

Masturbation, It's Facts & Myths

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ABSTRACT

Masturbation is the act of touching one's own genital for achieving sexual arousal to have an orgasm. It is a very common thing to do. We are living in 21st century so there is nothing wrong to discuss about it and it never were. Although there are some people who masturbates but don't want to talk about it. Let's discuss why people masturbate. There is so many history about masturbation Life is full of all tension, anxiety, stress that we are getting daily either from work place or there is burden of studies burden of so much work loads. Some people masturbates to get relieved from all those things for a time being because masturbation reduces stress, anxiety and enhances good sleep for a time being. We all have sexual urge or sexual need. There are so many myths about masturbation such as, a woman cannot masturbate but a man can which is not true because everyone has sexual desire and everyone has the right to fulfill their urge. Even animal masturbation has also been seen.

A couple can have sex to fulfill their sexual desire. But a single person who is not in a relationship they are generally prone to masturbation to fulfill his/her sexual desire. Couples also masturbate together (mutual masturbation). Each and every person every human being after hitting pubertal age group is generally in favor of masturbation. But everything has a limitation. There are some people who get addicted to it to avoid stress and life problems. If this occurs then the person will avoid problems instead of facing them. In a relationship mutual masturbation might be satisfying for some couple but on the other hand there are some relationships where relation could get effected badly. Masturbation has a great relation with psychology. Before considering we have to consider insight (how we see a material), how we perceive someone, and where can we do it. Masturbation occurs in 4 phases – desire phase, excitement phase, orgasm and resolution phase. These phases are regulated by hypothalamus and amygdale of our brain. And there is hormonal turbulence occurs within the blood stream during this procedure.

Masturbation not a bad thing to do but it should be done in a limit. Everything should be done in a limit because everything has a good and bad effect.

So there are so many things to know about masturbation which we are going to see in this article.

KEYWORDS: Masturbation, Physiological phenomenon, Myths & Facts of Masturbation

INTRODUCTION

Masturbation is the act of touching one's own genitals for sexual stimulation to achieve 'orgasm'. It may be done by hands, fingers, sex toys etc. It is absolutely normal for both male and female. Masturbation by own or with a partner (mutual masturbation) is considered as a healthy part of sexual enjoyment. Animal masturbation has also been seen.

Apart from the pleasure masturbation can help us to identify our own sexual potentiality. It's very common for people of any gender even if they don't talk about it. Even before puberty, sometimes it is seen that children feels good touching their genitals. There are some people who masturbate often and there are some people who don't masturbate too frequently.

Orgasm:

Orgasm is the intense pleasurable feelings occurred in the genitals accompanied by ejaculation of ejaculatory fluid. It is the peak of sexual arousal and climax of sexual excitement. All muscles during sexual arousal that are contracted get relaxed when an orgasm is achieved.

History of masturbation:

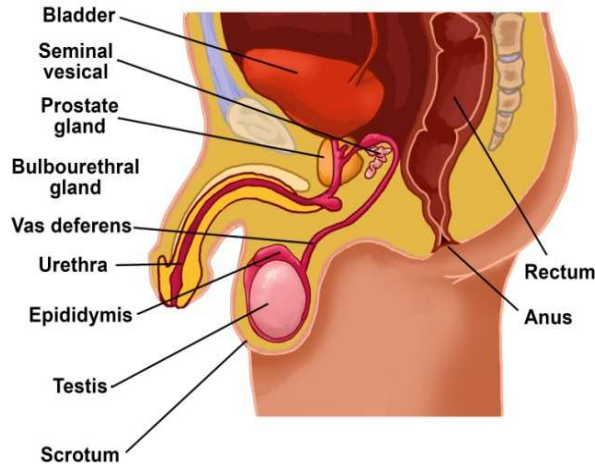
The word "masturbation" was introduced from a Latin verb "masturbari" (Masturbari -> Masturbar -> Masturbate) in the mid 19th century.

According to an Egyptian myth earth was created by masturbation of god 'ATUM' and 'Pharaoh' masturbated in the Nile River ritually. There are some traditional cultures which believe that masturbation is the rite of passage into manhood ('Sambia' tribe in New Guinea).

