Findings from

**BICIP:**
A Study of Sexual/Bisexual Identities, Communities, and Politics

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“Bisexuality: Myths and Truths about a Misunderstood Sexual Orientation”
a Workshop presented by
Planned Parenthood of Northern New England
Burlington, Vermont
April 14, 1998

Please note: These findings are preliminary. As noted within, many have been previously presented but most are not yet published. Further distribution, with acknowledgement to Paula C. Rust, is permitted for the purpose of education, but published citation or quotation of these findings is permitted only with the written and specific permission of Paula C. Rust.
Lesbians’ Attitudes toward Bisexual Women

from
"Taking the ‘Bi’ out of Bisexuality: Lesbians’ Feelings about Bisexual Women and New Bisexual Identities and Politics"
American Psychological Association Annual Meetings
Toronto, Canada.
August, 1993

Measures of Social Distance

Comfort Do you tend to feel more comfortable when you are in a group of lesbians or when you are in a group of bisexual women?

I feel much more comfortable among lesbians 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I feel much more comfortable among bisexuals

Discussion Group If you were going to join a discussion group which was formed to talk about the problems people have in their relationships with friends and lovers, would you prefer to join a discussion group which included mostly bisexual women with a few lesbians, or a discussion group which included mostly lesbians with a few bisexual women? Indicate how strongly you feel about this on the scale below.

Much rather join group with mostly bisexual women and a few lesbians 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Much rather join group with mostly lesbians and a few bisexual women

Friendship Are you more likely to make friends with a woman you have just met if she is a lesbian or if she is bisexual?

I am more likely to make friends with a lesbian 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I am more likely to make friends with a bisexual

Dating (If you were not involved in a relationship now,) would you prefer to date a bisexual woman or a lesbian? Indicate on the scale below how strongly you feel about this.

I would prefer to date a bisexual woman 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I would prefer to date a lesbian

Measures of Political Trust

Gay Rights Campaign Would you rather work closely on a gay rights campaign with a bisexual woman or with a lesbian? How strongly do you feel about this?

I would much rather work with a bisexual woman; I would never work with a lesbian 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I would much rather work with a lesbian; I would never work with a bisexual woman

Public Speech If you were going to make a speech to a local citizen’s group about alternatives to traditional heterosexual relationships, and something came up so that you couldn’t go, would you rather trust a bisexual woman or a lesbian to go in your place? How strongly do you feel about this?

I would much rather trust a bisexual woman; I would not trust a lesbian at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I would much rather trust a lesbian; I would not trust a bisexual woman at all
Attitudes toward Bisexuals and Bisexuality among Self-Identified Bisexual Women and Men
BICIP Study, 1995

From
"From BiPhobia to BiPride"
Paula C. Rust, PhD

Presented at the
Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Meeting
August, 1997
Toronto

The statements below reflect some popular opinions about sexuality. Use the scale after each statement to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement. Do these questions quickly; give your first response and don’t agonize over them, but feel free to write comments if you want to explain any of your answers.

Use this scale to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|10| “Sexuality is very fluid; one’s sexuality can change many times over the course of one’s lifetime.”
   |
|11| “Bisexuality is a very rare form of sexuality.”
   |
|12| “In general, bisexual people are more flexible in their thinking than either lesbians/gays or heterosexuals.”
   |
|13| “It is more difficult to form a stable bisexual community than it is to create a stable lesbian or gay community.”
   |
|14| “Bisexuals can be bridge builders between heterosexuals and homosexuals.”
   |
|15| “Many people are really bisexual, but some are not in touch with their sexual feelings toward one or the other sex.”
   |
|16| “Lesbians and gay men should not trust bisexuals too much, because when the going really gets rough, bisexuals are more likely to leave their lesbian and gay friends and return to a heterosexual lifestyle.”
   |
|17| “Bisexuals are in a unique position to break down the lines between rigid gender and sexual categories.”
   |
|18| “Some lesbians really are somewhat attracted to men, but they are afraid to express these feelings because other lesbians would not approve of them.”
   |
Perceptions of Bisexuals' Social and Political Trustworthiness

"From BiPhobia to BiPride: Changes in Self-identified Bisexual Women's Attitudes Toward Themselves During a Decade of Growing Bisexual Political Activism"  Paula C. Rust SSSP Meetings, Toronto, 1997. Do not cite or quote without permission.

1995: "Lesbians and gay men should not trust bisexuals too much, because when the going really gets rough, bisexuals are more likely to leave their lesbian and gay friends and return to a heterosexual lifestyle"
Comfort among Bisexual Women vs. Lesbians

"From BiPhobia to BiPride: Changes in Self-identified Bisexual Women's Attitudes Toward Themselves During a Decade of Growing Bisexual Political Activism" - Paula C. Rust, SSSP Meetings, Toronto, 1997. Do not cite or quote without permission.

