

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)



DIJ Social Science Study Group

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Sexuality among Marital and Extra-Marital Couple Relationships in Contemporary Japan

Delayed dating, kissing and sexual experiences among Japanese adolescence as well (married) couples who do not desire any sexual intercourse with their spouses are defining characteristics of couple relationships in contemporary Japanese society. Whereas sexlessness and passivity in romantic relationships are widely observable, recent survey data reveal an increase of men and women in the age of 40s to 60s who engage in sexual affairs with persons other than their spouses. It seems that the social acceptance of sexual affairs, under the condition that they do not negatively affect their family, has increased.

This presentation focuses on the discourses in contemporary Japanese popular media and in the recent Japanese academic literature revolving around sexless (heterosexual) couple relationships and extra-marital affairs from 2000 to 2017. In addition, this presentation draws from an interview research conducted with 45 Japanese men and women in their 20s to 40s. The aim of this study is to clarify the transformation and the characteristics of the Japanese sexless phenomenon in conjunction with the rise of extra-marital affairs, by demonstrating how the meaning of sexuality (and its lived behavior) in extra-marital affairs diverges from the social expectations on sexuality within couple relationships. More men and women want to discover aspects of their sexuality through extra-marital affairs, aspects they cannot experience with their own spouse due to social constraints. Even if they desire a satisfying sexual life in their marriages, the lack of education regarding sexual health and the benefits of sexual satisfaction for both sides in a couple relationship leads to difficulties in understanding how sexuality and married life can be combined.

Alice Pacher is a doctoral candidate and research assistant in the Department of Clinical Psycho-Social Science at Meiji University in Tokyo. She completed her master's degree at Meiji University in 2014 and her bachelor's at the University of Vienna in 2011.

Attendance is open to all. Advance **registration is appreciate** (jentzsch@dijtokyo.org).

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