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NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY  
OF MALE EXPERIENCES AND REACTIONS

by

Barbara Shively Matthews

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development

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To my husband, Gerald, for his boundless patience and support in fulfilling this paper, I extend a wife's gratitude and love. To my children, Greg and Chris, who survived without a mother's support, my love and devotion.

Barbara Shively Matthews

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## ABSTRACT

Nocturnal Emissions: A Comparative Study  
of Male Experiences and Reactions

by

Barbara Shively Matthews, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1982

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Department: Family and Human Development

This exploratory study examined the differences between males who have and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions. There were 104 males between the ages of 18 to 41 who participated by completing a sexuality pretest and a nocturnal emissions questionnaire. The respondents' information and education about sexuality, reactions to nocturnal emission ejaculation or the lack of ejaculation, dream frequency levels of nocturnal emissions, and the effect of other sexual outlets upon the frequency of nocturnal emissions were assessed. Results revealed that in this sample the males who did not experience nocturnal emissions had received less sexual information than males who experienced nocturnal emissions.

(67 pages)

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Visitations by the so-called "angel of the night," a term originated by pioneer sexologist Paolo Montegazza (Katchadourian, Lunde & Trotter, 1979), have resulted in trauma, confusion, or embarrassment for many young men. Nocturnal emissions have often placed young men in awkward and perplexing predicaments when they wake up and find that seminal emissions or "wet dreams" have occurred. A nocturnal emission, commonly referred to as a "wet dream", is an ejaculation of semen by a sexually mature male during sleep. Though nocturnal emissions are almost always accompanied by dreaming, the dreamer may frequently awaken in the process of orgasm or during impending orgasm (Katchadourian et al., 1979). Orgasms during sleep, either nocturnal or daytime, constitute about 1/12th of a male's total sexual outlet at ages 21 to 25, and are, therefore, of considerable interest to both men and women.

Though there is wide interest in nocturnal emissions, they have received sketchy treatment in the literature. In addition, the study of nocturnal emissions is part of the broader area of sexual behavior research which has often run into public and scientific

resistance (Diamond & Karlen, 1980). Consequently, nocturnal emissions are widely misunderstood (Kinsey, Pomeroy & Martin, 1948).

Males who have nocturnal emissions usually receive no prior sexual information (Shipman, 1968). The cultural assumption is that there is no need to explain male sexuality prior to puberty; its first evidence will be a pleasurable dream with the tell-tale evidence found in the morning (Shipman, 1968). This contributes to the postponement or avoidance of any discussion of the physical or emotional manifestations of puberty and/or the occurrence of nocturnal emissions (Masland, Rigg, Shochet, Westman, & Lopez, 1980).

There are males, however, that never seem to experience nocturnal emissions. Males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions usually receive no prior information regarding this possibility and are unprepared for this phenomenon. No mention is made in the media or the literature about males having erotic dreams to orgasm without the accompanying ejaculate. Because of this informational void, trauma, confusion, and feelings of abnormality are more likely to beset the male who has not experienced a wet dream.

Few studies have been conducted on nocturnal emissions and coverage is extremely limited, probably because of the sensitive and sexual nature of the subject. Thus, the purpose of this investigation is to compare males who have experienced nocturnal emissions with those males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions in regard to their reactions to nocturnal emissions.



## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nocturnal Emissions Treatment

There is considerable variation among individuals in the frequencies with which they have nocturnal emissions. Kinsey et al. (1948) found that there are males who never ejaculated in their sleep, males who experienced only a few wet dreams, as well as males who had two or three wet dreams per night.

This variability in male experiences is not reported in the research literature except for Kinsey's work. Furthermore, the filtering process by which research literature leads to a lay acceptance of research findings had not occurred here. As a result, the media and popular literature make no mention of this variability and, in fact, this information is little known and has had no impact on the public.

Shipman (1968) reports that the onset of puberty associated with nocturnal emissions, particularly ejaculation, is a traumatic event in a young male's life, with almost no prior explanation of the event. Consequently, a male's reaction is steeped in fright and misunderstanding, with no apparent resource to consult to clear up the confusion.

Due to the lack of available resources, as well as the recognition of the variability in nocturnal emissions among males, this investigation is exploratory in its approach. Males who have experienced

nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions will be assessed on variables having to do with their informational levels and reactions to their varied experiences.

#### Variability in the Occurrence of Nocturnal Emissions

A nocturnal emission is the body's way of relieving sexual tension, which becomes particularly high at the adolescent age (Masland et al., 1980). These emissions characteristically begin when a boy is 11 to 16 years of age (Masland et al., 1980). Thus, nocturnal emissions are primarily seen as a phenomenon of single males in their teens and early twenties.

A high percentage of all males do experience nocturnal emissions at some time in their lives. Ultimately, about 83% of all males have wet dreams (Kinsey et al., 1948). Katchdourian et al. (1979) state that practically all males report having had erotic dreams to orgasm at least once. McCary (1973) reports that almost all men have erotic dreams and 85% of them have had dreams that culminated in orgasm. Kinsey et al. (1948) recorded that some men experience orgasm practically every time they awaken from sleep, even though this may be two or three times in a single night. Thus, orgasm as the product of nocturnal dreams is well known in the male.

Research, however, has done little toward recognizing that there is a portion of the male population that does not experience

nocturnal dreaming to orgasm with an ejaculate. In the Kinsey studies (Kinsey et al., 1948), 17% of the males interviewed did not experience nocturnal emissions. For these males, the lack of seminal fluid indicates that the male is still capable of orgasm as a result of an erotic dream, but the dream and orgasm occur without the ejaculate. Thus, this event may be considerably different for males who do not have the "companionable evidence" upon awakening (Masland, et al., 1980).

Males, then, may experience a variety of possibilities concerning nocturnal emissions. These include: (1) experiencing nocturnal emissions, (2) not experiencing nocturnal emissions at all, or (3) dreaming to orgasm without an accompanying ejaculate. These variations have not been addressed in the literature as they relate to males' information about wet dreams and to the variety of reactions that may be experienced. Thus, this investigation seeks to assess the relationship between variability in occurrence of wet dreams and the degree of information about sexuality and reactions to nocturnal emissions.

#### Educational and Occupational Levels

It is particularly interesting to note that there are great differences in the occurrence of nocturnal emissions across educational levels and occupational classes (Kinsey et al., 1948). Wet dreams occur most often in that segment of the population that

goes to college. Among males who are in college, nocturnal emissions begin at earlier ages than among males of lower educational levels. Those men who had no more than eight years of school report the lowest incidence of nocturnal emissions, while those males who had 13 years of school report the highest incidence of nocturnal emissions (Kinsey et al., 1948).

With regard to differences in occupational classes, Kinsey et al. (1948) reported that day laborers averaged not more than two or three nocturnal emissions per year and semi-skilled workmen reported an emission frequency only a bit higher than that. The frequency of nocturnal emissions in the college and graduate school groups, however, was close to once every two weeks at practically every age level throughout life. This means that males in the upper occupational levels report 10 to 12 times as many nocturnal emissions as reported among males of the lower occupational classes.

College males report the highest frequency of nocturnal emissions, with a peak of 19 to 20 years of age (Kinsey et al, 1948). This can be interpreted to mean that the lowest frequency of males not experiencing nocturnal emissions should appear in this population. Since only the Kinsey studies reported nocturnal emission frequency figures, these figures can be used to validate this investigation by the similarity in sample population.

### Sex Education

Discussing sexual matters with adolescents is more often than not a difficult matter for adults to undertake. The cultural assumption is that there is no need to explain anything to young males prior to puberty and that the first evidence of a nocturnal emission will be after a pleasurable dream which the boy will come to understand. Adults also assume that adolescents will learn from peers whatever they need to know about sexual matters (Shipman, 1968). It is understandable, then, that the adolescent male with an inadequate sex education who awakens to find that he has had a "wet dream" may be upset and feel guilty (Masland et al., 1980).

