

KINSEY TODAY

A publication of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction

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Director's Column by Dr. John Bancroft



The new year begins with good news for the Kinsey Institute. The builders have now moved out, leaving us with some great space for our archival project, which is steadily moving forward.

We have just learned that we are to be funded for a large study of high-risk sexual behavior in gay and straight men, applying our theoretical ideas of dual control of sexual response in an exciting and unique research program. The Viagra study is now under way. We have masses of research data to analyze and write up. A study to compare directly psychophysiological response patterns in men and women is about to start. A large survey of a representative sample of women is in the offing to explore the determinants of sexual well-being in women. A productive year on all these fronts means we will enter the next millennium addressing crucial issues in a wide range of human sexuality research.

In the last newsletter, we announced the imminent launch of our new Sexuality Research Information Service. Our goal of launching before the end of last year was thwarted by unexpected problems with the software we were using, which was clearly not sufficiently user friendly. We have gone back to the drawing board and, with the help of Jian Liu from IU Libraries, now have a much more friendly and flexible system. By the time you receive this newsletter, this service will be running. Please visit it on the Web (www.indiana.edu/~sris) and give us your feedback and suggestions. This is a feasibility project, and if it proves to be successful, then we will hope to obtain funding to keep it going.

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KISSISS Answers Students' Questions

The new Kinsey Institute Sexuality Information Service for Students (KISSISS) provides information on human sexuality in a favorite format of today's students—electronically via the World Wide Web. Launched last November, the interactive Web site allows Indiana University students to ask personal questions about sexuality in a confidential manner—and to receive answers from by some of the world's experts in this area.

"We surveyed hundreds of students, and they told us they feel comfortable using the Web as a source of information; they feel a sense of anonymity and privacy regarding personal issues," says Jennifer Bass, a Kinsey Institute research associate and health educator. The new information service is part of a three-year project, supported by the Mary B. Orvis Fund, to establish an integrated, coordinated approach for helping students with their sexual lives.

"We found that while students are inundated with *talk* about sex among peers, in films, and in the media, they are eager for reliable sources of *information* about sex," says Bass, who coordinates the project. Also involved in administering the project are Anne Reese, director of Health and Wellness Education at the IU Health Center; Carol McCord, assistant to the dean in the Office for Women's Affairs; John Bancroft, director of the Kinsey Institute; and Meredith Reynolds, research fellow at the institute. IU business student Peng Shi designed the KISSISS Web site.

"I think that having a site devoted to questions about sexuality helps to normalize the idea and makes students feel more comfortable asking what's on their minds," says Reese. She notes that the Bloomington campus has been providing general health information electronically for more than a decade. Her office responds to queries for health information submitted to the IU Health Service Web site.

Visitors to the KISSISS site find a number of options. They can ask a question and

receive a personal answer via e-mail; they can post an opinion on the Topic Board page; and they can browse through a Question and Answer Bulletin to learn from other students' queries. In addition, students can take a Sexual Health Knowledge Quiz. Students are invited to submit queries about STDs, birth control and pregnancy, gender and sexual identity, sexual functioning, and sex within relationships, and they are reassured that "no question is too weird or too simple."

Bass draws on the expertise of health providers, health educators, and researchers not only from the Kinsey Institute, but also from other campus and off-campus resources to provide authoritative answers. In some cases, she refers students to medical or counseling services for follow-up.

The project also fosters coordination among the various groups providing sexual health services both on campus and off campus. "Our needs assessment showed that there are excellent services available for students, but we can all benefit from increased integration," Bass says. The project is also offering training programs in sexual health for advisors and coordinators in IU residence halls, who have identified this area as a primary concern of students seeking advice.

"Communication is the key to healthy sexuality," Bass says, "and that's the premise of this entire project, including the Web-based information service and the networking among health providers, educators, and researchers in human sexuality."

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The mission of the Kinsey Institute is to promote interdisciplinary research and scholarship in the fields of human sexuality, gender, and reproduction. The institute was founded in 1947 by renowned sex researcher Alfred C. Kinsey. A Harvard-trained biologist, Kinsey began collecting sexual histories after discovering that few scientific data existed on human sexual behavior. From 1941 to 1954, Kinsey's pioneering work was supported by the National Research Council, which was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Today, the institute has two components, an Indiana University research institute and a not-for-profit corporation, which owns and manages the institute's research data and archives, collections, and databases.

Kinsey Institute Web site:
<http://www.indiana.edu/~kinsey>

Kinsey Institute Organizes
First-of-Kind Viagra Study

It is one of the biggest medical stories of the decade. It has also been the subject of more jokes than any prescription drug since Prozac. Former presidential candidate Bob Dole is even doing television commercials on behalf of its manufacturer, Pfizer, Inc. It's Viagra (sildenafil citrate), the drug treatment for erectile dysfunction that burst onto the pharmaceutical market last spring and generated sales of \$788 million during its first year.

