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AN INVESTIGATION OF A SHIFT IN THOUGHT CONTENT IN SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION

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The present study was an extension of a study by Bruce, Barlow, and Jones (1989), and examined whether a cognitive shift from on-to-off-task thought occurred during sexual arousal, accounting for dysfunctional performance. This study examined the thought content and sexual response of sexually functional, (SFs; N = 10), and sexually dysfunctional, (SDs; N = 10) subjects during three levels of distraction, (no distraction, first level of distraction, and second level of distraction). As hypothesized, under no distraction, SFs exhibited the highest level of arousal and greatest number of on-task thoughts. As distraction increased, SFs showed a decrease in arousal and number of on-task thoughts, and an increase in the number of off-task thoughts. For SDs, results indicated that there was no change in arousal or number of off-task thoughts as distraction increased. However, the hypothesis that SDs would exhibit the lowest level of arousal and highest number of off-task thoughts was not confirmed. Implications for future theoretical and therapeutic investigations are discussed.