A frank discussion would seem especially important to explain the physical and emotional manifestations of puberty to young males. Sometimes parents make the mistake of assuming that sex information has come from older siblings, peers, or they believe such information is unimportant. Even when a background of open communication exists at home, it is usually necessary for the parent to initiate any dialogue about sex by inquiring what understanding of and experience with wet dreams the boy has acquired (Masland et al., 1980). Research findings show that in a sample of 146 male college students, 90% of the males indicated that they received no information about nocturnal emissions from either parent and that what they learned from peers was most inadequate (Shipman, 1968). Thus, the first ejaculations by males in puberty are probably profound and frightening experiences because of inadequate knowledge about sexual matters (Shipman, 1968).

Thus, the first ejaculations by males in puberty are probably profound and frightening experiences because of inadequate knowledge about sexual matters (Shipman, 1968).

A related question concerns the various sources of information about nocturnal emissions, such as word-of-mouth, experience, or the media that is available to the adolescent. Sunseri, Sunder, and Jucha (1973) report that from a sex information survey of 47 female and 38 male college students, the initial primary sources of general information about sex are peers and reading material. The schools were also seen as an appreciable source of information, especially concerning nocturnal emissions (Sunseri et al., 1973). Although these findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the sample size, it does confirm the reports by Masland et al. (1980) and Shipman (1968) that show sex information is not readily given by parents but most often comes from peers.

Because of the lack of readily available information, this investigation seeks to determine if males are aware of the variety of experiences that may occur regarding nocturnal emissions. The existing literature does not appear to provide information to develop positive reactions to the variability of nocturnal emissions.

### Synthesis

Discussing sexual matters with male adolescents is more often than not a difficult matter for parents to undertake. Adults make

the assumption that there is no need to offer sexual explanations to boys because they will come to understand or ask peers. Research findings do indicate that the primary sources of information about nocturnal emissions are peers and reading material. Most males approach puberty and move through adolescence without accurate knowledge of the event that will supposedly take place and mainly rely on peers for information.

Since a high percentage of all males do experience nocturnal emissions at some time in their lives, it is generally assumed that all males have nocturnal emissions. Kinsey et al. (1948) dispels this myth by reporting that 17% of the male sample studied did not experience nocturnal emissions. Of those males that do experience nocturnal emissions, some experience very few, while others may experience frequent nocturnal emissions. This variability is little known and the media, as well as popular literature, overlook it.

Another little discussed issue is the differences found in the occurrence of nocturnal emissions depending upon educational level and occupational classes. Men with lower educational levels and day laborers or semi-skilled workmen have the lowest incidence of nocturnal emissions. However, college and graduate school groups show much higher incidences.

The literature leaves gaps which need to be explored by additional research. This investigation is designed to make comparisons

concerning the occurrence of and reaction to nocturnal emissions. Males who have experienced nocturnal emissions, males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions, the extent of their information and education about sex, reactions to ejaculation, and reactions to the lack of ejaculation will be assessed.

The following objectives will be addressed in this study:

1. To determine and describe the differences between males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions in the education and information about sexuality they have received to date.
2. To determine and describe the differences between males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions in their reactions to having or not having nocturnal emissions.
3. To describe the different frequency levels of orgasm between males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions.



## CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

Process and ProceduresIntroduction

This chapter will present a description of the respondents who participated in this study, their demographic characteristics, the materials utilized, the procedures employed in obtaining the data, and the statistical techniques which were used in analyzing and interpreting the data.

Respondents

The sample used in this investigation consisted entirely of a male college sample with an N of 104. Respondents were drawn from a nonclinical population of males currently residing in Logan, Utah, and associated with Utah State University. These respondents represented a middle- to upper-middle-class population that are now attending college. A systematic, random sample was collected by asking every fifth male entering the University Student Center and the University Library to participate and complete a questionnaire.

Instrumentation

The Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions (Wells & Matthews, unpublished) was developed specifically for this investigation to measure experiences and reactions of males having experienced or not having experienced nocturnal emissions. This questionnaire contained

selected items that were based upon the range of male experiences reported by Katchadourian et al. (1979) and Kinsey et al. (1948). These variables were modified and used to construct questions which assessed the respondents' demographic characteristics, their informational level concerning nocturnal emissions, their dream frequency at specific ages, their present reactions to nocturnal emissions, and the effects of other sexual outlets on the frequency of nocturnal emissions. A true/false pretest was administered to measure the current sex education level of the respondents. Appendix A shows the 16 item sexuality pretest and the correct answers. This pretest was given prior to the questionnaire, the Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions.

#### Procedures

The Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions (Wells & Matthews, unpublished) was distributed through three individuals in Logan, Utah, at the Utah State University Student Center and the University library. The three data collectors were involved in two preparation sessions before the subjects were contacted. Each collector used a standardized procedure to approach a subject (Appendix B). A letter to introduce the data collector and the study was given to each prospective subject to read (Appendix C). Following the letter, a brief verbal description of the study was again given to each subject. The data collector asked each subject to first individually complete a

true/false pretest and finally, a questionnaire on nocturnal emissions (Appendix D). Informed consent was not necessary under the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board at Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

#### Research Design and Statistical Procedures

This investigation was designed to assess males' experiences with nocturnal emissions. Males who have experienced nocturnal emissions, males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions, the extent of their information and education about sex, their dream frequency, their reactions to ejaculation or to the lack of ejaculation, and the effects of other sexual outlets on the frequency of nocturnal emissions were measured.

A t-test was used for the following variables:

1. The mean difference between males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions on their reported reactions to nocturnal emissions (Inventory Question 27);
2. The mean difference between males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions on their reported other sexual outlets (Inventory Question 28);
3. The mean difference between males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal

- emissions on their reported sources of information concerning nocturnal emissions (Inventory Question 24);
4. The mean difference between males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions on their reported sources of information that 15% to 20% of all males never experience nocturnal emissions (Inventory Question 25);
  5. The mean difference between males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions on their reported dream frequency concerning nocturnal emissions (Inventory Question 26);
  6. The mean difference between males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions on their reported reactions to a first nocturnal emission (Inventory Question 29);
  7. The mean difference between males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions on scores from the human sexuality pretest (Pretest Questions 1-16); and
  8. The mean difference between males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions on a score from items 1, 5, 10, and 15 on nocturnal emissions that were included in the human sexuality pretest.

Chi-square tests were applied to the following variables:

1. The effect of other sexual outlets upon the dream frequency of males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions (Inventory Questions 26 and 28);
2. The effect of a respondent's demographic characteristics of age, level of schooling, living status, religion, and religiosity upon the reported frequency of orgasm (Inventory Questions 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 26); and
3. Seven sources of information which include parents, siblings, peers, media, school classroom, religious training, and books/printed materials and the reported reactions of males who have had nocturnal emissions and those males who have not had nocturnal emissions (Inventory Questions 24 and 27).

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

Characteristics and ObjectivesSample Characteristics

A systematic, random sample of 104 males participated in this study at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Over the course of seven days, three data collectors approached every fifth male that entered the University Student Center and the University Library between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. During each solicitation period, the one male and two female collectors made no attempt to exclude male faculty or other males not deemed to be students from participating in this study. More than 80% of the approached persons agreed to complete a true/false pretest on human sexuality and the Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions (Appendix D). Subjects were generally very cooperative and interested in the study.

