits or psychopathology and orgasmic dysfunction have generally not been supported. Compared with women without the disorder, some women with female orgasmic disorder may have greater difficulty communicating about sexual issues. Overall sexual satisfaction, however, is not strongly correlated with orgasmic experience. Many women report high levels of sexual satisfaction

despite rarely or never experiencing orgasm. Orgasmic difficulties in women often co-occur with problems related to sexual interest and arousal.

In addition to the subtypes “lifelong/acquired” and “generalized/situational,” the following five factors must be considered during assessment and diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder given that they may be relevant to etiology and/or treatment: 1) partner factors (e.g., partner’s sexual problems, partner’s health status); 2) relationship factors (e.g., poor communication, discrepancies in desire for sexual activity); 3) individual vulnerability factors (e.g., poor body image, history of sexual or emotional abuse), psychiatric comorbidity (e.g., depression, anxiety), or stressors (e.g., job loss, bereavement); 4) cultural/religious factors (e.g., inhibitions related to prohibitions against sexual activity; attitudes toward sexuality); and 5) medical factors relevant to prognosis, course, or treatment. Each of these factors may contribute differently to the presenting symptoms of different women with this disorder.

## Prevalence

Reported prevalence rates for female orgasmic problems in women vary widely, from 10% to 42%, depending on multiple factors (e.g., age, culture, duration, and severity of symptoms); however, these estimates do not take into account the presence of distress. Only a proportion of women experiencing orgasm difficulties also report associated distress. Variation in how symptoms are assessed (e.g., the duration of symptoms and the recall period) also influence prevalence rates. Approximately 10% of women do not experience orgasm throughout their lifetime.

## Development and Course

By definition, lifelong female orgasmic disorder indicates that the orgasmic difficulties have always been present, whereas the acquired subtype would be assigned if the woman’s orgasmic difficulties developed after a period of normal orgasmic functioning.

A woman’s first experience of orgasm can occur any time from the prepubertal period to well into adulthood. Women show a more variable pattern in age at first orgasm than do men, and women’s reports of having experienced orgasm increase with age. Many women learn to experience orgasm as they experience a wide variety of stimulation and acquire more knowledge about their bodies. Women’s rates of orgasm consistency (defined as “usually or always” experiencing orgasm) are higher during masturbation than during sexual activity with a partner.

## Risk and Prognostic Factors

**Temperamental.** A wide range of psychological factors, such as anxiety and concerns about pregnancy, can potentially interfere with a woman’s ability to experience orgasm.

**Environmental.** There is a strong association between relationship problems, physical health, and mental health and orgasm difficulties in women. Sociocultural factors (e.g., gender role expectations and religious norms) are also important influences on the experience of orgasmic difficulties.

**Genetic and physiological.** Many physiological factors may influence a woman’s experience of orgasm, including medical conditions and medications. Conditions such as multiple sclerosis, pelvic nerve damage from radical hysterectomy, and spinal cord injury can all influence orgasmic functioning in women. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors are known to delay or inhibit orgasm in women. Women with vulvovaginal atrophy (characterized by symptoms such as vaginal dryness, itching, and pain) are significantly more likely to report orgasm difficulties than are women without this condition. Menopausal status is not consistently associated with the likelihood of orgasm difficulties. There may be a significant genetic contribution to variation in female orgasmic function. However,

psychological, sociocultural, and physiological factors likely interact in complex ways to influence women's experience of orgasm and of orgasm difficulties.

## Culture-Related Diagnostic Issues

The degree to which lack of orgasm in women is regarded as a problem that requires treatment may vary depending on cultural context. In addition, women differ in how important orgasm is to their sexual satisfaction. There may be marked sociocultural and generational differences in women's orgasmic ability. For example, the prevalence of inability to reach orgasm has ranged from 17.7% (in Northern Europe) to 42.2% (in Southeast Asia).

## Diagnostic Markers

Although measurable physiological changes occur during female orgasm, including changes in hormones, pelvic floor musculature, and brain activation, there is significant variability in these indicators of orgasm across women. In clinical situations, the diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder is based on a woman's self-report.

