

Review of: "Exploring Perceptions on Sexual Empowerment Among Heterosexual Black Women in Braamfontein, Johannesburg"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Title: Exploring Perceptions on Sexual Empowerment Among Heterosexual Black Women in Braamfontein, Johannesburg

Overall comments: Thank you for inviting me to review this manuscript. Generally, this manuscript is well-written and addresses an interesting topic in female sexuality and sexual functioning. I am happy that this research was conducted using a qualitative rather than a quantitative analysis, and the reason for the former must be emphasized in writing to address the complexity of the concept (construct) of sexual empowerment. I felt that the introduction, which includes the concept and construct of sexual empowerment, was very challenging.

Specific comments.

Regarding the abstract: The abstract is comprehensive. Please shorten the long sentences. "This study contributes to our understanding of sexual empowerment from women's perspectives and can be used to draft plans for educational seminars on sexual empowerment and policies on sexual and reproductive health rights," can be shortened into two sentences: "This study contributes to our understanding of sexual empowerment from women's perspectives. The outcome of the study may be used to draft plans for educational seminars on sexual empowerment and policies on sexual and reproductive health rights."

Regarding the introduction: The authors should explain what "sexual empowerment" really means. What is sexual empowerment in the context of women's sexuality and sexual functioning? Is it empowering women to have the freedom to express their sexual needs and sexual satisfaction? Or empowering women to please, entertain, and pleasure their partner sexually? Or does it encompass both the concept of receiving and participating in pleasuring their partner? The idea of sexual empowerment for women on their rights is a bit too vast/huge. Can sexual empowerment be exercised within cultural and religious norms?

For the punctuation errors, please add a comma in these sentences (corrected):

"Before we, as researchers, define the discourse of sexual empowerment, there is a need to understand how women living in unequal societies perceive sexual empowerment."

Regarding the methods and results: were fair.

Regarding the discussion.

Please check for some punctuation errors; for example, the following sentences should have a comma before “which helps them..”. It was stated, “Social media is one of the influences on female sexuality in the 21st century. This study provides evidence that social media sexually empowers women with sexual knowledge which helps them explore their sexuality. A growing body of literature reveals how social media freely allows women to share their sexual understanding and sexual experiences.” How does social media sexually empower women? Or does social media (enable) empower women to exercise their rights? These are two different concepts. If it refers to the first statement, then the authors should consider the role of a pornographic element in social media that may inspire the idea of “sexual liberation” for women.

For the masturbatory approach for women in the study, it is not clear whether this self-pleasure activity is related to the dysfunction in their male partner’s erection/ejaculatory capabilities. Could it be an issue of fidelity? A woman who masturbates, like a man, may fantasize about their sexual partner. Or is it okay to masturbate together with their partner, e.g., their partner liberates the woman’s sexual gratification via cooperation in the sexual activity?

A discussion on this matter is pivotal. The authors may consider the following references for citation:

Poh Yih Chew. Chia Lip Choy. Hatta bin Sidi. Hajar Mohd Salleh Sahimi, Farah Deena Abdul Samad, Arun Ravindran. The Association Between Female Sexual Dysfunction and Sexual Dysfunction in the Male Partner: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. JSexMed, 2021; 18: 99 – 112. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsxm.2020.10.001>