To test the objectives, all respondents were placed into two distinct groups, those males that had not experienced nocturnal emissions and those males that had experienced nocturnal emissions (Appendix D, Inventory Question 23). Ultimately, Group 1 consisted of 29 males who had not experienced nocturnal emissions and Group 2 consisted of 75 males that had experienced nocturnal emissions (total N = 104).

Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 41 years. The mean age for Group 1, or those who had not experienced nocturnal emissions, was 23.4 years of age. The mean age for Group 2, or those who had experienced nocturnal emissions, was 23.9 years of age. Table 1 describes the age groups of this sample.

Table 1  
Frequency of Respondents by Age Group

Age Group	Group 1	Group 2	Total of Groups	%
18-19	3	8	11	11
20-21	5	10	15	14
22-23	11	18	29	28
24-25	4	12	16	15
26-27	2	12	14	13
28-29	2	6	8	8
30-31	0	4	4	4
32-33	2	4	6	6
Other (41)	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	29	75	104	100
Mean Age	23.4	23.9	23.6	

To establish educational categories, the respondents were asked to select the number of years of formal education that they had completed. There were 74 undergraduate college students with the remaining 30 respondents reporting graduate work or degrees. The largest undergraduate group (22%) had completed the junior college year, while the largest graduate group (11%) had completed one year in a graduate program. The resulting analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2  
Frequency of Respondents by Educational Level

Number of Years Formal Education	Group 1	Group 2	Total of Groups	%
13	3	10	13	13
14	4	15	19	18
15	6	17	23	22
16	6	13	19	18
17	6	5	11	11
18	4	4	8	8
19	0	2	2	1
20	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
Totals	29	75	104	100



Classified by living status, the sample was very homogeneous. Clustering occurred especially in the single and married categories, with 67 single males accounting for 64% of the sample and 21 married males accounting for 20% of the sample. As is noted in Table 3, those divorced represented only 3%, none of whom were remarried. Opposite sex cohabitation and homosexual cohabitation were also relatively infrequent, 7% and 6%, respectively.

Table 3  
Frequency of Respondents by Current Living Status

Current Living Status	Group 1	Group 2	Total of Groups	%
Single	17	50	67	64
Married	6	15	21	20
Divorced	2	1	3	3
Divorced and Remarried	0	0	0	0
Opposite Sex Cohabitation	3	4	7	7
Homosexual Cohabitation	1	5	6	6
Totals	29	75	104	100

The respondents came from various religious backgrounds with no particular group predominating. Although this sample was collected in Utah, an area known for its large Mormon population, the highest percentile was not from this religious group. The largest group accounted for 29% of the sample and were those males that reported no religious affiliation at all. The Mormon group was the next highest with 27%, while the Protestants and Catholics each accounted for 16% of the sample. The distribution that resulted is shown in Table 4.

Table 4  
Frequency of Respondents by Religious Affiliation

Religion	Group 1	Group 2	Total of Groups	%
Catholic	5	12	17	16
Jew	0	3	3	3
Protestant	6	11	17	16
Mormon	4	24	28	27
Other	3	6	9	9
No Religious Affiliation	<u>11</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>29</u>
Totals	29	75	104	100

The way a respondent felt toward his religious affiliation is shown in Table 5. Again, results were heterogeneous. Across the four responses of very religious, somewhat religious, slightly religious, and not at all religious, it was expected that very religious would be the predominant factor when considering locale. But, somewhat religious was marked by 33 of the participants (32%), making this the largest response. There were 26 males who felt only slightly religious (25%), 23 felt not at all religious (22%), and 22 felt very religious (21%).

Table 5  
Frequency of Respondents by Self-Perceived Religiosity

Religiosity	Group 1	Group 2	Total of Groups	%
Very Religious	5	17	22	21
Somewhat Religious	10	23	33	32
Slightly Religious	6	20	26	25
Not at all Religious	<u>8</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>22</u>
Totals	29	75	104	100

#### Objective 1

Objective 1 stated that this study would determine and describe the differences in the education and information about sexuality for males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have

not experienced nocturnal emissions. A t-test was used to test for significant differences between Group 1, or males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions, and Group 2, or males who have experienced nocturnal emissions on the amount of information and education about sexuality that they have received from various sources, such as parents, peers, and media. The results indicated that there was no significant difference ( $p = .05$ ) between the two groups on the amount of information received from parents, peers, media, school classroom, and books/printed material. However, the two groups reported receiving significant amounts of information from siblings and religious training. Also, there was no significant difference ( $p = .05$ ) between the two groups on the amount of education they received about sexuality.

When significance was found with the t-test, findings show that males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions are definitely receiving little to no information about wet dreams. Also, siblings and religious training are giving significantly less information about nocturnal emissions to Group 1, or those males that do not experience nocturnal emissions (Table 6). However, regardless of the source of sex information, all males in this sample are receiving very little information concerning nocturnal emissions.

No significant differences were found between Group 1 and Group 2 on learning from any of the seven educational sources that 15 to 20% of all males never experience nocturnal emissions. However,

Table 6  
 Respondents' Mean Ratings of the Sources of  
 Information About Nocturnal Emissions  
 That They Received

Information Source	Group 1 $n_1 = 29$		Group 2 $n_2 = 75$	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
A. Parents	1.24	0.73	1.26	0.57
B. Siblings	*1.10	0.31	1.37	0.71
C. Peers	2.24	1.09	<sup>a</sup> 2.44	1.03
D. Media	1.72	0.79	<sup>a</sup> 1.70	0.88
E. School Classroom	1.58	0.32	1.98	1.01
F. Religious Training	*1.10	0.40	<sup>a</sup> 1.46	0.84
G. Books/Printed Material	2.24	1.18	2.89	1.04

Note: Response: 4 = Great Deal of Information to 1 = No Information

<sup>a</sup> $n_2 = 74$

\* $p < .05$

both groups report receiving little to no information that some males simply do not experience nocturnal emissions. Table 7 gives the respondents' mean ratings of the amount of information about nocturnal emissions that they received.

Table 7  
 Respondents' Mean Ratings of the Amount of Information  
 About the Incidence of Nocturnal Emissions  
 Obtained from Educational Sources

Education Source	Group 1 $n_1 = 29$		Group 2 $n_2 = 75$	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
A. Parents	1.00	0.00	1.08	0.31
B. Siblings	1.00	0.00	1.09	0.44
C. Peers	1.13	0.58	<sup>a</sup> 1.26	0.64
D. Media	1.00	0.00	1.16	0.75
E. School Classroom	1.27	0.84	1.33	0.82
F. Religious Training	1.00	0.00	1.10	0.42
G. Books/Printed Material	1.62	0.97	1.70	1.03

Note: Response: 4 = Great Deal of Information to 1 = No Information

<sup>a</sup> $n_2 = 73$

The 16-item pretest on human sexuality that was used to assess the sex education and information males have received to date failed to show significant differences at the .05 level between males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions. There were four items within the pretest (1, 5, 10, and 15) that were scored separately to assess a male's

information and education about nocturnal emissions. These variables also failed to attain the .05 level of significance. The data tend to indicate, however, that sex information is not high for either group, with a mean score of 10.16 out of a possible 16. With regard to the selected four items pertaining to nocturnal emissions, each group had a mean score of 2.56 out of a possible 4, showing that males are not informed or educated about nocturnal emissions regardless of whether they have or have not experienced them. Table 8 gives the 16-item pretest results and the selected four-item nocturnal emissions pretest results for Group 1 and Group 2.

