

old females will have experienced orgasm at all, and this figure has only risen to 53 per cent by the age of twenty. By thirty-five it is 60 per cent.

The adult male achieves an average of about three orgasms a week, and over seven per cent experience daily or more than daily ejaculation. The frequency of orgasm for the average male is highest between the ages of fifteen and thirty, and then drops steadily from thirty to old age. The ability to achieve multiple ejaculation fades, and the angle at which the erect penis is carried also drops. Erection can be maintained for an average of nearly an hour in the late teens, but it has fallen to only seven minutes at the age of seventy. Nevertheless, 70 per cent of all males are still sexually active at the age of seventy.

A similar picture of waning sexuality with increasing age is found in the female. The more or less abrupt cessation of ovulation at around the age of fifty does not markedly reduce the degree of sexual responsiveness, when the population is taken as a whole. There are, however, great individual variations in its influence on sexual behaviour.

The vast majority of all the copulatory activity we have been discussing occurs when the partners are in a pair-bonded state. This may take the form of an officially recognised marriage, or an informal liaison of some sort. The high frequency of non-marital copulation that is known to take place should not be taken to imply a random promiscuity. In most cases it involves typical courtship and pair-formation behaviour, even if the resulting pair-bond is not particularly longlasting. Approximately 60 per cent of the population becomes formally paired, but 50 per cent of females and 84 per cent of males will have experienced copulation before marriage. By the age of forty, 26 per cent of married females and 50 per cent of married males will have experienced extra-marital copulation. Official pair-bonds also break down completely in a number of cases and are abandoned (0-9 per cent in 1956 in America, for example). The pair-bonding mechanism in our species, although very powerful, is far from perfect.

Now that we have all these facts before us we can 55