



**Inmates Perceptions on Sexual Behavior
in the Opposite Sex: a qualitative study**

Patrícia Bastos

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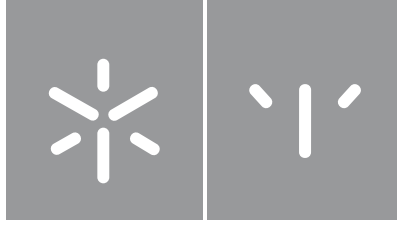


Universidade do Minho
Escola de Psicologia

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setembro de 2020



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Professor Doutor Rui Abrunhosa Gonçalves

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Universidade do Minho, 4 de setembro, 2020

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STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

I hereby declare having conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism or any form of undue use of information or falsification of results along the process leading to its elaboration.

I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

Patricia Isabel Rafael Bastos

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Universidade do Minho, 4 de setembro de 2020

Perspetivas de Reclusos Sobre o Comportamento Sexual no Sexo Oposto: Um estudo qualitativo

Resumo

A sexualidade é definida como um dos aspetos centrais do ser humano. Durante o tempo de reclusão, a sexualidade pode ficar comprometida devido à privação de contacto sexual, ou de existência de uma relação romântica no exterior. O presente estudo focou-se em perceber que tipos de comportamentos são adotados de forma a preservar a sexualidade, baseando-se na perspetiva do sexo oposto, entrevistando dez reclusas. Os resultados obtidos, mostraram que é perspetivado o recurso a visitas íntimas, relações homossexuais, masturbação, abstinência, correspondência e saídas jurisdicionais. As implicações práticas do estudo, são também discutidas.

Palavras-chave: adaptação; comportamento sexual; prisão; sexualidade;

Inmates Perceptions on Sexual Behavior in the Opposite Sex: A qualitative study

Abstract

Sexuality is a central aspect of the human being. During prison time, an individual's sexuality may be compromised due to the deprivation of regular sexual contacts regardless the individual's sexual orientation or the outside existence of previous romantic relationships. The current research aims primary to understand how male and female prisoners conceive sexual behavior in prison, based on the opposite sex perspective, interviewing ten female inmates. The results showed that the use of intimate visits, homosexual relationships, masturbation, abstinence, correspondence and temporary are expected. The practical implications of the study are also discussed.

Keywords: adaptation; prison; sexual behavior; sexuality

Contents

Inmates Perceptions on Sexual Behavior in the Opposite Sex: A qualitative study	8
Method.....	11
Participants	11
Measures	12
Procedure.....	12
Data analysis.....	13
Results	14
Intimate Visits.....	14
Homosexual relationships	15
Correspondence	16
Masturbation	17
Abstinence	17
Temporary leaves	17
Discussion.....	18
Conclusion and Future Perspectives.....	21
References	23
Legislation.....	26
Appendixes.....	27

Inmates Perceptions on Sexual Behavior in the Opposite Sex: A qualitative study

Sexuality is a central aspect of the human being, integrating components such as sexual activity, gender identity, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. This is manifested through thoughts, desires, fantasies, beliefs, attitudes, interpersonal relationships, and behaviors (International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2008). It is noteworthy that often the behaviors that are used to demonstrate the concept of sexuality end up promoting sexual satisfaction to the individual.

Sexuality plays an important role in terms of life quality. Literature refers to a correlation between the concept of sexual satisfaction and the concept of quality of life, showing that increasing sexual satisfaction improves it. So, becomes conceivable to state that a direct, proportional and significant influence between these two features exist (Chao et al., 2011). Nevertheless, depending on prison time, sexuality can be perceived as a problem with different levels of concern. An individual who is in prison during a short period can neglect sexuality due to feelings of anxiety and depression, common in the early days of imprisonment, and later due to the perspective of reintegration into society. Conversely, an individual with longer sentences frequently reveals a deterioration in sexual life (Marchetti, 2001).

During prison time, an individual's sexuality may be compromised due to the deprivation of regular sexual contacts regardless the individual's sexual orientation (Castro, Gómez, Carrasco, & Foster, 2017; Sykes, 1958) or the outside existence of previous romantic relationships (Carcedo et al., 2011). Additionally, sexuality can also be affected by an environment that is managed under culturally different norms (Liebling, 2011).