Table 8  
Mean Scores on the 16-Item Pretest and the Selected  
Nocturnal Emission Pretest Items  
(Questions 1, 5, 10, and 15)

Pretest Items	Group 1 $n_1 = 29$		Group 2 $n_2 = 75$	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
16 Items (1-16)	9.96	2.58	10.36	2.28
4 Items (1, 5, 10, 15)	2.57	0.95	2.56	0.74

Note: Highest score possible on the 16-item pretest = 16.  
Overall mean for 16-item pretest = 10.16

Highest score possible on the selected nocturnal emission pretest = 4.  
Overall mean for four items = 2.56

Chi-square statistics were used to compare present reactions to nocturnal emissions with the various sources of information about sexuality. Significant relationships were found between these variables: (1) the amount of information about nocturnal emissions and sexuality given by parents and the difficulty of accepting the male sexual ability ( $\chi^2 = 17.02$ ,  $df = 6$ , and  $p < .01$ ); (2) the amount of information about nocturnal emissions and sexuality given by parents and a male's ability to enjoy and look forward to nocturnal emissions ( $\chi^2 = 17.00$ ,  $df = 9$ , and  $p < .05$ ); and (3) the amount of information about nocturnal emissions and sexuality given by siblings and a male's ability to accept nocturnal emissions, but still feel that it is "abnormal" ( $\chi^2 = 19.13$ ,  $df = 9$ , and  $p < .05$ ).

Results from the significant chi-squares above indicate that regardless of the amount of information about nocturnal emissions and sexuality provided by parents, 90 respondents (88%) still feel that it is not difficult to accept their sexual abilities as males. Lack of parental information does not appear to be a problem for males concerning their feelings about their sexual abilities. While 85 respondents (83%) did report having received no information from parents, they were divided on how the lack of information affected their ability to enjoy nocturnal emissions and to look forward to their occurrence. Of the 83% reporting, 32% of the respondents who stated that they received no information from parents also



reported that they were able to enjoy and look forward to nocturnal emissions; 17.5% reported that a lack of information about nocturnal emissions and sexuality by parents had very little effect on their ability to enjoy nocturnal emissions; another 17.5% reported that the lack of parental information about nocturnal emissions and sexuality did have an effect upon their ability to look forward to and enjoy nocturnal emissions, while 16% felt that no information about nocturnal emissions and sexuality from parents did have a great effect on their ability to enjoy and to look forward to nocturnal emissions.

In the last significant chi-square noted above, 87 respondents reported that regardless of the amount of information about nocturnal emissions and sexuality received from siblings, they accepted nocturnal emissions and did not feel they were "abnormal." Across all six present reaction responses to nocturnal emissions, least or no information from siblings was reported by the greatest number of respondents, with a mean of 78%, while little information by siblings was second, with a mean of 16.6%. Peers were not found to play a significant part in the amount of information they give about male reactions and nocturnal emissions. However, the respondents agreed that the media, school classroom, religious training, or books/printed material gave them little to no information across all present reaction responses on nocturnal emissions.

## Objective 2

This objective is to determine and describe the reactions of males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions. A t-test was used to test respondents' reactions to the first nocturnal emission with or without ejaculate and their present reactions to nocturnal emissions.

Of nine possible reaction responses to a first wet dream, there were significant differences between the two groups on Reaction A, "first wet dreams were traumatic and psychologically painful", and Reaction D, "first wet dreams were sinful and against religious beliefs" (Table 9). With Reaction A, Group 1 felt no trauma or psychological pain at the onset of the first nocturnal emission simply because they do not experience nocturnal emissions with ejaculate, while Group 2 did feel negatively about their first nocturnal emission. Group 2 also felt significantly more sinful in Reaction D and that this first occurrence was against their religious belief. However, Group 1 did not feel that it was against their religious beliefs or sinful because they do not experience them or deal with the physical evidence. Therefore, the absence of nocturnal emissions and the evidence relieves Group 1 of trauma and the feelings of having sinned, while for Group 2, the start of nocturnal emissions subjected them to definite feelings of sinfulness, trauma, and pain at first occurrence. Table 9 shows the respondents' mean reactions to the first wet dream with or without an ejaculate.

Table 9  
 Respondent's Mean Reactions to the First  
 Wet Dream With or Without Ejaculate

Reaction	Signi- ficance	Mean		Total Mean
		Group 1 $n_1 = 27$	Group 2 $n_2 = 75$	
A. Traumatic, psychologi- cally painful.	*0.007	1.14	1.57	1.35
B. Confused, did not know what had happened	0.165	1.33	2.26	1.79
C. Afraid, something is wrong with my body	0.666	1.25	1.46	1.35
D. Sinful, against my religious belief	*0.012	1.14	1.62	1.38
E. Guilty, should have had more self control	0.146	1.25	1.56	1.40
F. Awkward, did not want to tell my family	0.122	1.48	2.76	2.12
G. Satisfied, it was a release from sexual tension	0.556	1.62	2.38	2.00
H. Normal, reassurance as a male	0.223	1.48	2.32	1.90
I. Sign of maturity, was sexually capable	0.173 0.173	1.37 1.37	2.30 2.30	1.83 1.83

Note: Reactions Responses: 1 = Not at All to 4 = Very Much So.

\* $p < .01$

Present reactions to nocturnal emissions show significant differences between groups for three reactions: (1) A, something I accept, but feel is "abnormal"; (2) B, has made it more difficult to accept my sexual ability as a male; and (3) E, something I dislike, but live with (Table 10). Group 2 males who do experience wet dreams report feeling significantly more "abnormal" than do Group 1 males who do not experience nocturnal emissions. Also, Group 2 was more likely to agree with the statement that they disliked nocturnal emissions but lived with them than did Group 1. Ultimately, Group 1 reported that it was much easier to accept their sexual ability as males than did Group 2. Table 10 depicts their mean present reactions to nocturnal emissions and the differences between groups.

### Objective 3

Objective 3 will describe the different frequency levels between males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions. T-tests were used to measure significant differences between Group 1 or males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions and Group 2, or males who have experienced nocturnal emissions on the reported nocturnal emission frequency level for each age group and the reported nocturnal emission frequency level in conjunction with other sexual outlets. The results indicated that there were no significant differences ( $p = .05$ ) between the two groups on reported frequency levels for

Table 10  
 Respondents' Mean Present Reactions to Nocturnal  
 Orgasm With or Without Ejaculate

Reaction	Signi- fiance	Mean		Total Mean
		Group 1 $n_1 = 29$	Group 2 $n_2 = 74$	
A. Something I accept, but feel is "abnormal"	**0.003	1.13	1.31	1.22
B. Has made it more diffi- cult to accept my sexual ability as a male	***0.000	1.03	1.20	1.11
C. Something I enjoyed and look forward to	0.214	2.03	2.44	2.23
D. Something I try to avoid at all costs	0.069	1.27	1.43	1.35
E. Something I dislike, but live with	*0.041	1.17	1.46	1.31
F. Something I readily accept as a normal circumstance	0.637	2.89	3.00	2.94

Note: Present Reaction Responses: 1 = Not at All to 4 = Very Much So

\* $p < .05$   
 \*\* $p < .01$   
 \*\*\* $p < .001$

ages 26-27, 28-29, and 30-31. However, the two groups did report significant differences at ages 18-19, 20-21, 22-23, and 24-25. Also, the only significant difference ( $p = .01$ ) found between groups on

the reported nocturnal emission frequency level in conjunction with other sexual outlets was "other sexual outlets increase the frequency level of nocturnal emissions."

