



Sexuality in Europe and the USA

**A Harris Interactive Survey for
France 24 and *L'Express***

**Aired on July 26th 2007 on France 24
and published in *L'Express* of July 26th 2007**



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Technical note

Survey conducted online by Harris Interactive for France 24 and L'Express , from May 31st to June 12th 2007.

This survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive among a total of 5,430 adults who have already had sexual intercourse, including 4,446 (aged 16-64 years old) within France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain and the USA, and 984 (aged 18-64 years old) in Italy, between 31st May and 12th June 2007. The sample comes from nationally representative samples. Figures for factors including age, sex, education level and region were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. A propensity score weighting procedure was also applied to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. This procedure provides added assurance of accuracy and representativeness.

Weighted and unweighted bases are shown below, and results/percentages represented here are weighted.

Unweighted bases for the survey are: Total 5,430; France 943; Germany 896; Great Britain 925; Italy 984; Spain 891 and the USA 791.

Weighted bases for the survey are: Total 5,332; France 921; Germany 885; Great Britain 884; Italy 976; Spain 882 and the USA 783.

Sample Source : Harris Interactive relied on the Harris Poll OnlineSM panel as the primary sample source for this survey. This multimillion member online panel consists of potential respondents who have been recruited through online, telephone, mail, and in-person approaches to increase population coverage and enhance representativeness. All panel members have agreed to be invited to participate in online surveys through a confirmed opt-in approach.

Please note that any communication of these results has to be made with technical elements such as: survey methodology, fieldwork dates, name of the agency, sample size.

Comments

Comments

For the shows aired on July 26th 2007 on "France 24" channel and for *L'Express* published on July 26th 2007, Harris Interactive sought the opinion of the citizens of 6 countries (5 European countries and the USA) about sexuality.

This survey was conducted online among a total of 5,430 adults who have already had sexual intercourse, including 4,446 (aged 16-64 years old) within France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain and the USA, and 984 (aged 18-64 years old) in Italy: France 943; Germany 896; Great Britain 925; Italy 984; Spain 891 and the USA 791.

Comments

***1. Some information on Europeans' and Americans' sexuality
Even though the age of the first sexual intercourse is the same for all countries surveyed,
sexuality is lived differently depending on the country***

- Age of the first sexual intercourse

The first sexual intercourse happens around 18 years old on average for all countries surveyed, no matter what gender

The British seem to be the first ones to have their first sexual intercourse as they answer that their "first time" happened at 17.4 years old on average. The Americans come next at 17.8 years old, the Germans at 17.9 years old and the French at 18 years old. Finally, the Italians at 18.5 years old and the Spanish at 18.8 years old are the last ones to have their first sexual intercourse.

This question is more embarrassing for Europeans than Americans, as only 12% of the latter do not answer the question, versus 17% of the French, 18% of the Spanish, 27% of the British, 28% of the Italians and 28% of the Germans.

Males and females in these countries have their first sexual intercourse at similar ages, except in Germany and Spain. In fact, German females declare to have had their first intercourse at 17.2 years old on average and males a bit later, at 18.5 years old. The opposite is observed in Spain where males seem to be more precocious than females. The latter have their first sexual intercourse at 19.3 years old versus 18.4 years old for males.

Comments

-Number of sexual partners in life

Germans take the lead concerning the number of sexual partners met in their life, closely followed by the Americans and the British. However, no matter which country is considered, males pretend to have known more sexual partners than females

The Germans have had 13 sexual partners on average during their life, which places them on top of the countries surveyed, before the Americans: 12.5 and the British: 12.5.

Then come the French: 11.1, the Italians: 10.3 and finally the Spanish with 8 partners.

A strong disparity can be observed between the answers of males and females at this question. Males declare to have had more partners than females do, no matter the country: Germany: males: 15.5, females: 10.1 / Great Britain: males: 14.9, females: 10 / USA: males: 13.8, females: 10.9 / France: males: 13.6, females: 8.5 / Italy: males: 12.1, females: 8.5 / Spain: males: 11.5, females: 4.6.

- Amount of sexual intercourse per month

The French have the highest amount of sexual intercourse per month, compared with the other countries

Males and females in our survey converge regarding the number of sexual intercourse they declare having in a month. Nevertheless, the Italians are an exception as males declare to have sexual intercourse 8.8 times per month on average while females state only 5.8.

The French are the most sexually active as they have sexual intercourse 8.9 times per month, versus 8 for the Germans, 7.3 for the Italians, 5.9 for the Americans and 5.8 for the British.