Despite being in the same circumstances, men and women do not experience imprisonment in the same manner. While incarcerated women feel these differences in a more emotional way, pointing out loneliness as one of the biggest problems (Castro et al., 2017), men point social isolation, lack of contact with the female sex and also low prison activity as the greatest difficulties (Koscheski, Hensley, Wright, & Tewksbury, 2002).

The previous aspects force inmates to develop sexual strategies in order to preserve their sexual identity and, consequently, quality of life (Kolb & Palys, 2018; Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013). Two empirically tested models are suggested to explain these adopted strategies. The "deprivation model" (Sykes, 1958), theorizes that sexual behaviors adopted in prison, such as homosexual relations or masturbation, arise from the deprivations (e.g., heteronormative sexual identity) faced during imprisonment. In turn, Irwin and Cressey (1962), proposed the "importation model," which holds that the behaviors adopted by inmates are influenced by their previous social values and personal histories. When applying this model

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

to prison sexuality, we can deduce that, for example, an inmate imports his sexual orientation with him. However, the two models usually combine in order to understand the strategies used. This means that the different strategies used regarding sexuality may indicate an individual's prior homosexual identity or deprivation of heterosexual relationships, for example.

Some of the alternative solutions to obtain sexual satisfaction, rely on the engagement in homosexual relationships and masturbation (Sykes, 1958). A study conducted in Chile, which aimed to investigate inmates' lives in relation to their sexuality, showed that it was common for female inmates to establish romantic relationships through homosexual relationships early after entry into prison (Castro et al., 2017). Regarding the male gender, a study conducted in Los Angeles County Jail reported that 75% to 90% of subjects have sexual contacts in the prison context (Lea, Gideonse, & Harawa, 2018).

Another way to accomplish sexual satisfaction, without having to get in intimacy with another individual is masturbation. It has been confirmed, both for men and for women in prison, that this is a strategy commonly adopted. In a research with a sample of 142 male inmates, it was observed that 99.3% of them perform masturbation (Hensley, Tewksbury, & Wright, 2001). This behavior is present namely in circumstances such as the presence of female prison guards that act as stimulus (Hefner, 2018). In addition, this type of sexual behavior is also adopted by women in prison (Pardue, Arrigo, & Murphy, 2011).

On the other hand, and more recently, there is the possibility that imprisoned individuals still kept loving relationship in the exterior and therefor they can also benefit from intimacy visits. However, these private encounters, where the inmate and the partner are able to do any activity they wish, are not accessible to everyone (Thompson & Loper, 2005). According to Wyatt (2005), certain requirements must be present, for example the absence of a disciplinary record. Studies were conducted in women's prisons where this possibility existed, showing a positive effect on sexual gratification and on the emotional relationship (Einat & Rabinovitz, 2013). Other benefits reported by inmates consist in the sensation of freedom and temporary privacy (Einat & Rabinovitz, 2013). In male prisons, conjugal visits were found to be effective ways to reduce sexual tension and sexual stress (Hensley et al., 2001). In most cases, conjugal visits reduce violence in prisons.

Sexually transmitted diseases is one of the major refrains for prisoners to engage in sexual activities with other inmates thus promoting sexual abstinence (Lea, Gideonse, & Harawa, 2018). The desire to preserve the meaning of previous experiences, as well as the need to strengthen relationships, are additional motivations for adopting this behavior (McCauley et al., 2019). Although sexual abstinence refers to the absence of sexual relationships during a period of time (Carcedo, Perlman, Fernández-Rouco,

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Pérez, & Hervalejo, 2019), it does not imply that there is no sexual satisfaction when adopted (Carcedo, Perlman, López, Orgaz, & Fernández-Rouco, 2015).

Till now we are mentioning strategies related with consensual sexual activity but we are aware that in the prison there is also coercive sexual activity (Gopal, 2015; Hefner, 2018). A study conducted in eight prisons in Spain showed percentages for sexual violence with values of 12.0% and 6.1% for women and men, respectively (Caravaca-Sánchez & Wolff, 2016). Nevertheless, although these practices are recognized, the current study will not address them.