When significance was found with the first t-test, results indicated differences between Groups 1 and 2 on frequency levels during ages 18-19, 20-21, 22-23, and 24-25. There were 101 males who reported that at 18-19 years of age, 73 experienced nocturnal emissions between once or twice a year to less than once a month, while 28 reported never experiencing an orgasm to experiencing an orgasm with or without an ejaculate once or twice a year. At age 20-21, 68 males report having nocturnal emissions between once or twice a year to less than once a month, and 25 report never having experienced an orgasm to having experienced an orgasm with or without an ejaculate once or twice a year. There were 79 males who reported for the age 22-23, with 58 experiencing nocturnal emissions between once or twice a year to less than once a month. At age 24-25, of 53 males, 39 again reported having nocturnal emissions between once or twice a year to less than once a month. From ages 26-27 to 30-31 and other older respondents, Group 1 males report never experiencing an orgasm with or without an ejaculate, while Group 2 males report nocturnal emissions from once to twice a year to less than once a month. Table 11 describes by age group the mean frequency levels of wet dreams with or without ejaculate for Group 1 and Group 2.

Table 11  
 Respondents' Mean Frequency Levels by Age  
 for Wet Dreams with or Without Ejaculate

Age	Signi- ficance	n <sub>1</sub>	Mean of Fre- quency Level	S.D.	n <sub>2</sub>	Mean of Fre- quency Level	S.D.
18-19	**0.01	28	1.28	0.71	73	2.68	1.11
20-21	***0.00	25	1.24	0.59	68	2.51	1.04
22-23	*0.02	21	1.28	0.64	58	2.15	1.02
24-25	***0.00	14	1.07	0.26	39	2.02	1.08
26-27	1.00	10	1.00	0.00	27	19.6	1.07
28-29	1.00	8	1.00	0.00	14	1.92	1.14
30-31	1.00	7	1.00	0.00	11	2.18	0.57
Other	1.00	2	1.00	0.00	3	2.66	0.57

Note: Frequency Level Responses: 0 = N/A to 6 = Daily

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$

\*\*\* $p < .001$

The second t-test, as noted above, on the reported nocturnal emission frequency level of males with the use of other sexual outlets resulted in only one significant difference ( $p = .05$ ). Of

the 97 males reporting, 69 stated that other sexual outlets such as masturbation, sexual intercourse, or couple sex play increased the frequency of their nocturnal emissions between very little to somewhat, while 28 reported none to very little increase in the frequency of their nocturnal emissions. Males that experience nocturnal emissions are reporting, then, that other sexual outlets have very little effect on the ability to increase the frequency of their wet dreams.

Table 12 shows the effect of other sexual outlets on the frequency of nocturnal emissions for Groups 1 and 2.

Table 12  
Effect of Other Sexual Outlets on Respondents'  
Nocturnal Emission Frequency

Effect	Signi- ficance	Group 1			Group 2		
		n <sub>1</sub>	Mean	S.D.	n <sub>2</sub>	Mean	S.D.
A. Reduces the frequency	0.06	28	1.42	0.87	72	2.02	1.21
B. No Change in frequency	0.25	29	1.96	1.23	72	1.79	1.04
C. Increases the frequency	*0.00	28	1.25	0.64	69	1.94	1.14
D. Varies with the situation	0.84	28	1.92	1.12	71	2.39	1.16

Note: Effect on Frequency Response: 1 = Not At all to 4 = Very Much So

\*p = .001



In addition to the t-tests on Objective 3, chi-square statistics were used to make comparisons on (1) the four effects of other sexual outlets with the nocturnal emission frequency level for each of the eight age groups; and (2) the nocturnal emission frequency level for each of the eight age groups with the respondents' demographic variables of age, education, living status, religion, and religiosity. Across all age groups (18-19 to 30-31), the first chi-square statistics showed a significant relationship between Group 1 and Group 2, such that males felt that other sexual outlets did not increase the frequency level of their nocturnal emissions. Those males that did not experience nocturnal emissions reported that other sexual outlets did not help to achieve nocturnal emissions with an ejaculate. However, eight of these males reported having attempted other sexual means to achieve nocturnal emissions. For ages 18-19 to 28-29, regardless of the frequency of nocturnal emissions, an average of 59.83% (mean) of the respondents reported that other sexual outlets did not increase or decrease their nocturnal emissions with various situations, while an average of 40.18% (mean) believed that the frequency of nocturnal emissions was somewhat to very much determined by various situations. As the respondents' ages increased (24-25 to 30-31), those males that reported one or two nocturnal emissions per year, less than one a month, one or two per month, or one or two per week, consistently reported little to no change in the frequency of nocturnal emissions regardless of an increase, decrease, no change, or various sexual outlet situations.

The second set of chi-square statistics mentioned above described the frequency levels of the eight age groups with the respondents' demographic variables. No significant differences were found between age, living status, religion, and the frequency of nocturnal emissions at any age level. However, results did indicate significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) were found for education with ages 20-21, 22-23, 26-27, 30-31, and religiosity with ages 18-19 and 20-21. Thus, at ages 20-21, 22-23, 26-27, and 30-31, regardless of the amount of education they had received to date, most respondents reported either never dreaming to orgasm or having had only one to two dreams to orgasm per year. It should be noted that education seems to have no bearing on the ability to achieve more frequent orgasms for this sample. This does not validate the findings of Kinsey, et al. (1948) that the higher the education level the greater the sexual dream frequency and corresponding nocturnal emissions.

Though there was no significance between religion and frequency levels of nocturnal emissions, there was significance at the .05 level of confidence between the frequency of nocturnal emissions at ages 18-19, 20-21, and degree of religiosity. At these ages, religiosity was similar across all four levels: very religious, somewhat religious, slightly religious, and not at all religious. Frequency levels at these ages clustered in never having had a dream to orgasm or having only one to two dreams to orgasm per year. Regardless of the frequency levels of nocturnal emissions at age

18-19 or 20-21, the largest number of respondents reported they were somewhat religious. But as the respondents got older, clustering occurred in the not at all religious category, reflecting their diminished religiosity.

#### Summary of Findings

Information from siblings and from religious training was found to be significant. Differences revealed that males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions are receiving less information from both siblings and religious training than those males who have experienced nocturnal emissions. Results show that neither group is receiving the information that 15% to 20% of all males never experience nocturnal emissions. The 16-item pretest and the four-item nocturnal emissions pretest further revealed that males are not being informed or educated about human sexuality and nocturnal emissions regardless of whether they have or have not experienced nocturnal emissions.

Only two reactions to a first wet dream were found to be significant. The absence of nocturnal emissions relieved Group 1 of trauma, psychological pain, a feeling of sinfulness, and the first occurrence was against their religious upbringing, while Group 2 reported experiencing these feelings. Present reactions of those males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions find them to

feel significantly more "normal", that it is easy to live without nocturnal emissions, and that it is easier to accept their sexual ability than for males who experience nocturnal emissions.

Results show the majority of males in this sample reported one to two nocturnal emissions per year or less than one nocturnal emission per month, and the next largest group were those who had not experienced a nocturnal emission. Males that do experience nocturnal emissions are reporting that other sexual outlets have very little effect on increasing the frequency of nocturnal emissions. However, there is a significant difference in frequency levels when they are compared to males that do not experience nocturnal emissions. Sex education and frequency of nocturnal emissions for this sample do not help to achieve more orgasms; frequency levels did not rise as education increased. Respondents also reported being somewhat religious when they were younger and not at all religious as they got older.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

SummaryPurpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there are differences between males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions. The extent of the respondents' information and education about sex, reactions to ejaculation or the lack of ejaculation, dream frequency levels of nocturnal emissions, and the effect of other sexual outlets upon the frequency of nocturnal emissions were assessed.

