

# Estado de ánimo: variables sexuales que influyen

## Extended Summary

Mood and emotions are part our daily life, but despite being something that we experience almost constantly, these two concepts have always been difficult to define. Throughout history many authors have tried to clarify the nature and the components that form them.

Emotions are usually defined as a passing state triggered by an internal or external stimulus (Myers and DeWall, 2014). Several theories have been presented about the nature of emotions, such as that of James-Lang (1992) or the central theory of Cannon (1932). And although the authors can not agree with the definition, it can be said that emotions have regulating and motivational functions (Izard, 2006). Mood has been defined as "an affective state of long duration, low intensity and certain diffusivity" (Frijda, 2009).

Although the duration of mood is longer compared to the duration of emotions, it does not imply that it is not modifiable. Throughout each day there may be small events that could be related to changes in mood. Several investigations talk about these phenomena that influence mood. For instance, one of the investigations compared the time of the day in which mood had its highest peak. It was concluded that mood formed a cycle such as the sleeping cycle, therefore a circadian cycle, and that this highest positive mood was found at noon rather than at bedtime or at the moment of waking up (Gallardo, 2006). Other studies discovered about the effects of our mood in different situations. For example, mood can affect our memories. Bower (1981) concluded that people tend to selectively remember mood-congruent details depending on the situation and mood state they have been induced to. Studies also pointed that individuals with more positive naturally occurring moods demonstrate greater verbal fluency (Carvalho and Ready, 2009).

Now a days mood is a variable of great importance in the scientific world, because it is the source of many disorders like depression, all of the anxiety disorders and bipolar disorders among others. Of all mood disorders, depression is the most common condition, and produces a functional disability that is as severe as the most chronic medical diseases. At present, 10% of the Spanish population is estimated to be suffering from depression (Baronet, 2010).

Regarding the sexual variables; sexual satisfaction is defined as a state of well-being experienced by a person in relation to their sexual activity (Carrobles, 2011). Several studies have concluded that a sexual malfunction is related to symptoms of anxiety and depression as well as greater general psychological distress (Arrington et al., 2004, Frohlich and Meston, 2002). What they tell us is that the functioning and sexual activity are related to the psychological state. These investigations study the associations between depressive and anxiety symptoms. Therefore there are reasons to think that various sexual variables such as satisfaction and activity are related to the mood since this variable is part of psychological functioning.

The variables measured in this study were sexual activity and sexual satisfaction. sexual activity was recorded by answering three possibilities; "No", "Yes, on my own" and "Yes, as a couple". These answers will later be analyzed in the database as 0, 1 or 2 respectively. Whilst sexual satisfaction was measured using a Likert scale from 0 to 10. Subjects answered this Likert scale depending on their mean levels of sexual satisfaction during the day.

The subjects who participated in this study were 5 university students; 3 women and 2 men. With ages between 18 and 22 years. The average age was 20.4 years and a standard deviation of 1.4.

Before starting the daily record, the subjects were asked to complete an online questionnaire about classification data, including date of birth, age, sex. Once this step was completed, each one was given an identification code in order to maintain data protection and privacy. The subjects received an email each night with a link to access the daily record. This record was filled daily for 90 consecutive days (approximately 3 months) by the subjects. The duration of the data collection was decided to be done for 3 months in order measure possible cyclical phenomena within sexual variables and mood. Once the data collection was completed, it was transferred to the SPSS. Then, the data was arranged forming a time series for each of the subjects, in which the variables were displayed lined up by columns and all of the daily registrations per subject in rows.

Once the data was organized, we preceded to continue with the analysis. The model used was mixed models in which it was intended to check if there was interaction between: Sexual Activity and Mood, Sexual Satisfaction and Mood, and finally if the interaction between Activity and Sexual Satisfaction was related to the Mood.

Our results show that all of the three interactions possible were significant. And it was observed that both Sexual Activity and Sexual Satisfaction had a negative correlation with the mean levels of Mood registered daily. This result does not seem congruent within the latest papers about mood. However, it is observed that the

interaction between the Sexual Activity and Sexual Satisfaction has a positive correlation with Mood.

Mood is a factor of great importance in our daily life and in the field of research. It is capable of affecting several aspects of health, being mood disorders one of the most affecting disorders for a greater number of people. This paper tried to investigate one of the variables that may affect this construct. And as shown by the results of the interaction between Sexual activity and Sexual satisfaction, it had a positive and significant correlation with Mood. Therefore, we can conclude that these variables influence our Mood.

In our results we observed that the higher the mood, the less sexual activity and sexual satisfaction registered. Which means that if there is sexual activity, mood will be worse, and it goes the same way with sexual satisfaction, the higher the satisfaction the worse the mood. So, this results are incongruent with other investigation. However these results are given only with the separate variables. The results of the observation of the interaction of both variables tell us that if sexual activity occurs together with a good sexual satisfaction, the mood will be higher, and vice versa. The incongruent results may be due to our small sample. The mortality of the subjects responding the questionnaire was quite high. This is a common problem during longitudinal studies. People show difficulties making the daily record a habit, so we end up with a great number of subjects that were not answering every day. This problem could be fixed by creating some tool that help people remember to complete the questionnaire beside just a email a day. Maybe a mobile application (App) could really help solving this problem. It will be very helpful for the subjects to have notifications and the questionnaire all in one App on their cell phone, this way they could record the daily mood within seconds and at any place. Other way to increase the subjects daily record could be offering a reward for completing the 90 consecutive days. Los estudios sobre el estado de ánimo podrían ser de gran relevancia a la hora de prevenir y enfocar tratamientos de trastornos del estado de ánimo. It could be interesting to replicate this study focusing on the difference between men and women to try to prove if both sexes are influenced in the same way by the sexual activity and satisfaction. The information provided by these studies could be useful when it comes to prevention or planning of treatments for mood disorders.

## **Bibliography**

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