The Kinsey Institute is embarking on a new study of Viagra that will be the first to evaluate long-term use, patient satisfaction, and the impact of the drug's use on sexual relationships. The research will assess more thoroughly the factors that predict a good response to the drug, including continued use and a positive effect on the relationship.

"Viagra has been a key factor in raising the whole question of the importance of sex to the quality of life in mid to late life, but we know little about the specific impact Viagra is having on relationships," says John Bancroft, director of the Kinsey Institute. "It is quite likely to be sufficient on its own in many cases. In other cases it may raise or exacerbate other problems that need to be dealt with. There may be other cases where it's most effective when combined with a counseling approach to the sexual relationship."

The study, sponsored by Pfizer, is being conducted at five research centers and is coordinated by the Kinsey Institute. A total of 200 couples, with the men age 21 and older, will be recruited at the five study sites (40 at each site).

In addition to Kinsey Institute researchers, collaborators in the study are David Barlow and John Wincze, Boston University; Ray Rosen, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, New Jersey; Taylor Segraves of MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland; and Stanley Althof of Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, Cleveland.

"We have the five best-known groups in the area of clinical research into the psychological causes of erectile dysfunction collaborating on this study," says Kinsey

scientist Erick Janssen, who organized the collaboration. When the study is completed next year, the data will be sent to the Kinsey Institute for processing and analysis.

"An important part of the collaboration for the Kinsey Institute is that the study will allow us to more fully test our theories on inhibition," Janssen explains. "We now have data on more than 1,000 men, but relatively little from clinical populations. With the Viagra study, we have built a measure of inhibition proneness into the protocol, so we'll be able to see how that relates to response to the drug and general satisfaction with the sexual relationship."

After careful medical screening, male subjects and their partners will be asked to complete a number of questionnaires that will assess relevant characteristics of the male partner, his mood state, characteristics of the relationship, medical history, and basic demographic information. The couple will be asked to keep a record of attempts at sexual activity during a one-month period before starting on Viagra. The male partner will then be given a supply of the drug at a standard dose and will be asked to continue keeping a record of sexual activity through the following six months and to return for further questionnaire assessment and dosage adjustment at one, two, and four months, and for final assessment at the end of six months.

"Viagra deals with the erection, but it doesn't have any direct effect on the relationship," Bancroft says. "It will be interesting to see what effect Viagra has on the pattern of care for sexual problems, which has tended to shift during the last decade from psychological types of intervention to more physical intervention. It's not inconceivable that we could have a shift back in the other direction. It's a very interesting time of change. Viagra has sort of destabilized the picture, and it's difficult at this stage to predict where it could lead."

New Archival Space To House Kinsey Treasures

It's just a room full of empty shelves at the moment. So why is the Kinsey Institute's archival consultant, Ruth Beasley, so delighted with the new Kinsey Archive?

The reason is that the Kinsey Institute is quite literally cleaning out its attic. And the large room on the fifth floor of Morrison Hall is the ideal place to put "the single most important repository of materials bearing on the history of sexuality in the United States," in the words of historian George Chauncey.

The completely renovated space will house such largely untapped treasures as Alfred Kinsey's correspondence with hundreds of people, famous and obscure; papers of Kinsey and the institute, going back to the 1930s; clinical papers, notes, and correspondence donated by individual scholars and research groups; and intimate personal accounts and memorabilia volunteered by more than 200 individuals.

Before the mid-1980s, explains Beasley, much of this material was thought of simply as the institute's "old files." It was wedged into filing cabinets or stashed in cardboard boxes wherever space could be found. In 1985, however, an NEH grant allowed a group of scholars to carry out a basic assessment of the collections, which they found to be of great potential value.

Alfred Kinsey's correspondence is a case in point. Judith Allen, IU professor of history and director of the Gender Studies Program, has noted: "From 1948 onwards, 'everyone' wrote to Kinsey. . . . [These letters] provide a particularly rich portrait of wartime, postwar, and 'Cold War' America, and of conditions in comparative countries overseas, in particular Japan, Australia, and Scandinavia." One top priority is to compile an index of Kinsey's correspondents as an aid to researchers in social and medical history worldwide.

Individual personal accounts, observations, and memorabilia make up another extremely varied resource. They were donated by doctors and scientists, prisoners, prostitutes, and many others, including a tattoo artist, a Russian aristocrat, and a Benedictine monk. Beasley predicts that besides social and medical historians, researchers in art history and in the clinical study of sexuality will find these

holdings an unmatched primary resource. Strict ethical guidelines will protect the sources of materials here and throughout the collections.