Procedure

Questionnaire responses from 104 male adults were analyzed. All of the respondents that participated lived in or near Logan, Utah, and were associated with Utah State University. Of 126 males that were approached outside the University Student Center and the University Library, 104 males, or 82.5%, agreed to participate and their questionnaires were utilized. The questionnaires contained items that assessed the respondents' demographic characteristics, their information and education about sex, their dream frequency levels at specific ages, their reactions to ejaculation or lack of ejaculation, and the effect of other sexual outlets upon the frequency

of nocturnal emissions. These questions were selected based upon the range of male experiences reported by Katchadourian et al. (1979) and Kinsey et al. (1948). The variables were modified to pertain to the questions asked in this investigation. The Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions (Wells & Matthews, unpublished) (Appendix D) was developed to answer this purpose. A true/false pretest was administered to measure the current sex education level of the respondents prior to the administration of the Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions.

The questionnaire scales comprising the Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions were designed to provide a range of choices appropriate for the content area of study. Adjacent to every item that assessed information were responses No Information, Little Information, Some Information, and A Great Deal of Information. Subjects indicated their choice by circling one of the four alternatives. The frequency level with or without an ejaculate was determined on a 0 through 6 scale: Not Applicable, Never, Once or Twice a Year, Less Than Once a Month, Once or Twice a Month, Once or Twice a Week, and Daily or More Often. Reactions to nocturnal emissions and the effect of other sexual outlets had a range of 1 to 4: Not at All, Very Little, Somewhat, and Very Much So. The only negative-positive responses on the questionnaire appeared in the information section. The most negative response being 1 or 2, No Information or Little Information.

### Analysis

All three original objectives were tested using the .05 critical level to determine significance. These objectives were tested using an independent sample t-technique and the chi-square nonparametric technique. The sample characteristics were also tested using these same techniques.

### Findings

The first objective was to determine and describe education and information differences between males who have experienced nocturnal emissions and males who have not experienced nocturnal emissions and was accepted for siblings and religious training information, while all other sources were not significant. Results reflect that neither Group 1, those who have not experienced nocturnal emissions, nor Group 2, those who have experienced nocturnal emissions, is receiving the information that 15% to 20% of all males never experience nocturnal emissions. Overall, males who do not experience nocturnal emissions are receiving less sexual information than males who experience nocturnal emissions, but both groups are receiving little to no information and education, as indicated on the pretest about sex and nocturnal emissions. Speculatively, males who experience nocturnal emissions may be receiving more information because parents don't approach the topic until, or if, it occurs, while the lack of nocturnal emissions by some males probably means no information on the subject.

Objective 2 was to determine and describe the reaction differences between the two groups. Males who do not experience nocturnal emissions felt significantly different from males who do experience nocturnal emissions on sinfulness and trauma at the onset of nocturnal emissions, while present reactions were significant between males who do not experience nocturnal emissions and males who do experience nocturnal emissions on their acceptance of nocturnal emissions, acceptance of male sexual ability, and nocturnal emissions as something that is disliked. Apparently the lack of nocturnal emissions relieves males who do not experience nocturnal emissions from negative feelings of sinfulness, pain, or acceptance of occurrences.

Contrary to expectations on the outcome of Objective 3, the majority of males in this sample did not display a range of frequency levels for nocturnal emissions. Instead, they clustered into two groups: those reporting one to two nocturnal emissions per year to less than one nocturnal emission per month, to those who had not experienced an orgasm. This is contradictory to the Kinsey et al. (1948) findings in which nocturnal emission frequency rates were found to occur, on the average, once every two weeks in the college population.

#### Discussion

Nocturnal emissions are primarily seen as a phenomenon experienced by single males in their teens and early twenties. It was recognized



by Kinsey et al. (1948), Katchdourian et al. (1979), and McCary (1973) that practically all men experience nocturnal emissions. However, the Kinsey studies (1948) found that 17% of the males interviewed never experienced nocturnal dreaming to orgasm with an ejaculate by age 47. Of the 104 males in this study, 75 reported that they had experienced nocturnal emissions, while 29 reported that they had not experienced nocturnal emissions. Therefore, 27.88% of this sample had not experienced wet dreams, exceeding the 1948 report by Kinsey. This percentage difference should be recognized and considered in terms of the 33 years that have passed between the two samples, the new lifestyles, nutrition updates, more sexual awareness, and changing sexual attitudes. Neither religiosity or educational level, as Kinsey et al. (1948) reported, appears to be operating in regard to the frequency of nocturnal emissions. This leaves a question concerning why, after over three decades of abundant sexual stimuli, the frequency rate of this sample declined instead of decreased. More indepth research would seem to be needed to accurately assess this difference.

Contrary to public opinion, the results of this study show that males are not informed and educated about sexuality and nocturnal emissions. This confirms Shipman's (1968) conclusion that adolescent males are not receiving information on nocturnal emissions and sexuality. What information Shipman's sample received was from

books/printed materials, while this sample received most of their information from peers and books/printed materials. In no case are respondents receiving a great deal of information, but rather are reporting no to little information from parents, siblings, media, and school classrooms; little to some information from peers and books/printed materials. Group 1 males received less information about nocturnal emissions than males who experienced them. Thus, males who have nocturnal emissions may question their occurrence, while males who don't experience them do not ask about what hasn't occurred. The males' low scores on the true/false pretest and the four selected items from the pretest on nocturnal emissions correspond with their reported lack of information from all sources. Respondents made comments that further validated a lack of information and education on sexuality and nocturnal emissions:

"There was very little talk about the subject (nocturnal emissions) at home."

"Parents were inhibited about sex. Concerned overly with bodily cleanliness, perhaps I subconsciously thought it was like bedwetting. Wow, a revelation! I am getting over this. I thought I was abnormal for a while."

"There should be more information at a younger age so kids don't get too uptight about the 'normalness'."

It was expected that Group 1, or males who had not experienced nocturnal emissions, would react to nocturnal emissions more negatively than Group 2, or those males who had experienced them. However, the findings show that Group 1 felt significantly more

"normal" than did Group 2. Those males who experienced nocturnal emissions reacted more negatively, possibly because of concern over the ejaculate which was described by some as "messy" or "embarrassing." They not only received little to no information, but they felt more "abnormal", had difficulty accepting their sexual abilities, and lived with nocturnal emissions but disliked it. These males expressed their feelings about nocturnal emissions this way:

"It was OK, nothing I could control--it was more annoyance in 'losing control' of myself than anything else (as a young male I thought I had to be more in control)."

"We control our bodies, they don't control us, or at least we should."

"At first somewhat traumatic, later accepted as normal occurrence."

"To say the least, the first occurrence was traumatic. I was certain I had damaged myself--!!!"

"I felt very guilty."

"I don't enjoy them very much simply because it creates a mess."

". . . fearful of the unpredictability of the event."

These negative comments validate Group 2's responses on the questionnaires. Could these resulting comments that manifest anxiety, guilt, or unpreparedness for the event arise from the denial of the personal aspects of sexuality, as well as the lack of education and information?

One possible explanation for the negative reactions within this sample could be the reported influence of religion upon the

respondents. People in Utah are greatly influenced in all phases of living by a dominant Mormon doctrine where a life of control is valued. If a male can restrain his body, then reasonably, the number of nocturnal emissions and the emission frequency level could be altered. Guilt, anxiety, or trauma would be the natural result of this evident lack of control after a nocturnal emissions event. Of course, this is speculative, but one's nurturing environment and one's control of mind over body cannot be ignored.

The following reactions, by contrast, from males who had not experienced nocturnal emissions were:

"I haven't had any nocturnal emissions, but feel it is normal."

"Never had any, I don't know why. It really doesn't bother me."

"Have never had an orgasm with sexual dreams--."

"I have never experienced it (wet dreams)."

Here the incidence of anxiety and guilty feelings appear to be lessened. The absence of the unmistakable evidence must be a major part of the lack of guilt and anxious feelings. It may also be inferred that the lack of education and information work in Group 1's favor by erasing the thought of "being abnormal sexually" or "every-one is having wet dreams but me."