Comments

-Number of different sexual partners in the past year

The Italians have had the highest number of partners in the past 12 months and males have had more sexual intercourse with different partners than females in the past year

Males seem to have had more sexual intercourse with different people in the past year. In fact, Italian males declare to have had sexual intercourse with 2.6 partners on average vs. 1.7 for Italian females. In a less significant way than in Italy, this tendency exists in all other countries: France: males: 2.3, females: 1.3 / Germany: males: 2.0, females: 1.7 / Great Britain: males: 2.0, females: 1.4 / USA: males: 1.8, females: 1.4.

All of the Italians also distinguish themselves from the other countries. They declare having had 2.2 partners on average in the past year, before the Germans: 1.9, the French: 1.8, the British: 1.7 and the Americans: 1.6.

Comments

2. Contraceptives and protection means

Even though the usage of condoms is widely spread, only France considers abortion in case of an unexpected pregnancy

-Condom usage and risky behaviours

The usage of condoms is widely spread in all countries surveyed. No major difference can be observed between males and females, except in France. However, some countries have more risky behaviour than others

83% of the Americans, 81% of the Spanish, 75% of the British, 74% of the French, 71% of the Germans, 68% of the Italians have already used condoms. The usage declared by males converges with that declared by females, except in France where only 66% of females feel they meet partners using condoms, while 84% of males declare using condoms.

Many interviewees have not answered this question in Italy: 20%, Germany: 20% and Great Britain: 18%. 12% of the French have not answered, 10% of the Spanish and 8% of the Americans.

53% of the Americans, 45% of the British, 41% of the Germans state having had one or several unprotected sexual intercourse. 37% of the French, 36% of the Spanish and 32% of the Italians are in the same situation.

Answers given by males and females vary from one country to another. Even if in Germany (males: 43%, females: 40%), in Italy (males: 30%, females: 33%) and in France (males: 39%, females: 35%) males and females behave in the same way, risky unprotected sexual intercourse is more frequent among American males: 58% than females: 48%, as well as among British males: 52% than females: 41%. Finally, Spanish males: 43% have had much more risky sexual intercourse than females: 29%. Many interviewees have not answered this question, especially in Germany: 23%, Italy: 22% and Great Britain: 21%. 13% of the Spanish surveyed have not answered, 11% of the French and 9% of the Americans.

Comments

-Abortion

Except in France, no country surveyed considers abortion as an option in case of an unexpected pregnancy

Even though 48% of the French consider abortion in case of an unexpected pregnancy, 65% of the Americans, 58% of the Spanish, 55% of the Germans, 52% of the Italians and 60% of the British would not consider abortion as a solution. No matter in which country, females are slightly more favourable to abortion than males, notably in France (males: 38%, females: 56%).

Many people did not want to answer that question. Particularly in Germany: 29%, Great Britain: 26% and Italy: 24%. This question has raised less resistance in France: 17%, Spain: 14% and the USA: 12%.

Comments

3. Europeans' and Americans' approach to sexuality

Infidel partners are not forgiven in any country and homosexuality only concerns a small minority of people

-Infidelity

No country surveyed is ready to forgive an infidel partner involved in a monogamous relationship.

However, the Americans and the French are more understanding. We can also notice that males seem to be more conciliatory than females

In all countries surveyed, respondents refuse to forgive their partner's infidelity, the British: 51%, the Spanish: 50%, the Italians: 48%, the French and the Americans: 45%. The Germans are less categorical as 36% of them condemn infidelity.

However, the most understanding are the French and the Americans, 37% of them declaring being ready to forgive an extra-conjugal affair. It is also the case for 28% of Germans, 27% of Spanish, 23% of Italians and 22% of British.

Compared with females, males seem to be more ready to forgive infidelity in their couple. It is notably the case in the USA: 47% of males vs. 25% of females, in France: 47% of males vs. 28% of females as well as in Great Britain: 31% of males vs. 13% of females.

The other countries show the same tendencies, but to a lesser extent. Germany: 34% of males vs. 23% of females /Spain: 32% of males vs. 23% of females. In Italy, females: 24% are as understanding as males: 23%.

Many people have not answered this question. Especially in Germany: 34%, Italy: 29% and Great Britain: 27%, and to a lesser extent in Spain: 23%, France: 18% and the USA: 18%.

Comments

-Homosexual relations

Homosexual relations remain quite uncommon as 83% of the Spanish, 79% of the French, 78% of the Americans, 75% of the British, 71% of the Italians and the Germans state that they have never had a homosexual relation.

Males do not seem to have had more homosexual relations than females, even if the Spanish, the French and the Americans show a slight difference between males and females. Spain: males: 10%, females: 4% / France: males: 14%, females: 8% / Americans: males: 16%, females: 12%.