The issue of sexuality and consequently the sexual behavior adopted by prisoners still lacks information. Most studies focus on consensual and nonconsensual behavior in homosexual relationships (Hefner, 2018) or on the attitudes of inmates (Blackburn, Fowler, Mullings, & Marquart, 2011) and prison guards (Coelho & Gonçalves, 2010) towards sex and sexuality. Data related on how imprisoned men and specially imprisoned women refer to their sexuality during prison sentences remain scarce (Castro et al., 2017; Ricciardelli, Grills, & Craig, 2016; Tewksbury, & West 2000).

The current research aims primary to understand how male and female prisoners conceive sexual behavior in prison. At the same time and considering the absence of literature on women in prison, another purpose of the investigation will be to understand the sexual strategies they use when serving time and to verify if these are similar to those that men exhibit. This comparison will be obtained since male prisoners give their perspective on the sexual behaviors of female prisoners, and conversely female prisoners will refer to the sexual behavior of male prisoners¹.

In addition to the contribution to the literature mentioned above, this study may have practical implications for the practical component. First, it will provide more knowledge on the sexual behaviors adopted in Portuguese prisons. Secondly, it will also attempt to develop possible solutions to improve prison facilities in providing better conditions for intimacy contacts between couples. The aforementioned point is particularly important since some prisons still do not recognize the sexuality and sexual behavior of the inmates (Gopal, 2015) or consider them as reproachable (Carcedo et al., 2015). Lastly, it can provide prison guards with a better understanding of this issue and enable them to take the right steps to address it in the best possible way.

¹ Due to the current pandemic conditions, it has not been possible to conduct data collection in male prisons. Therefore, this study will only present the perspectives of female inmates regarding the sexual behavior of male inmates.

Method

Participants

The study collected the perspective of ten female inmates that were serving time in Santa Cruz do Bispo Special Prison (Estabelecimento Prisional Especial de Santa Cruz do Bispo) using semi-structured interviews. This number followed the saturation point predicted in qualitative studies conducted with interviews. The participants were randomly selected from the institution where the study was conducted. The range of participants included individuals who were incarcerated for at least one year independently of being convicted offenders or in pre-trial detention. Participants were all Portuguese and Caucasian individuals fluent in the Portuguese language, both in their comprehension and in the articulation of speech. There were no restrictions of any kind on the type of crime committed, neither on the sexual orientation of the subjects. Despite this selection, only the individuals who were willing to participate entered the sample.

The women who agreed to participate in the study were aged between thirty and fifty-seven years old. Three inmates were married, the rest were single or divorced, but with significant relationships. Regarding sentence time, three inmates entered in 2015, one in 2016 and another in 2017 and four started their sentence in 2018. Half of the women interviewed had benefit from intimate visits, and four of them had jurisdictional licenses.

In Table 1, the individual characteristics of each of the participant is presented. It is important to note that the names mentioned are merely fictitious, serving to ensure the anonymity of the inmate and simplify the process of information analysis.

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Table1

Description of Female Inmates

Name	Age	Marital Situation	Year of Entrance	Conjugal Visitation	Temporary Leaves
“Cátia”	37	Single	2016	Yes	No
“Elvira”	57	Married	2017	Yes	Yes
“Eva”	39	Married	2018	No	Yes
“Fabiana”	56	Married	2018	No	No
“Iara”	30	Single	2018	No	No
“Júlia”	32	Single	2015	Yes	No
“Rosa”	38	Single	2018	No	No
“Sara”	31	Single	2015	Yes	Yes
“Sílvia”	50	Single	2015	No	Yes
“Susana”	38	Divorced	2017	Yes	No

Measures

For sample control purposes, a Sociodemographic Questionnaire was used to explore demographic characteristics such as age, gender, nationality and time of imprisonment.

Subsequently, information was collected through a semi-structured interview. The interview covered issues related to the prison conditions, prison adaptation, the greatest problems that male prisoners would face as well as possible solutions to them, and finally discussed sexual adaptation and the strategies used for this effect. There were explicit questions directed towards the opposite sex but not on a personal level. Although the method used to collect data covers several topics, it should be noted that except for sexual adaptation and the strategies used to preserve it, the remaining themes are merely an approximation to the aim behind this research.