Anatomy of reproductive system:

Male reproductive system- The principal male sex organs are 'penis' and 'testis' (it is within the scrotum). Other organs are epididymis, vas deferens, accessory glands (seminal vesicles, prostate gland, and bulbourethral gland).

- **Penis:** Penis is the principle male reproductive organ. It has a long shaft and bulbous tip which is called as 'glans penis'. Glans is protected by foreskin. The penis is erected when man becomes sexually aroused. Penis is supplied by the 'pudendal artery' and 'pudendal nerve'.
- **Scrotum:** Scrotum is a sac like structure which holds and protects the testis and hangs behind the penis. Scrotum is connected to the pelvic cavity by the inguinal canal.

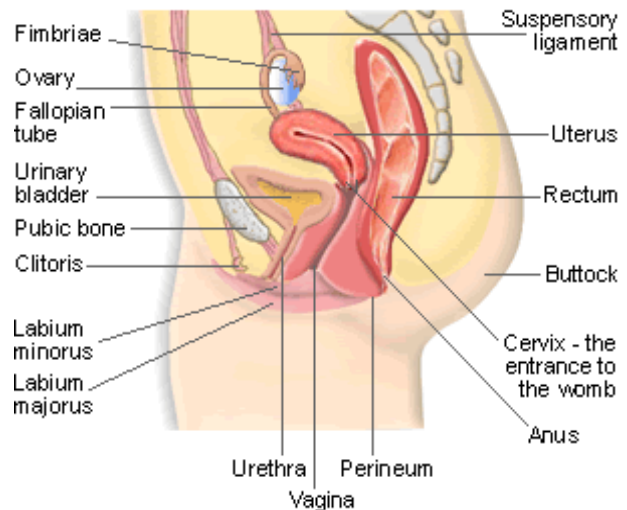


- **Testis:** Testis or testicle is a male reproductive organ. Testis produces sperm within the seminiferous tubules and testis synthesizes and secretes androgens by which male reproductive system are carried out.
- **Epididymis:** Epididymis is a long coiled tube like structure. Sperms are produced in the seminiferous tubules flows into the epididymis.
- **Vas deferens:** The vas deferens or the sperm duct is 30 cm long thin tube which starts from the epididymis and ends to the pelvic cavity. Vas deferens transport spermatozoa from the epididymis to the urethra.
- **Accessory glands:** Accessory glands like seminal vesicles, bulbourethral glands or Cowper glands and prostate gland provide lubrication to the duct and give nutrition to the sperms.

Female reproductive system- The female reproductive organs are:

- **Vulva:** Vulva consists of all external part of female reproductive system such as- labia majora, labia minora, clitoris, vaginal opening, Bartholin's glands, Pudendal cleft.
- **Clitoris:** A small, very sensitive erectile part of vagina at the anterior end of vulva. There are a large number of nerve endings. The dorsal nerve of the clitoris is analogous to the dorsal nerve of pelvis. It is the terminal branch of pudendal nerve.
- **Cervix:** It is the neck of the uterus. It joints with the upper part of vagina. It is conical in shape.
- **Uterus:** The uterus is a pear shaped muscular organ situated in the female pelvic cavity. It is the principal female reproductive organ. It provides nutrition and protects the developing embryo and fetus. When ovum

gets fertilized by sperm it then the fertilized ovum gets implanted into the endometrium.



- **Fallopian tube:** Fallopian tubes are the tubing like structure leading from ovaries to uterus. When an ovum gets maturity it escapes from the ovary (then the ovarian wall gets ruptured) and enters into the fallopian tube and goes towards the uterus. During this movement of ovum if it gets fertilized into the fallopian tube then the fertilized ovum gets implanted into the uterus.
- **Ovaries:** The female gonad or the ovaries are small organs situated in the pelvic cavity, one on each side of the uterus. The two ovaries are connected with uterus by fallopian tubes. Ovary produces ovum and secretes hormone (progesterone and estrogen).

