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The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS) and Its Short Form (NSSS-S)

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Purpose

The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS; $k = 20$) and its short form (NSSS-S; $k = 12$) are multi-dimensional self-report scales designed to measure sexual satisfaction in both clinical and non-clinical samples. The conceptual framework of the NSSS derives from the sexuality counseling and psychotherapy literature, focuses on multiple aspects of sexual satisfaction, and is gender, sexual orientation and relationship status neutral (Štulhofer, Buško, & Brouillard, 2010; 2011).

Development

Initial bi-cultural construction and validation of the NSSS were carried out in Croatia and the United States using seven independent samples with over 2,000 participants aged 18–55 years.

Principal component analysis was carried out on an initial pool of 35 Likert-type items generated by the proposed five-dimensional conceptual framework. Oblimin method extraction and rotation suggested a forced two-factor solution which proved stable across the samples. Using both statistical and content-related characteristics, 20 items were retained from the initial set creating two 10-item subscales: The Ego-Centered

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subscale and the Partner/Sexual Activity-Centered subscale. The short version or NSSS-S was subsequently developed in order to facilitate the use of the NSSS in clinical and non-clinical studies and demonstrates reliability and validity comparable to the full scale instrument (Štulhofer, Buško, & Brouillard, 2011).

The NSSS-S was recently validated in Spanish (Strizzi, Fernández-Agis, Alarcón-Rodríguez, & Parrón-Carreño, 2016) and Portuguese samples (Pechorro, Almeida, Figueiredo, Pascoal, Vieira, & Neves, 2016)². Both translated measures were found to have sound psychometric properties, and yielded a two factor solution—also reported in an online study carried out in the USA ($n = 425$; Mark, Herbenick, Fortenberry, Sanders, & Reece, 2014).

Response Mode and Timing

For each item, respondents are asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their sex life in the preceding six months using the following 5-point Likert type scale: 1 = *Not at all Satisfied*, 2 = *A Little Satisfied*, 3 = *Moderately Satisfied*, 4 = *Very Satisfied*, 5 = *Extremely Satisfied*.

Scoring

The Ego-Centered subscale (Items 1–10), Partner and Activity-Centered subscale (Items 11–20), NSSS (Items 1–20), and NSSS-S (Items 2–3, 5–6, 8, 10–12, 14, 17, 19–20) are computed by summing the related items with higher scores representing higher levels of sexual satisfaction.

Reliability

Internal consistency in bi-cultural student and community samples, and a sample

² For a Portuguese validation of the full NSSS see Pechorro, Almeida, Figueiredo, Pascoal, Vieira, & Neves (2015).

of Croatian non-heterosexual men and women was high for the full scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94-.96$), its two subscales ($\alpha = .91-.93$ and $.90-.94$, respectively) and the short version ($\alpha = .90-.93$) (Štulhofer et al., 2010; 2011). No substantial gender- or sexual orientation-specific differences were observed. In the Spanish sample, internal consistency of the NSSS-S was satisfactory both for the overall scale ($\alpha = .92$) and its subscales ($\alpha = .88$ and $.87$). Similar findings were reported in the Portuguese validation study (Pechorro et al., 2016), in which Cronbach's alpha was $.94$ for the scale and $.92$ and $.89$ for its subscales, and in the Mark et al. (2014) study ($\alpha = .91$ for the full scale).

Test-retest reliability of the NSSS and NSSS-S was shown to be satisfactory in a sample of Croatian students ($N = 219$) over a 1-month period, with somewhat stronger associations reported among women (Štulhofer et al., 2010). A comparable value ($.81$) was reported in the Mark et al. study (2014), in which test-retest reliability of the NSSS-S was assessed after two months.

Validity

In support of convergent validity, associations between a global (single-item) measure of sexual satisfaction and the NSSS/ NSSS-S scores were significant and strong in the initial studies (Štulhofer et al., 2010; 2011), the Portuguese study (Pechorro et al., 2015) and the Mark et al. study (2014).

The NSSS and NSSS-S were shown to be significantly positively associated with a general measure of life satisfaction (Štulhofer et al., 2010; 2011). Significant negative correlations with the shortened Sexual Boredom Scale scores (Watt & Ewing, 1996) and positive correlations with relationship intimacy, partner communication about sex, and relationship status were also found among both Croatian and the U.S. male and female

college students. In addition, the NSSS-S was moderately correlated with the General Measure of Relationship Satisfaction (Mark et al., 2014). Portuguese versions of the NSSS and NSSS-S were significantly correlated with the sexual sensation seeking and (negatively) with sexual boredom (Pechorro et al., 2015; 2016). A study focusing on avoidant and anxious attachment styles and sexual satisfaction reported a significant negative relationship between insecure attachment and the NSSS scores (Khoury & Findlay, 2014).

Significant differences were found in the average NSSS and NSSS-S scores between participants in a clinical sample of individuals undergoing sex therapy ($N = 54$; $M_{\text{age}} = 34.6$) and a large non-clinical community sample of comparable age (Štulhofer et al., 2010; 2011). Participants with sexual difficulties systematically reported lower sexual satisfaction (Cohen's d values ranged from -1.07 to -1.39). Discriminant analyses with the NSSS and NSSS-S as independent variables—carried out to predict membership in the clinical vs. nonclinical community sample—correctly classified 80.3% and 79.6% of cases, respectively.

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The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS) and the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale-Short Form (NSSS-S)

Thinking about your sex life during the last six months please rate your satisfaction with the follow aspects:

1. The intensity of my sexual arousal

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

2. The quality of my orgasms*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

3. My “letting go” and surrender to sexual pleasure during sex*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

4. My focus/concentration during sexual activity

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

5. The way I sexually react to my partner*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

6. My body’s sexual functioning*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

7. My emotional opening up in sex

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

8. My mood after sexual activity*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

9. The frequency of my orgasms

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

10. The pleasure I provide to my partner*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

11. The balance between what I give and receive in sex*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

12. My partner's emotional opening up during sex*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

13. My partner's initiation of sexual activity

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

14. My partner's ability to orgasm*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

15. My partner's surrender to sexual pleasure ("letting go")

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

16. The way my partner takes care of my sexual needs

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

17. My partner's sexual creativity*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

18. My partner's sexual availability

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

19. The variety of my sexual activities*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

20. The frequency of my sexual activity*

Not at all Satisfied A Little Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Very Satisfied Extremely Satisfied.

**Denotes a NSSS-S item.*