## Functional Consequences of Female Orgasmic Disorder

The functional consequences of female orgasmic disorder are unclear. Although there is a strong association between relationship problems and orgasmic difficulties in women, it is unclear whether relationship factors are risk factors for orgasmic difficulties or are consequences of those difficulties.

## Differential Diagnosis

**Nonsexual mental disorders.** Nonsexual mental disorders, such as major depressive disorder, which is characterized by markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities, may explain female orgasmic disorder. If the orgasmic difficulties are better explained by another mental disorder, then a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder would not be made.

**Substance/medication-induced sexual dysfunction.** Substance/medication use may explain the orgasmic difficulties.

**Another medical condition.** If the disorder is due to another medical condition (e.g., multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury), then a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder would not be made.

**Interpersonal factors.** If interpersonal or significant contextual factors, such as severe relationship distress, intimate partner violence, or other significant stressors, are associated with the orgasmic difficulties, then a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder would not be made.

**Other sexual dysfunctions.** Female orgasmic disorder may occur in association with other sexual dysfunctions (e.g., female sexual interest/arousal disorder). The presence of another sexual dysfunction does not rule out a diagnosis of female orgasmic disorder. Occasional orgasmic difficulties that are short-term or infrequent and are not accompanied by clinically significant distress or impairment are not diagnosed as female orgasmic disorder. A diagnosis is also not appropriate if the problems are the result of inadequate sexual stimulation.

## Comorbidity

Women with female orgasmic disorder may have co-occurring sexual interest/arousal difficulties. Women with diagnoses of other nonsexual mental disorders, such as major depressive disorder, may experience lower sexual interest/arousal, and this may indirectly increase the likelihood of orgasmic difficulties.

# Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder

## Diagnostic Criteria

**302.72 (F52.22)**

- A. Lack of, or significantly reduced, sexual interest/arousal, as manifested by at least three of the following:
1. Absent/reduced interest in sexual activity.
  2. Absent/reduced sexual/erotic thoughts or fantasies.
  3. No/reduced initiation of sexual activity, and typically unreceptive to a partner's attempts to initiate.
  4. Absent/reduced sexual excitement/pleasure during sexual activity in almost all or all (approximately 75%–100%) sexual encounters (in identified situational contexts or, if generalized, in all contexts).
  5. Absent/reduced sexual interest/arousal in response to any internal or external sexual/erotic cues (e.g., written, verbal, visual).
  6. Absent/reduced genital or nongenital sensations during sexual activity in almost all or all (approximately 75%–100%) sexual encounters (in identified situational contexts or, if generalized, in all contexts).
- B. The symptoms in Criterion A have persisted for a minimum duration of approximately 6 months.
- C. The symptoms in Criterion A cause clinically significant distress in the individual.
- D. The sexual dysfunction is not better explained by a nonsexual mental disorder or as a consequence of severe relationship distress (e.g., partner violence) or other significant stressors and is not attributable to the effects of a substance/medication or another medical condition.

*Specify whether:*

**Lifelong:** The disturbance has been present since the individual became sexually active.

**Acquired:** The disturbance began after a period of relatively normal sexual function.

*Specify whether:*

**Generalized:** Not limited to certain types of stimulation, situations, or partners.

**Situational:** Only occurs with certain types of stimulation, situations, or partners.

*Specify current severity:*

**Mild:** Evidence of mild distress over the symptoms in Criterion A.

**Moderate:** Evidence of moderate distress over the symptoms in Criterion A.

**Severe:** Evidence of severe or extreme distress over the symptoms in Criterion A.

## Diagnostic Features

In assessing female sexual interest/arousal disorder, interpersonal context must be taken into account. A “desire discrepancy,” in which a woman has lower desire for sexual activity than her partner, is not sufficient to diagnose female sexual interest/arousal disorder. In order for the criteria for the disorder to be met, there must be absence or reduced frequency or intensity of at least three of six indicators (Criterion A) for a minimum duration of approximately 6 months (Criterion B). There may be different symptom profiles across women, as well as variability in how sexual interest and arousal are expressed. For example, in one woman, sexual interest/arousal disorder may be expressed as a lack of interest in sexual activity, an absence of erotic or sexual thoughts, and reluctance to initiate sexual activity and respond to a partner’s sexual invitations. In another woman, an inability to become sexually excited, to respond to sexual stimuli with sexual desire, and a correspond-