Comments

4. The new sexual behaviours

Drugs improving sexual performances and dates generated by the Internet are still unusual

-Dates generated by the Internet remain in the minority

A large majority of the Internet users interviewed has not had any sexual intercourse with people originally met through the Internet: 72% of Internet users in Spain, 70% in Great Britain and France, 66% in the USA, 65% in Italy. The answers given by males and females are identical, even if slight disparities can be observed in Spain (males: 28%, females: 16%), Italy (males: 22%, females: 11%) and France (males: 26%, females: 17%).

-The usage of drugs generates little interest

The usage of drugs improving erectile functioning, such as Viagra, Levitra or Cialis, remain in the minority: 87% of French, 85% of Spanish, 79% of Americans, 75% of Italians, 73% of British and 72% of Germans have never used such products. Let us note that Americans (13%) and British (10%) record the highest proportion of users.

Infrequently used, these drugs do not raise any particular interest: 72% of Germans, 67% of Italians and Spanish, 63% of French, 61% of Americans, 58% of British are not likely to use palliatives for improving erectile functioning in the future. Nevertheless, 28% of Americans, 25% of French and 21% of British declare being ready to use these drugs in the future. Spanish: 17% and Italians: 12% seem to be less likely to do so. Germans look particularly opposed to this usage, as only 5% are likely to use these drugs in the future.

Depending on the country, males seem to be more interested by these products than females (ready to encourage their partner to use them): France: males 31%, females 19% / Great Britain: males 28%, females 15% / Spain: males 24%, females 11% / Italy: males 16%, females 7% / Germany: males 8%, females 3%. In the USA, the tendency goes the other way round: females: 30% are a little more curious than males: 27%.

Age of first sexual intercourse

Age of first sexual intercourse

How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time?

Open-ended question

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Mean	18,0	17,9	17,4	18,5	18,8	17,8
Not answered	17%	28%	27%	28%	18%	12%
<i>Males: Mean</i>	18,1	18,5	17,6	18,6	18,4	18,0
<i>Females: Mean</i>	18,0	17,2	17,3	18,5	19,3	17,5

Number of sexual partners in life

Number of sexual partners in life

How many different sexual partners have you had in your life, including those for only one night?

Open-ended question

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Mean	11,1	13,0	12,5	10,3	8,0	12,5
Not answered	24%	34%	32%	35%	28%	17%
<i>Males: Mean</i>	13,6	15,5	14,9	12,1	11,5	13,8
<i>Females: Mean</i>	8,5	10,1	10,0	8,5	4,6	10,9

Number of sexual intercourse in a month

Number of sexual intercourse in a month

In a typical month, about how many times do you have sexual intercourse with another person?

Open-ended question

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	-	783
Mean	8,9	8,0	5,8	7,3	-	5,9
Not answered	34%	40%	39%	39%	-	20%
<i>Males: Mean</i>	8,9	8,5	5,7	8,8	-	6,3
<i>Females: Mean</i>	8,9	7,3	5,9	5,8	-	5,4

Number of sexual partners in the past year

Number of sexual partners in the past year

In the past year, with how many different people have you had sexual intercourse?

Open-ended question - Base: had at least 1 sexual intercourse per month

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	477	422	357	398	-	479
Mean	1,8	1,9	1,7	2,2	-	1,6
Not answered	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%
<i>Males: Mean</i>	2,3	2,0	2,0	2,6	-	1,8
<i>Females: Mean</i>	1,3	1,7	1,4	1,7	-	1,4

Condom usage

Condom usage

TO MALES: Have you ever used a condom during sexual intercourse?

TO FEMALES: Have you ever had a partner who used a condom during sexual intercourse?

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Yes	74%	71%	75%	68%	81%	83%
No	14%	9%	7%	12%	9%	9%
Not answered	12%	20%	18%	20%	10%	8%
<i>Males: Yes</i>	84%	77%	77%	71%	84%	86%
<i>Females: Yes</i>	66%	65%	72%	66%	78%	81%

Unprotected sexual intercourse

Unprotected sexual intercourse

Have you ever had unprotected sexual intercourse (without using a condom) without knowing your partner's sexual history?

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Yes (total)	37%	41%	45%	32%	36%	53%
Yes, several times	22%	24%	29%	20%	24%	35%
Yes, once	15%	17%	16%	12%	12%	18%
No	52%	36%	34%	46%	51%	38%
Not answered	11%	23%	21%	22%	13%	9%
<i>Males: Yes (total)</i>	39%	43%	52%	30%	43%	58%
<i>Females: Yes (total)</i>	35%	40%	41%	33%	29%	48%

Drugs improving erectile functioning

Drugs improving erectile functioning

TO MALES: Have you ever used a drug that improves erectile functioning, such as Viagra, Levitra, or Cialis?