When this sample was asked to respond to what they had done behaviorally to bring about a wet dream, 74 males stated that they had done nothing to bring about wet dreams. However, 30 males reported that they had tried to bring about wet dreams by reading

exotic material and/or stopped masturbating for a time. Of these 30 males that did try something, 22 males had experienced nocturnal emissions and eight males had not experienced nocturnal emissions. They were not clustered into any religious group. There were nine who reported no religious affiliation, eight were Mormon, five were Catholic, four were Protestant, one was Jewish, and three males reported other affiliations. It appears that regardless of their experience with nocturnal emissions or religious affiliation, these males were not inhibited about trying to increase the number of nocturnal emissions or trying to achieve an orgasm with an ejaculate during a state of sleep.

The frequency level between Group 1 and Group 2 reflects the fact that Group 2 males produce an ejaculate as a result of erotic dreaming. Though Group 1 may have erotic dreams, even to orgasm, no ejaculate occurs. Dream frequency within Group 1 males was not significant over the age range measured. Within Group 2, males' rates of nocturnal emissions decreased at age 26-27, when compared to 18-19 year old males. A possible explanation to consider may be that a highly eroticized state exists for males at about the time they first marry and are in a "honeymoon" phase of their relationship, only to become more familiar with their partner. Subsequently, males are less sexually aroused by their spouses even though the rates of intercourse remains high. As a sexual stimulus decreases and fails to satisfy their curiosity or desire for a new

experience, sexual dreaming increases, hence resulting in an increase of nocturnal emissions or erotic dreaming.

#### Significance of the Study

Because the empirical literature is limited and does not portray the variety of experiences that males can have regarding nocturnal emissions, this study seeks to add to the existing literature and to correct inconsistencies currently reported. Regardless of whether a male does or does not experience a nocturnal emission, a more positive body and sexual image may be brought about by accurate information on human sexuality (Wells, 1978). Most educational efforts do not approach nocturnal emissions through courses in human sexuality or related courses and parental information is extremely limited. In short, young men are ignorant about this aspect of their sexual selves. Therefore, the results of this study are seen as vital information in sex education programs for an understanding of male experiences and reactions concerning nocturnal emissions.

#### Limitations

The following limitations are recognized:

1. This study is exploratory in nature and, therefore, empirical research upon which to build is scarce and contradictory, as well as unreliable.

2. Respondents do not represent a nationally diverse population.
3. The Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions was designed and constructed for this study. The study indicates this instrument is useful, yet tentative, and needs to be administered to a variety of males to establish its validity and reliability.

### Recommendations

Since the scope of this study is an exploratory effort, it is recommended that further research be done by using a more sophisticated instrument. The Inventory of Nocturnal Emissions needs to be tested further and revisions made as necessary to establish it as a useful research instrument.

Upon examination of this sample, we know that the responses of males who experienced nocturnal emissions were different from those males who did not experience nocturnal emissions. Therefore, a questionnaire plus an indepth interview would seem to be of value in future study to explore more intimately the feelings of males concerning their fantasies, dreams, and sexual outlets that might affect nocturnal emissions. Other questions worthy of further consideration are:

1. Is there a relationship between a male's environment and the suppression of sexual feelings to the extent that it affects nocturnal emissions?

2. How important is the time element between exposure to poor first sex education sources and later superior sex education sources? Does this affect a person's ability to shake off sexual misconceptions and anxieties?
3. What types of sex education and information are associated with trauma or high excitement at puberty for males?

Further research should expand the sample to include respondents from a nationally diverse population and should encompass the lower socio-economic class and those with lower levels of education. If feasible, measurement should also include males that range from 14 to 18 years of age to receive more accurate recollective information concerning experiences, reactions, as well as the information they receive concerning nocturnal emissions.

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## APPENDIXES

Appendix ATrue/False Questionnaire

Please circle only one response per statement.

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	
1. Adolescent males should experience wet dreams.	1	(2)	4
2. The micro-organisms that cause gonorrhoea and syphilis are sensitive to soap and water and some of the contraceptive foams.	1	(2)	5
3. It is recognized that women can have orgasms as a result of a clitoral" climax or a "vaginal" climax.	1	(2)	6
4. It is a fact in male-female sexual relations that the penis may be too large or too small for satisfactory intercourse.	1	(2)	7
5. Masturbation and sexual intercourse reduce the frequency of erotic dreams to orgasm for men and women.	1	(2)	8
6. As teachers, Gay men and Lesbian women pose a danger to students because they may seduce their students.	1	(2)	9
7. Pregnancy can occur during menstruation.	(1)	2	10
8. Frequent masturbation during adolescence interferes with the development of mature adult and satisfactory sexual adjustment between partners.	1	(2)	11
9. There is more variation in the size of the penis in the flaccid state than in the erect state.	(1)	2	12
10. Those males who do not experience nocturnal emissions are abnormal.	1	(2)	13

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	
11. A woman usually experiences more frequent and stronger orgasms during intercourse than during masturbation.	1	(2)	14
12. Gay men and Lesbian women more often report that their sexual relationships are less satisfactory than heterosexual relationships.	1	(2)	15
13. A nonorgasmic woman is not frigid.	(1)	2	16
14. Studies confirm that most accurate sex information has come from formal classroom instruction rather than from parents, clergy, or peers.	(1)	2	17
15. Some males have erotic dreams to orgasm, but do not experience ejaculation.	(1)	2	18
16. Studies indicate that premarital intercourse negatively affects the marital bond.	1	(2)	19

Appendix BStandardized Procedure for Data Collector  
on Nocturnal Emissions

1. Greet the prospective subject.
2. Tell the subject who you are. "I'm (name), a student at Utah State University working as a data collector in the Department of Family and Human Development on a study of male nocturnal emissions."
3. Present the letter for inspection.
4. Answer any questions.
5. Ask question: "Would you be willing to participate in this study as a confidential respondent by completing a questionnaire about nocturnal emissions?"

No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_

6. If NO: Thank the subject and terminate the interview.
7. If YES: Be sure you give the subject the following information:

"This questionnaire's purpose is to find out as much as we can about male nocturnal emissions, or 'wet dreams.' You are one of 100 males we are contacting this spring. Some of the statements on the questionnaire will be very personal and I want you to know we would appreciate your honest and frank response to every one."

"This questionnaire is strictly confidential and your name will not be associated with any information you give me. The information you provide will be combined in summary form with information from the other 99 participants. The confidentiality of this interview is protected by Federal Government guidelines and Utah State University."

8. Proceed to Pretest and Nocturnal Emissions Inventory. (Make sure participant has a pen or pencil.)



DEPARTMENT OF  
FAMILY AND  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
UMC 29

Appendix C

June 1, 1981

Dear Student:

I am a graduate student in the College of Family Life and Department of Family and Human Development. For my thesis research I have chosen to learn more about the little studied phenomenon of male nocturnal emissions, better known as "wet dreams." My main interests are finding out the amount of information or the lack of information males receive concerning wet dreams, as well as the reactions they have. To meet the objectives of my thesis, I wish to obtain this information from as many males as possible. I am asking your cooperation in this study.

If you should be willing to participate, the interviewer will ask you to complete a questionnaire about nocturnal emissions, which will take approximately 10 minutes. The questionnaire will be strictly confidential and your name will not be associated with the information you give us. The confidentiality of your responses on the questionnaire is protected by rigid guidelines mandated by the Federal Government and by Utah State University.

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to call the Family and Human Development Department and ask for any of the following: Dr. J. Wells, B. Matthews, or L. Serna. The phone number is 750-1548. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Sincerely,

*B. L. Matthews*

B. L. Matthews

Appendix DTrue/False Questionnaire

Please circle only one response per statement.