Procedure

After obtaining the authorization of the study from the Direção Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais (DGRSP) and the Ethics Commission for Research in Social and Human Sciences of the Minho University (CEICSH), as well as the authorization to record the interview, contact was initiated with the

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

participants who were in conformity with the above mentioned criteria. Each interview lasted about twenty minutes.

All the participants were initially asked to sign an informed consent document as a form of authorization. This document informed the participants about the objectives of the study, clarified possible doubts, and ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the data obtained in the procedure. It also provide information related to willingness for participants to quit the task if they wanted to. Thereafter, the participant was given the document referring to the sociodemographic data and, finally, the interview was initiated and recorded so that the data can be analyzed. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, interviews were conducted individually in a private room provided by the prison administration.

Data analysis

After conducting the semi-structured interview, the data were studied using the thematic analysis technique. In this way, the analysis of the number of woman inmates referring to each strategy can be combined with the analysis of their meaning in context (Marks & Yardley, 2004).

Additionally, a mixed approach both combining a deductive and an inductive methodology, was used. Accordingly, and based on previous literature, it was possible to create codes using a deductive approach and generate additional codes after the interview transcripts using an inductive approach.

In order to facilitate the aforementioned procedures, and to obtain a more reliable analysis, it was used the QSR International Nvivo 10 Software.

Results

This study attempted to perceive the sexual strategies used by individuals in prison to preserve their sexuality, based on the perspective of the opposite sex.

Throughout the interviews, all the strategies stated in the literature review were mentioned. In addition, the participants also referred other behaviors such as the use of correspondence (e.g., letters), and the benefits of furloughs or temporary leaves.

Table 2 shows the sexual strategies revealed during the interviews, as well as the respective frequencies of inmates who stated them.

Table 2

Analysis of Strategies with Frequencies

Strategies	N
Intimate Visits	6
Homosexual relationships	6
Correspondence	5
Masturbation	2
Abstinence	2
Temporary leaves	1

Intimate Visits

A total of six inmates listed this strategy, one of the most mentioned in the interviews. In most cases it was also the first solution identified since four of the participants were beneficiaries of this regime. By contrast, some inmates, such as Sara and Eva, mentioned this strategy due to their lack of knowledge of what a male inmate does if he is not in a relationship outside the prison.

Sara: "I think so. Now we also have the intimate visits. (...) It's one of the solutions. They can't have punishments, because they have more urges than women. And... they have to fight to get intimate visits. And who doesn't have a partner... I don't know. Try to deal with it..."

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Eva: *"It's like this... there are intimate visits for those with a wife. For those who don't have a wife, I don't know..."*

In addition, intimate visits were also considered beneficial in other aspects. For example, Julia saw the intimate visit as beneficial for the inmate during the sentence because it provides him with some emotional comfort. On the other side, Rosa added that the intimate visit is also advantageous for the couple since it provides contact with the person with whom they have a relationship and can avoid parallel relationships inside the prison.

Julia: *"(...) an intimate visit and that's an incredible strength. (...) I think a person deals better with the situation, feels love, affection..."*

Rosa: *"And that (homosexual relationships) turns out to be a problem for prisons, that's why I say that the intimate visit turns out to be good for a couple. (...) Because it ends up with the inmate... the inmate being calmer, being with the person he wants and... that's it."*

Homosexual relationships

Concerning homosexual relations, this strategy was also pointed out by six inmates. Women who adhered to this type of behavior report the need for sexual contact and the need for affection. We can corroborate that with citations from inmates Silvia and Rosa.

Silvia: *"They get involved because they feel the need for having sex, some of them, right? (...) Yes, a man is more... he can't wait as much as a woman."*

Rosa: *"There is a great lack of affection. As much as our family gives us affection... there is a lack of affection. And I see for other people who look for anything and everything. (...) This often leads to people in jail having a relationship with people with the same sex. (...) But sometimes people make the wrong choice because they are not sure what they want, due to lack of love and lack of affection."*

However, while acknowledging that one inmate may become involved with another due to sexual needs, participants, like Elvira, mentioned other reasons for this behavior, such as the benefits it may bring them.