ing lack of signs of physical sexual arousal may be the primary features. Because sexual desire and arousal frequently coexist and are elicited in response to adequate sexual cues, the criteria for female sexual interest/arousal disorder take into account that difficulties in desire and arousal often simultaneously characterize the complaints of women with this disorder. Short-term changes in sexual interest or arousal are common and may be adaptive responses to events in a woman's life and do not represent a sexual dysfunction. Diagnosis of female sexual interest/arousal disorder requires a minimum duration of symptoms of approximately 6 months as a reflection that the symptoms must be a persistent problem. The estimation of persistence may be determined by clinical judgment when a duration of 6 months cannot be ascertained precisely.

There may be absent or reduced frequency or intensity of interest in sexual activity (Criterion A1), which was previously termed *hypoactive sexual desire disorder*. The frequency or intensity of sexual and erotic thoughts or fantasies may be absent or reduced (Criterion A2). The expression of fantasies varies widely across women and may include memories of past sexual experiences. The normative decline in sexual thoughts with age should be taken into account when this criterion is being assessed. Absence or reduced frequency of initiating sexual activity and of receptivity to a partner's sexual invitations (Criterion A3) is a behaviorally focused criterion. A couple's beliefs and preferences for sexual initiation patterns are highly relevant to the assessment of this criterion. There may be absent or reduced sexual excitement or pleasure during sexual activity in almost all or all (approximately 75%–100%) sexual encounters (Criterion A4). Lack of pleasure is a common presenting clinical complaint in women with low desire. Among women who report low sexual desire, there are fewer sexual or erotic cues that elicit sexual interest or arousal (i.e., there is a lack of "responsive desire"). Assessment of the adequacy of sexual stimuli will assist in determining if there is a difficulty with responsive sexual desire (Criterion A5). Frequency or intensity of genital or nongenital sensations during sexual activity may be reduced or absent (Criterion A6). This may include reduced vaginal lubrication/vasocongestion, but because physiological measures of genital sexual response do not differentiate women who report sexual arousal concerns from those who do not, the self-report of reduced or absent genital or nongenital sensations is sufficient.

For a diagnosis of female sexual interest/arousal disorder to be made, clinically significant distress must accompany the symptoms in Criterion A. Distress may be experienced as a result of the lack of sexual interest/arousal or as a result of significant interference in a woman's life and well-being. If a lifelong lack of sexual desire is better explained by one's self-identification as "asexual," then a diagnosis of female sexual interest/arousal disorder would not be made.

## **Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis**

Female sexual interest/arousal disorder is frequently associated with problems in experiencing orgasm, pain experienced during sexual activity, infrequent sexual activity, and couple-level discrepancies in desire. Relationship difficulties and mood disorders are also frequently associated features of female sexual interest/arousal disorder. Unrealistic expectations and norms regarding the "appropriate" level of sexual interest or arousal, along with poor sexual techniques and lack of information about sexuality, may also be evident in women diagnosed with female sexual interest/arousal disorder. The latter, as well as normative beliefs about gender roles, are important factors to consider.

In addition to the subtypes "lifelong/acquired" and "generalized/situational," the following five factors must be considered during assessment and diagnosis of female sexual interest/arousal disorder given that they may be relevant to etiology and/or treatment: 1) partner factors (e.g., partner's sexual problems, partner's health status); 2) relationship factors (e.g., poor communication, discrepancies in desire for sexual activity); 3) individual vulnerability factors (e.g., poor body image, history of sexual or emotional abuse), psychiatric comorbidity (e.g., depression, anxiety), or stressors (e.g., job loss, bereavement); 4) cultural/religious factors (e.g., inhibitions related to prohibitions against sexual activity; attitudes toward sexuality); and