Sexual attraction and menstrual cycles [1]

Dear Alice,

First time asker! I've noticed an odd thing about myself over the years and it's remarkably consistent. I generally identify as bisexual since I'm about equally attracted to men and women. However, at two points in my menstrual cycle I'm on one extreme or the other. Example: mid-cycle, during ovulation, I'm very attracted to men. I can't get enough of my boyfriend, and vaginal intercourse feels amazing. Closer to my period, my preferences swing in the opposite direction, and while I still love my boyfriend very much and am attracted to him, I find myself more aroused by women and more attracted to women. Is this just a quirk of my own libido, or is this a known phenomenon?

Curious

Answer

Dear Curious,

Welcome first time asker! Your astute observations about the relationship between your menstrual cycle and the fluctuations in your attractions to different genders are very interesting and mostly uncharted territory in the land of research. So, it's hard to say if this is a pattern experienced by others, or something unique to your sexuality and physiology.

In terms of published data related to your question, Curious, there appear to be some links between the time of ovulation and heightened sexual attraction and activity. Of the women surveyed, participants, both with and without male partners, described more sexual desire near ovulation. Many researchers think this elevated sexual desire near ovulation has a biological or species survival function, increasing the likelihood a woman will become pregnant and have offspring.

While elements of the published theories may be true, sexuality and sex are more nuanced than just a method for baby making. And while elements of that research may be relevant to your body and sexual experience, your individual sexual identity and experience are just that: individual. Unfortunately, these studies are only based on heterosexual couples, so it's hard to compare your experience of increased attraction to women near your period versus increased attraction towards men near ovulation.

You have learned some interesting patterns about your own sexual attractions and preferences. These may continue to be consistent over your lifetime, or they may shift and evolve with time, new people, and new experiences. What seems important regardless of the
research, Curious, is that you are true to your own desires and continue to listen to your body.

Hope this helps!

Alice!

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