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Elvira: *"Because the man has to... the way I see it, right? And I think it's normal... a woman can do well without a man, right? A woman can live 2, 3, 4, 5 years without having a sexual relationship. But a man is not really like that. (...) There are men who, it's been happening, it has. It's public. There are men who do get involved with homosexuals. And they've never been (homosexuals)! (...) Sometimes just to get some help, to get a cigarette pack, or to get some stuff like that."*

Correspondence

Although it was not mentioned in the literature, half of the interviewed participants pointed out the correspondence exchange. It was verified through their reports that the exchanged letters have several purposes that correspond to the strategies listed in the literature review.

Inmate Rosa said that in her opinion the contents of the letters often give the inmate some pleasure.

Rosa: *"I mean, there's a lot of correspondence directly with the woman whether she's in jail or not. (...) then they search in the letters for something that... that turns them on, and that's it."*

Furthermore, as the inmate Catia says, correspondence was seen as a way of evidencing a relationship, so that the inmate could later benefit from the intimate visits regime.

Catia: *"(...) For example, they come in and already know inmates who have been there longer, that's what happens in general, and since they have all these contacts, they ask the inmate if he has a friend to communicate with. They are then 6 or 7 months communicating, exchanging letters, starting to make requests for visits between prisons. Then between letters and visits, and they have intimate visits."*

The letters were also considered important regarding the length of time between intimate visits. In this way, inmate Julia points out some advantages such as strengthening the relationship and increasing the desire to be with the other person.

Julia: *"That contact is also very good, staying besides the sexual level. You kind of start dating a little. And that desire for when the intimate visit comes, it seems to be getting stronger."*

Masturbation

Regarding masturbation, the number of inmates who mentioned it was low, only two. Sara and Elvira understood this strategy as a way to deal with sexuality during the time of reclusion. They also indicated some methods for the inmate to achieve sexual satisfaction through this component.

Sara: *"They do what they have to do... they have the magazines, movies..." "To do something?" "Yes... to masturbate"*

Elvira: *"They live the fantasy. (...) They imagine! And then, even a simple magazine is good for... I don't know, I didn't want to use the term. (...) Maybe a simple drawing makes a man masturbate to the thought of a woman."*

Abstinence

Despite mentioned by two inmates, the reasons that led them to consider abstinence as a behavior to be adopted do not coincide with those previously mentioned in the literature. Lara considered that this strategy was possible for an inmate that has a relationship on the outside and does not benefit from intimate visits. Susana pointed out the same factor listing possible solutions for restraining any kind of sexual behavior.

Lara: *"Yes, some men have partners. And they behave completely different, they don't have sexual relations, but they have a completely normal life."*

Susana: *"Here's the thing... I'll tell you what I think. There are men for example... who know how to wait. (...) They try to abstract themselves, for example with games, or gymnasium, or school."*

Temporary leaves

Despite four inmates were benefiting of jurisdictional leaves, only one cited it as a possible method to preserve sexuality. Julia considered this strategy, pointing out that imprisoned men often initiate contact with another person through letters or visits to the prison. Subsequently, he'll use the jurisdictional leaves to become more intimate with that person.

Julia: *“And he ends up saying, «Look, X wants to visit you». Or «X wants to meet you». And that's it, she ends up coming to a normal visit. (...) they wrote for example for a year, and then, after that year, they use jurisdictional exits so they can visit her.”*

Discussion

The current research aimed originally to understand how male inmates and female inmates conceive their sexuality, considering the opposite sex's perspective. Due to unexpected events (Covid-19 pandemic and contingency measures), data were only collected with female prisoners.

Along the literature review, some behaviors adopted in the prison environment were described, namely intimate visits (Hensley et al., 2001), homosexual relationships (Herbat et al., 2018), masturbation (Hensley et al., 2001) and abstinence (Lea et al., 2018; McCauley et al., 2019). In the current research, female inmates' perspectives regarding an male inmate's behaviour matched the above mentioned strategies.