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	
1. Adolescent males should experience wet dreams.	1	2	4
2. The micro-organisms that cause gonorrhoea and syphilis are sensitive to soap and water and some of the contraceptive foams.	1	2	5
3. It is recognized that women can have orgasms as a result of a "clitoral" climax or a "vaginal" climax.	1	2	6
4. It is a fact in male-female sexual relations that the penis may be too large or too small for satisfactory intercourse.	1	2	7
5. Masturbation and sexual intercourse reduce the frequency of erotic dreams to orgasm for men and women.	1	2	8
6. As teachers, Gay men and Lesbian women pose a danger to students because they may seduce their students.	1	2	9
7. Pregnancy can occur during menstruation.	1	2	10
8. Frequent masturbation during adolescence interferes with the development of mature adult and satisfactory sexual adjustment between partners.	1	2	11
9. There is more variation in the size of the penis in the flaccid state than in the erect state.	1	2	12
10. Those males who do not experience nocturnal emissions are abnormal.	1	2	13
11. A woman usually experiences more frequent and stronger orgasms during intercourse than during masturbation.	1	2	14

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	
12. Gay men and Lesbian women more often report that their sexual relationships are less satisfactory than heterosexual relationships.	1	2	15
13. A nonorgasmic woman is not frigid.	1	2	16
14. Studies confirm that most accurate sex information has come from formal classroom instruction rather than from parents, clergy, or peers.	1	2	17
15. Some males have erotic dreams to orgasm, but do not experience ejaculation.	1	2	18
16. Studies indicate that premarital intercourse negatively affects the marital bond.	1	2	19

NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS INVENTORY

17. What is your age? (Circle only one response) 20
- |             |             |                    |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 18-19 ..... | 24-25 ..... | 30-31 .....        |
| 1           | 4           | 7                  |
| 20-21 ..... | 26-27 ..... | 32-33 .....        |
| 2           | 5           | 8                  |
| 22-23 ..... | 28-29 ..... | Other (specify)... |
| 3           | 6           | 9                  |
18. What is the highest level of schooling completed by you?  
(Circle only one response)
- | High<br>School | College or<br>Trade School | Graduate<br>School |  |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 10             | 11 12                      | 13 14 15 16        | 17 18 19 20 <span style="float: right;">21-22</span> |
19. What is your current living status? (Circle only one response)
- |                                 |   |    |
|---------------------------------|---|----|
| Single .....                    | 1 | 23 |
| Married .....                   | 2 |    |
| Divorced .....                  | 3 |    |
| Divorced and remarried .....    | 4 |    |
| Opposite sex cohabitation ..... | 5 |    |
| Homosexual cohabitation .....   | 6 |    |



20. What is your religion? (Circle only one response)
- |                                |   |    |
|--------------------------------|---|----|
| Catholic .....                 | 1 | 24 |
| Jewish .....                   | 2 |    |
| Protestant .....               | 3 |    |
| Mormon .....                   | 4 |    |
| Other (specify) .....          | 5 |    |
| No Religious Affiliation ..... | 6 |    |
21. Would you say you are very religious, somewhat religious, slightly religious, or not at all religious? (Circle only one)
- |                            |   |    |
|----------------------------|---|----|
| Very religious .....       | 1 | 25 |
| Somewhat religious .....   | 2 |    |
| Slightly religious .....   | 3 |    |
| Not at all religious ..... | 4 |    |
22. Do you think of yourself as: (Circle only one response)
- |   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| Predominantly heterosexual .....          | 1 | 26 |
| Equally heterosexual and homosexual ..... | 2 |    |
| Predominantly homosexual .....            | 3 |    |
23. Have you ever experienced a wet dream to orgasm with an ejaculate?
- |           |   |    |
|-----------|---|----|
| No .....  | 1 | 27 |
| Yes ..... | 2 |    |
24. From what sources did you receive your information about wet dreams? (Under each source select the number that best corresponds with the amount of information received.)

Source	No Infor- mation	Little Information	Some Infor- mation	A Great Deal of Informa- tion	
A. Parents	1	2	3	4	28
B. Siblings	1	2	3	4	29
C. Peers	1	2	3	4	30
D. Media	1	2	3	4	31
E. School Classroom	1	2	3	4	32
F. Religious Training	1	2	3	4	33
G. Books/ Printed Material	1	2	3	4	34

25. From what sources did you learn that 15% to 20% of all males never experience wet dreams? (Under each source select the number that best corresponds with the amount of information received)

Source	No Infor- mation	Little Information	Some Infor- mation	A great Deal of Information	
A. Parents	1	2	3	4	35
B. Siblings	1	2	3	4	36
C. Peers	1	2	3	4	37
D. Media	1	2	3	4	38
E. School Classroom	1	2	3	4	39
F. Religious Training	1	2	3	4	40
G. Books/ Printed Material	1	2	3	4	41

26. How frequently did you or do you dream to orgasm with or without an ejaculate? (Under each age select the number that best corresponds.)

Age in Years	N/A	Never	Once or	Less than	Once or	Once or	Daily	
			Twice a Year	Once a Month	Twice a Month	Twice a Week	or more Often	
18-19	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	42
20-21	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	43
22-23	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	44
24-25	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	45
26-27	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	46
28-29	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	47
30-31	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	48
Other (specify__)		1	2	3	4	5	6	49

27. What is your present reaction to orgasm with or without an ejaculate? (Under each reaction select the number that describes you.)

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>Very Little</u>	<u>Some- what</u>	<u>Very Much So</u>	
A. Something I accept but feel is "abnormal"	1	2	3	4	50
B. Has made it more difficult to accept my sexual ability as a male	1	2	3	4	51
C. Something I enjoy and look forward to	1	2	3	4	52
D. Something I try to avoid at all costs	1	2	3	4	53
E. Something I dislike but live with	1	2	3	4	54
F. Something I readily accept as a normal circumstance	1	2	3	4	55

28. What effect do other sexual outlets such as masturbation, sexual intercourse, or couple sex play have on the frequency with which you have orgasm with or without an ejaculate? (Under each effect select the number that best corresponds.)

<u>Effect</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>Very Little</u>	<u>Some- what</u>	<u>Very Much So</u>	
A. Reduces the frequency	1	2	3	4	56
B. No change in the frequency	1	2	3	4	57
C. Increases the frequency	1	2	3	4	58
D. Varies with the situation	1	2	3	4	59

29. Which of the following reactions most closely describes your feelings about your first wet dream? (Under each reaction select the number that best describes you.)

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>Very Little</u>	<u>Some- what</u>	<u>Very Much So</u>	
A. Traumatic, psychologically painful	1	2	3	4	60
B. Confused, did not know what had happened	1	2	3	4	61
C. Afraid, something is wrong with my body	1	2	3	4	62
D. Sinful, against my religious belief	1	2	3	4	63

## 29. (Continued)

<u>Reaction</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>Very Little</u>	<u>Some- what</u>	<u>Very Much</u>	<u>So</u>
E. Guilty, should have had more self control	1	2	3	4	64
F. Awkward, did not want to tell my family	1	2	3	4	65
G. Satisfied, it was a release from sexual tension	1	2	3	4	66
H. Normal, reassurance as a male	1	2	3	4	67
I. Sign of maturity, was sexually capable	1	2	3	4	68

30. Behaviorally, what have you done to bring about a wet dream?  
(Circle any that apply).

Nothing .....	1	69
Read erotica or sexual material .....	2	70
Wearing erotic clothing to bed .....	3	71
Stopped masturbation for a time .....	4	72
Other (specify) .....	5	73

## 31. Please briefly summarize any information about your experiences with nocturnal emissions that would add to this investigation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HERE:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP