

Sexual Health Clinic

—The Kinsey Institute—

*Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Indiana University Health Center
600 N. Jordan, Third Floor
Bloomington, Indiana
Ph. 812/855-3878*

The Kinsey Institute Sexual Health Clinic provides diagnostic assessment, counseling, and treatment for people with problems in their sexual lives. The most common problems seen at the clinic are those involving difficulties in responding sexually (e.g., erectile problems in men and difficulties in achieving orgasm in women). The Institute research program that is currently linked to the clinic deals with aspects of sexual dysfunction in men.

Other problems, including concerns about sexual orientation, sexual aversion (male or female), consequences of earlier sexual assault or abuse, transsexuality, unusual sexual preferences (e.g., fetishism), and pedophilia or other types of behaviors prosecuted as sexual offenses, will be considered, and help offered when appropriate.

Clinic Philosophy

The philosophy of this clinical program is to approach human sexuality as a psychosomatic process and to strive to understand how psychological and physiological processes interact in people's sexual lives. The aim is to help patients experience improvement in the quality of their sexual lives, not simply to improve specific aspects of sexual response. This is of particular importance in dealing with problems of sexual dysfunction. While it is often necessary to assess the relevance of physical disease or drug factors, understanding the current sexual relationship is usually of primary importance. Even when there is a clear physical cause for a sexual problem, it is usually the case that psychological factors also play a part, and counseling can often be helpful in improving the quality of sexual life in such cases.

Patient Assessment

The mainstay of the assessment is a careful sexual history. When appropriate, other kinds of investigation will be carried out. These are most often used in assessing male erectile dysfunction, where assessment of spontaneous erections during sleep, or measurement of erections in response to drugs injected into the erectile tissues, or in response to psychological stimuli, are often helpful. Hormonal assessment is carried out when indicated. Referral for more complex forms of diagnostic assessment is also possible when indicated.

Treatment

Treatment may involve:

- simple advice and supportive counseling,
- sex therapy,
- pharmacological or hormonal treatment,
- use of mechanical devices (e.g., vacuum devices for erectile problems), or
- referral for surgical treatment.

In most cases where the patient has a sexual partner, the partner will be encouraged to attend the clinic with

the patient, initially for assessment, and if sexual counseling or therapy is involved, for joint treatment.

Transgendered Patients

For transsexual or transgendered patients seeking sex reassignment, or simply advice, an initial assessment interview is carried out. This may be followed by real-life testing (i.e., a period of time in which the individual is encouraged to live fully in the chosen gender role, with advice and support from the clinic). After a period of time, more irreversible steps, such as hormonal treatment to produce feminizing or masculinizing effects, may be taken with the clinic's help. Referral to a surgeon for sex-reassignment surgery or other surgical procedures (e.g., mastectomy, hysterectomy, breast augmentation, and/or facial plastic surgery) is done when appropriate.

Further Information

Anyone interested in finding out more about the clinic director's approach to assessment and treatment of any of these issues may refer to:

Bancroft, John. *Human Sexuality and Its Problems*, 2nd edition (Churchill Livingstone, 1989).

For further details about this clinic, please see the [recent article](#) in *Research and Creative Activity*, an online publication of Indiana University.

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