

**DAILY STRESS AND SEXUAL AROUSAL  
IN SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE**

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**Introduction:** Previous research has indicated that women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse (CSA) also report more sexual problems, including female sexual arousal dysfunction (FSAD; Lemieux & Byers, 2008). The effects of CSA on posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression have been examined as a potential cause of sexual arousal dysfunction in these women (Bremner, Vermetten, & Kelley, 2007). However, it is also feasible that other stressors in women's lives may be pertinent factors in sexual arousal functioning in these women. For example, studies have shown that daily stress can affect sexual arousal functioning, and individuals with psychopathologies usually report greater daily stress than individuals with no psychopathologies (Ter Kuile, Vigeveno, & Laan, 2007). To date, no studies have attempted to distinguish between the effects of past stress (i.e., CSA) and the effects of proximal stressors (i.e., daily stress).

**Method:** In this study, women with (N=36) and without (N=24) a history of CSA completed validated questionnaires measuring female sexual arousal functioning and daily stress. A standardized interview was used to measure the severity of posttraumatic stress disorder.

**Results:** We found support for a full mediation effect of daily stress on the relationship between CSA and sexual arousal function, even after controlling for the effects of PTSD on sexual functioning.

**Discussion:** These results suggest that treatment for FSAD for women with a history of CSA should not solely focus on the effects of the abuse on anxiety disorders (i.e., PTSD) but should also incorporate techniques to help women to improve coping with daily stressors.