TO FEMALES: Has a sexual partner of yours ever used a drug that improves erectile functioning, such as Viagra, Levitra, or Cialis?

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Yes	3%	6%	10%	6%	6%	13%
No	87%	72%	73%	75%	85%	79%
Not answered	10%	22%	17%	19%	9%	8%
<i>Males: Yes</i>	4%	7%	14%	9%	8%	13%
<i>Females: Yes</i>	3%	5%	7%	3%	3%	13%

Drugs improving erectile functioning

TO MALES: How likely would you be to use a drug that improves erectile functioning in the future?

TO FEMALES: How likely would you be to encourage your partner to use a drug that improves erectile functioning in the future?

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Likely (total)	25%	5%	21%	12%	17%	28%
Very likely	6%	1%	4%	3%	3%	7%
Somewhat likely	19%	4%	17%	9%	14%	21%
Unlikely (total)	63%	72%	58%	67%	67%	61%
Somewhat unlikely	31%	21%	18%	16%	25%	21%
Very unlikely	32%	51%	40%	51%	42%	40%
Not answered	12%	23%	21%	21%	16%	11%
<i>Males: Likely (total)</i>	31%	8%	28%	16%	24%	27%
<i>Females: Likely (total)</i>	19%	3%	15%	7%	11%	30%

Forgiving infidel partners

Forgiving infidel partners

If you were involved in a monogamous relationship and found out that your partner had had sexual intercourse with another person, would you forgive your partner?

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Yes	37%	28%	22%	23%	27%	37%
No	45%	36%	51%	48%	50%	45%
Not answered	18%	36%	27%	29%	23%	18%
<i>Males: Yes</i>	47%	34%	31%	23%	32%	47%
<i>Females: Yes</i>	28%	23%	13%	24%	23%	25%

Sexual intercourse with someone met on the Internet

Sexual intercourse with someone met on the Internet

Have you ever had sexual intercourse with someone you originally met on the Internet?

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Yes	22%	22%	14%	18%	21%	25%
No	70%	60%	70%	65%	72%	66%
Not answered	8%	18%	16%	17%	7%	9%
<i>Males: Yes</i>	26%	23%	15%	22%	28%	25%
<i>Females: Yes</i>	17%	22%	12%	11%	16%	25%

Abortion

Abortion

TO MALES: If your partner were to become unexpectedly pregnant, how likely would you be to recommend an abortion as an option?

TO FEMALES: If you were to become unexpectedly pregnant, how likely would you consider abortion as an option?

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Likely (total)	48%	16%	24%	24%	28%	23%
Very likely	23%	9%	13%	13%	13%	13%
Somewhat likely	25%	7%	11%	11%	15%	10%
Unlikely (total)	35%	55%	50%	52%	58%	65%
Somewhat unlikely	17%	17%	13%	11%	17%	12%
Very unlikely	18%	38%	37%	41%	41%	53%
Not answered	17%	29%	26%	24%	14%	12%
<i>Males: Likely (total)</i>	38%	13%	23%	17%	20%	18%
<i>Females: Likely (total)</i>	56%	21%	26%	29%	36%	28%

Homosexual relations

Homosexual relations

TO MALES: Have you ever had sexual relations with another man?

TO FEMALES: Have you ever had sexual relations with another woman?

	French	German	British	Italian	Spanish	American
<i>Weighted base</i>	921	885	884	976	882	783
Yes	11%	8%	7%	8%	7%	14%
No	79%	71%	75%	71%	83%	78%
Not answered	10%	21%	18%	21%	10%	8%
<i>Males: Yes</i>	14%	8%	8%	8%	10%	16%
<i>Females: Yes</i>	8%	8%	7%	8%	4%	12%

Sampling error

All surveys are subject to several sources of error. These include: sampling error (because only a sample of a population is interviewed); measurement error due to question wording and/or question order, deliberately or unintentionally inaccurate responses, non-response (including refusals), interviewer effects (when live interviewers are used) and weighting. With one exception (sampling error) the magnitude of the errors that result cannot be estimated. There is, therefore, no way to calculate a finite "margin of error" for any survey and the use of these words should be avoided.

With pure probability samples, with 100 percent response rates, it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error (but not other sources of error) is not greater than some number. With a pure probability sample of 5,430 one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results would have a sampling error of +/-1.5 percentage point. For individual countries, sampling error is +/-3 percentage points. However that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Harris Interactive

About Harris Interactive

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To become a member of the Harris Poll Online and be invited to participate in online surveys, register at www.harrispollonline.com.