Up to now, work with the collections has been limited to a very few scholars each year. This was enough, however, to reveal deterioration in many fragile components. In the new space, which is temperature- and humidity-controlled, Beasley and her colleagues can process manuscripts and records to national standards, moving them from aging cardboard boxes and folders into acid-free archival storage containers donated by IU's Lilly Library. Information about the thousands of items will appear in both the online Kinsey library catalog and a national bibliographic database.

Money for the renovation came from the IU Strategic Directions Initiative, Research and the University Graduate School, and the Kinsey Institute's own funds. A professional archivist will be hired to lead the massive project later this year. In the meantime, colleagues such as Phil Bantin of the IU Archives, Sandra Taylor of IU's Lilly Library, and Jo Burgess of the IU Libraries Preservation Department have provided training and advice to Kinsey staff. Paul Gebhard, director of the institute from 1956 to 1982, volunteered his time to list and briefly describe the contents of the individual manuscript collections, and Hannah Pinshow of the David Ben-Gurion Archives in Israel is sharing her expertise while visiting Bloomington this spring.



Ruth Beasley in the new archives space, which will hold more than 1,500 linear feet of mixed media

Friends to Sponsor Conference Reception

Friends of the Kinsey Institute will sponsor an opening reception April 29 for the cross-disciplinary conference on "Sexuality in Midlife" to be held on the IU Bloomington campus. "Members of the Friends and their guests will have an opportunity to meet the speakers and hear the opening session of this groundbreaking conference," says Judith Seifer, president of the Friends organization.

The Friends of the Kinsey Institute was launched in November 1997 to provide support for the institute's mission of promoting interdisciplinary research and scholarship in the areas of human sexuality, gender, and reproduction.

Officers of the Friends board for 1998-99 are Judith Seifer, R.N., Ph.D., Lewisburg, West Virginia, president; Geoffrey Grodner, attorney at law, Mallor Clendening Grodner & Bohrer, Bloomington, vice president; Jana Wilson, director, Development Publications, IU Foundation, Bloomington, secretary; and Scott Schurz, president and publisher, the *Herald-Times*, Bloomington, treasurer.

Other board members are Moya Andrews, associate dean, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, IU Bloomington; Ruth Beasley, Kinsey Institute archival consultant, Bloomington; Dorothy C. Collins, retired research and editorial associate, University Chancellor's Office, IU Bloomington; Wayne Craig, retired executive associate, University Chancellor's Office, IU Bloomington; Frank Hoffmann, professor emeritus of English, State University of New York College at Buffalo, of Nashville, Indiana; Milos V. Novotny, Rudy Professor of Chemistry, IU Bloomington; Ronald Powell, managing director, the Powell Group, Bloomington; Henry H. H. Remak, professor of Germanic studies, comparative literature, and West European studies, IU Bloomington; and Patricia Evans Stowers, instructor, Counseling and Educational Psychology, IU Bloomington, and certified sex therapist.

For information on joining the Friends of the Kinsey Institute, send e-mail to kifriend@indiana.edu or write to the Kinsey Institute.

(Director's Column, continued from page 1)

The book from our last conference, *The Role of Theory in Sex Research*, is now at the publisher, and we hope it will be out before the end of this year. It makes interesting and provocative reading. Our upcoming conference on "Sexuality in Midlife," scheduled for April 29–May 2, is jointly sponsored with SIECUS and also supported by the Ford Foundation. At the conference, in addition to reporting the research data, we will be grappling with some of the key political issues surrounding health care for sexual problems brought into sharp focus by the Viagra phenomenon of the past year.

We are in the final stages of appointing our new development officer. This position is funded jointly by the Indiana University Foundation, Research and the University Graduate School, and the Kinsey Institute. I look forward to telling you more about her and her work in the next newsletter.

Conference on Sexuality in Midlife

April 29–May 2, 1999

This invitational conference is co-sponsored by the Kinsey Institute and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). The goal is to bring together experts from various disciplines and areas of expertise who share a common interest in sexuality and aging to foster cross-disciplinary dialogue and suggest future directions for research and policy. The meeting will focus on research, education, and policy initiatives regarding sexuality throughout midlife and aging. The proceedings of the meeting will be published in an edited volume.

Session Topics

- Sexuality Education in Midlife and Beyond
- Sexuality and Relationships As People Age (including committed and noncommitted relationships, both heterosexual and homosexual)
- Impact of Aging on Sexuality (including heterosexual and homosexual individuals)
- Sexuality as a Quality of Life Issue and Implications for Public Policy
- Current Health Care Coverage (focusing on coverage related to sexuality in aging adults)
- Closing Session: Summary of Meeting Discussions in Relation to Research and Science, Education and Policy, and the Media

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