Physiological need:

Masturbation plays an important role in sexual development. People masturbate for many reasons. This includes enjoyment, fun, own pleasure and relief from anxiety. It is seen that, who have higher androgen level than normal range are linked to having more desire to sexual arousal/masturbation. This theory is only applicable for woman. Among man testosterone are unrelated to masturbatory desire.

In case of masturbation two main substances that play a major role is "dopamine and endorphins". Dopamine is a neurotransmitter which allows the person to feel the pleasure and endorphins are the chemical mediators which helps to counteract stress and physical effort that makes them able to recover and relaxed.

During masturbation dopamine is released and the person feels pleasure. And it peaks off during the climax. After climax endorphins (happy hormones) are released which make them feel satisfied and sometimes it helps them to fall asleep.

***Endorphins:** Endorphins are the hormones which are secreted in the pituitary gland and central nervous system. Endorphins are peptide and endogenous opioid neuropeptide hormones. Endorphins consist of two parts- endogenous and morphine or morphine like substance. It consists of three compounds - alpha endorphins, beta endorphins, gamma endorphins. Endorphins are the hormones which fight against stress and pain.

Mechanism of masturbation:

Sexual responses satisfy both biological and physiological needs. Our urge for masturbation or any sexual activity is triggered by environmental and physiological factors.

Sex hormone triggers sexual arousal by their effects on the hypothalamus because sexual arousal is regulated in hypothalamus. This part controls our emotion which also controls appetite, body temperature, thirst etc. Hypothalamus is also responsible for "fight or flight" response of our body. Amygdala near hypothalamus is responsible for alerting us to changes in our body's environment and this part of brain is also associated with sexual arousal. During sexual arousal some same signs like increased heart rate, increased blood pressure and respiration rate is seen as they would seen in a life threatening condition. So during masturbation these effects are seen in our body.

The 'nucleus accumbens' is the pleasure center of the brain. Dopamine is associated with the pleasure center and flows into this area which triggers the desire for sexual arousal. Sexual response cycle is divided into 4 stages:

- **Desire phase:** the desire phase is started with the sensory input.
- **Excitement:** This phase follows with the increasing activation of sympathetic branch of autonomic nervous system.
- **Orgasm:** It involves a peak activation of the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system which results in rhythmic muscular contractions in the pelvic organ.
- **Resolution:** It is the activation of the parasympathetic nerve branch of autonomic nervous system.

In the desire phase, amygdala selects incoming sensory information. This leads to the activation of sympathetic nervous system which peaks during 'orgasm'. After achieving orgasm parasympathetic system gets activated and gradually slows us down to normal from excitement. Through the whole process the nucleus accumbens receives dopamine and sends the message of feeling good. This provides reinforcement to continue the behavior (the process of arousal or masturbation).

When sexually aroused, the level of sex hormones increases with the human imagination which plays a great role in sexual arousal.

Hormonal changes after masturbation- After masturbation the levels of dehydroepiandrosterone and pregnenolone gets increased in the plasma level. There is no change observed of luteinizing hormone in the plasma level.

Masturbation and psychology:



Sexuality is the common property of every living being in the nature. Sexual act is the process to fulfill the urge of each and every living being. As we are concerning the human being, our matter of discussion is only confined within the domain

of human sexuality and human sexual needs. Persons who are not in a relationship those are generally prone to masturbate. Each and every human being after hitting puberty is generally in favor of masturbation. For the purpose of masturbation it is the basic need to erect penis in case of male and sexual arousal in case of female. For sexual arousal it is important to perceive anything sexually or coming off any caddish thought, coming off any sexual fantasy in our mind which leads to hormonal turbulence within the bloodstream which leads to penile erection and sexual arousal and that urge for masturbation which is needed to get relief from that sexual suppression happening in our body. By the process of semen ejaculation we get relieved from the overdose of hormonal overflow.

