

# To spice it up or not to spice it up: Investigating perceptions of sexual novelty use in heterosexual romantic relationships.

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## Introduction

- Novelty may combat sexual boredom in long-term relationships
- We investigated how couples introduce sexual novelty in discussions of sexual tensions

## Methods

- Couples (N = 7) were primarily White, mixed-sex, and cohabiting
- Mean age = 26 years
- Mean relationship length = 4 years
- Couples discussed a sexual problem for 10 minutes and we conducted a thematic analysis informed by Braun and Clarke (2006)

## Results & Discussion

- We identified two overarching themes related to reasons to explore sexual novelty and barriers preventing couples from implementing novelty
- Couples considered sexual novelty a positive addition to their sex lives, regardless of whether or not they discussed using it to solve a sexual problem

Couples considered sexual novelty to either *spice up* their already satisfying sex life or to *fix sexual problems*.

Couples often encountered barriers such as concerns about how to add novelty or an unwillingness to try new things.

## Motivation Themes

### Adding Spice (N = 4)

"I just like to do more than one position [when I] have sex ... it makes it more exciting."  
– Participant 3M

### Novelty as a Tool (N = 2)

Participant 3F proposed allowing furniture to dictate sexual positions as a solution to the couple's dissatisfaction due to overthinking.

### Blast from the Past (N = 2)

"We had ... light bondage at the beginning of our relationship. That ... hasn't happened in a long time."  
– Participant 7M

## Barrier Themes

### Abandoned Satisfaction (N=2)

Participant 2F attributed lack of sexual novelty exploration due to the dyad's established sexual routine

### Navigating Novelty (N = 4)

"I ask because I wanna know we're doing something that you're gonna like."  
– Participant 3M

### Status Quo Sufficient (N = 4)

Status Quo Sufficient may act as a barrier or a motivator for sexual novelty use. **Example:** our sex life is good, but let's make it better OR our sex life is good, spice is not needed