Preferences for Dating Bisexual Women vs. Lesbians

"From BiPhobia to BiPride: Changes in Self-identified Bisexual Women's Attitudes Toward Themselves During a Decade of Growing Bisexual Political Activism" - Paula C. Rust, SSSP Meetings, Toronto, 1997. Do not cite or quote without permission.
Current and Ideal Feelings of Sexual Attraction among Bisexual Women and Men

from
“Sexual Inquiries: A Look at Queer Sex and Sexual Identities”
Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley
Rochester, NY
Sept. 16, 1994

and
“Bisexual Experiences, Identities, and Politics”
The International Academy of Sex Researchers Annual Meeting
Provincetown, MA
September 23, 1995

56. How sexually attracted are you to women and men? On the scale below, choice A means that you are only attracted to women and not at all attracted to men, choice F means that you are equally attracted to women and men, and choice K means that you are only attracted to men and not at all attracted to women. Where would you place yourself on this scale at the present time in your life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attracted to women only</th>
<th>Equally</th>
<th>Attracted to men only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A  B  C  D  E  F  G  H  I  J  K</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 90 80 70 60 50:50 60 70 80 90 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59. If you could choose, where would you ideally like to be on the scale? _____
Table 2: Lesbians' Current and Ideal Feelings of Sexual Attraction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% attracted to one's own sex, not at all attracted to the other sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100% attracted to the other sex, not at all attracted to one's own sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means (N): 2.55 (44)  2.56 (39)

Sig. Test: Mean X-Y = -.188  Paired t-value = 2.67  p = .001

Table 3: Gay Men's Current and Ideal Feelings of Sexual Attraction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% attracted to one's own sex, not at all attracted to the other sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50:50 Equally attracted to both sexes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means (N): 2.60 (30)  3.67 (29)

Sig. Test: Mean X-Y = 1.072  Paired t-value = 2.58  p = .017
62. Some people find that their feelings of sexual attraction are different for men than they are for women. Even people who feel equally attracted toward men and women can feel differently toward men than they do toward women. Are your feelings of sexual attraction for men different from your feelings of attraction for women, and if so, how different are they?

1. Exactly the same 2. Slightly different 3. Somewhat different 4. Very different 5. Completely different

63. What about your feelings of emotional attraction? Are your feelings of emotional attraction for men different from your feelings of emotional attraction for women, and if so, how different are they?

1. Exactly the same 2. Slightly different 3. Somewhat different 4. Very different 5. Completely different
Differences between Bisexual Women, Bisexual Men, Lesbians, and Gay Men in the Degree to which Their Feelings of Sexual Attraction are Different for Women and Men

Differences between Bisexual Women, Bisexual Men, Lesbians, and Gay Men in the Degree to which Their Feelings of Emotional Attraction are Different for Women and Men
The Importance of Biological Sex versus Gender Style in Influencing Sexual Attractions to Others among Bisexual Women and Men

from
"Finding a Sexual Identity and Community: Therapeutic Implications and Cultural Assumptions in Popular Models of Coming Out"
Annual Primary Prevention of Psychopathology Conference, Department of Psychology, University of Vermont

and
"Bisexual Experiences, Identities, and Politics"
The International Academy of Sex Researchers Annual Meeting
Provincetown, MA
September 23, 1995

The questions above asked about your feeling of attraction toward men and women. But being a man or a woman in any culture is complex; it involves both biological sex and gender style. Biological sex refers to whether a person is biologically male or female; it refers strictly to physical sex traits, for example, whether a person has a penis or a vagina. Gender style is the way a person looks and acts; it includes their clothing, mannerisms, the way they speak and move. Gender style is often associated with biological sex, but not always. Some people are androgynous and other people crossdress or gender blend. The next few questions ask how much each of these specific aspects of what it means to be a man or a woman influence your feelings of sexual attraction to other people.

64. How much does a person's biological sex affect your feelings of sexual attraction to that person?

Does not matter at all; 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7
completely irrelevant

Matters completely; extremely important

65. How much does a person's gender style affect your feelings of sexual attraction to that person?

Does not matter at all; 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7
completely irrelevant

Matters completely; extremely important
Table 7: Compared Importance of Biological Sex and Gender in Affecting Bisexual Women's Feelings of Sexual Attraction

Table 9: Compared Importance of Biological Sex and Gender in Affecting Bisexual Men's Feelings of Sexual Attraction
Characteristics Other Than Sex and Gender
the Influence Feelings of Sexual Attraction
among Bisexual Women and Men

from
"Bisexual Experiences, Identities, and Politics"
The International Academy of Sex Researchers Annual Meeting
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52. Many people sometimes feel sexually attracted to people they don't know, for example, people they see walking on the street. Feeling sexually attracted to a stranger does not necessarily mean that you want to meet the person or have a sexual relationship with the person; it is usually just a physical feeling of sexual attraction that you have toward that person. Imagine walking down the street and seeing a stranger that you feel sexually attracted to; what does this person look like? Describe this person in as much detail as possible.

53. Describe your "ideal partner." Your "ideal partner" is the person with whom you would most like to have a long term relationship or spend the rest of your life. This might be a person that you have already met, or it might be a fantasy image of the kind of person you think would be your best match. (Note: If you are not interested in being involved in a long term relationship, describe the kind of person you would most like to have any form of emotionally intimate romantic relationship with.)