Need for masturbation preceded by overflowing of the perception of sexual matters which leads to fulfillment of semen within the body. After masturbation that semen gets ejaculated from the body and that gives relief to the person. Before considering masturbation we have to consider three points -

- **Insight:** Insight is how we think or see a material. If we see a naked body and started to think about the sexual material of the body then the hormone releases accordingly. But if we think it is as an art that doesn't produce any lewd thought, means there is no sexual arousal. This is insight.
- **Perception:** Mother, sister, girlfriend, wife all are sexual being. But we do not get erected from our mother or sister. But there is a sexual urge for girlfriend and wife. That means there is a role of perception or how we perceive anybody.
- **Reaction according to place:** In a public place or office or any non familiar place we cannot react sexually because those are not the place for sexual activity or to get sexually erected.

Masturbation helps to feel the pleasure and make us satisfied and relaxed for a time being. But when a person becomes dependent on these feelings he/she might get addicted of masturbation to avoid stress and problems. If masturbation addiction occurs then the person will be tend to avoid problems instead of facing them.

Masturbation can also effect in a relationship. In case of a couple when one is looking forward to masturbate the other one could feel neglected. Some people can feel shame due to masturbation which results to keep secret from their partners.

When a person masturbate endorphins are released which counter the effect of dopamine (the good feeling) and suppresses it. That's why all males generally lose their sexual desire after masturbation. When dopamine suddenly loses its effect the only thing felt by a person is the horrible emotions which results from the part of his brain that thinks it is a bad habit. The person can feel inferiority, anxiety, loss of self esteem, depression.

Myths regarding masturbation:

There are various types of myths about masturbation. Some are discussed below-

- Masturbation can grow hair on our palms.
- **Fact-** Hairy palm can cause by hereditary condition and it is rare. But there is no relation with masturbation.

- Masturbation can cause blindness.
- **Fact-** It is a myth because there is link with puberty and shortsightedness but there is nothing to do with masturbation.
- Masturbation is a sin.
- **Fact-** According to Hinduism masturbation is not a sin. But according to Muslim religion it is a sin. But there are many religions, so more research is needed to prove it.
- Masturbation is only a thing a man would do but it's not for a woman.
- **Fact-** Research has shown that female masturbate too which is very normal and healthy. Who have higher androgen level are prone to have higher sexual urge. It is very common for both sexes to masturbate. Research has found that during adolescents aged 14-17 years in Unites States around 48% of female masturbate. Everyone has sexual urge or desire. So it is not a wrong thing to do for a woman.
- Masturbation causes shrinkage of penis or penis curvature.
- **Fact-** Masturbation doesn't cause any of this condition. During masturbation slightly chafing of soft skin of genital organs could occur and to avoid that lubricant can be used.

Good effects of masturbation: There are some good effects of masturbation which are discussed below-

- Masturbation can help with stress relief. Because having an orgasm releases endorphins which help us to get relief from stress and anxiety and put us in a great mood for the time being as the primary action.
- Masturbation induces good sleep quality for some people.
- Orgasm acts as a natural pain killer which can also give relief a woman from menstrual cramps.
- Masturbation reduces tension as primary action.
- During masturbation dopamine and oxytocin are released which boosts our satisfaction level as primary action.
- During ejaculation a little amount of cortisol is released from the adrenal gland which is a stress hormone, enhances immune system and also reduces the risk of heart disease.
- Research has shown that masturbation helps to reduce the risk of prostate cancer. Toxins built up naturally in the uro-genital tract. At the time of masturbation the level of toxin decreases which lowers the risk of prostate cancer.

Bad effects of masturbation: Some bad effects of masturbation are discussed below-

- Regular masturbation can cause erectile dysfunction. Due to the rapid frequency the muscles of sex organs gets relaxed and weaker.

- In case of mutual masturbation there is a bigger risk of STD (sexual transmitted disease) which spreads skin to skin like herpes. On the other hand if someone masturbate with unwashed sex toys (such as- dildo, vibrator etc.) it could become a fomite (an object which carries infectious microorganisms) which can spread infections to the genital organs. So the sex toys should be washed before using.
- When someone masturbates too frequently he/she can get addicted to it. If this happens to the person he/she might lose their self esteem and can suffer from inferiority, anxiety, depression.
- Premature ejaculation can happen if someone masturbates too frequently. Because the nerves could get damaged which are responsible for ejaculation.
- Excessive masturbation can cause fatigue and weakness.
- Excessive masturbation can reduce sperm motility.

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