The results also revealed different reasons that can induce a prisoner to engage in strategies such as homosexual relationships and abstinence. Concerning homosexual relationships, the literature has pointed out as motivational factors the deprivation of heterosexual interactions (Sykes, 1958). However, the findings suggest that this type of behavior (i.e., homosexual relationship) can be used when an inmate needs goods such as cash or cigarettes. This viewpoint is consistent with studies that highlight "barter" as one of the motivations for sexual behavior in prison, as a way of winning certain services (Smith, 2006; Warren, Jackson, Loper, & Burnette, 2010). Actually, Warren and colleagues (2010) in their research showed that 12.8% of inmates were involved in sexual bartering activities. Furthermore, they sought to understand the range of activities of this type, through the perspective of the participants involved and found, despite the subjective nature of the research and the lack of data, that most inmates believed that less than 20% were involved in sex in order to have something in return (Warren et al., 2010). Nevertheless, there is a tenuous line between coercion and consent in this activity, since there may be inmates who offer sex for their benefit, as well as inmates who only accept this sort of relationship because they simply need money (Ristroph, 2006). Thus, in Portuguese prison context, it becomes necessary to develop investigations that address homosexual relationships, along with their motivations, in order to reach a better understanding of this issue and to realize if these perspectives portrayed by the literature are supported.

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Concerning abstinence, the existence of outside relationships and the non-benefit of intimate visits are foreseen as causes for adopting this strategy. Not being involved in sexual activities is advantageous for those who actually have a relationship, providing individuals with benefits from prison policies that facilitate access to romantic relationships, especially for sexual purposes (Carcedo et al., 2019). Nonetheless, according to the deprivation model (Sykes, 1958), these two factors were not considered earlier, as they could also induce self-satisfaction behaviors, not implying necessarily abstinence. On the other hand, one of the most important aspects when referring to this strategy (i.e. abstinence) were the activities mentioned to facilitate this process (e.g. games, physical activity, and gymnasium). According to Carcedo and his colleagues (2019), the inclusion of inmates who do not engage in sexual practices in prison in activities they consider pleasurable might reduce the anguish sensations that can be experienced (Carcedo et al., 2019). However, this topic requires future research, given the importance of understanding the reasons that lead an individual to avoid any sexual practice.

The present research also revealed that correspondence and temporary leaves, as reported by the participants, are strategies which can be adopted by male inmates. Under Article 126° of Law Decree 51/11 of April 11th, an inmate has the right to send and receive correspondence, regardless of whether he is illiterate or economically insufficient. The decree also requires that letters have to be read by a staff member before they are sent and received. Besides this requirement and as described by the participants, this method is often used to maintain loving relationships. In a similar way, literature extends the contribution of correspondence to diminish the impact of imprisonment among family members, increasing communication capacity (Kazura, 2018; Kotova, 2019). However, the fact these letters are read by the prison personnel is an obstacle for sharing personal and sensitive issues (Kotova, 2019). Additionally, the results showed that correspondence could be useful to prove the existence of a relationship, allowing an inmate to later enjoy the intimate visits regime. In the above-mentioned decree, it can be observed according to Article 120°, that the inmate must be married, must maintain a relationship analogous to marriage, or must maintain a stable affective relationship. In the latter two cases, regular visits or exchange of correspondence are also required for one year. Therefore, the letters could be used to benefit from intimate visits afterwards. Although some female inmates also mention that the letters' content is used to provide pleasure to male inmates, there is no evidence in the literature supporting this view, thus meaning this topic ought to be considered for future research.

Regarding temporary leaves, one of the participants pointed out this aspect as a way to develop intimacy with someone, after previous contact. In fact, according to Article 76° of Law Decree 115/09 of October 12th, this measure intends to maintain and promote family bonds and prepare for freedom. This

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

finding also corroborates a literature review carried by Cheliotis (2009), where evidences suggested that temporary leaves reinforce family morale, promote feelings of well-being for husbands and their wives, and reaffirm marital and family commitments as well as emotional bonds. Moreover, the same study supports some evidence regarding prioritizing contact with family and partners, and solving relational crises (Cheliotis, 2009). Currently, there are no studies proving the effectiveness of temporary leaves in maintaining sexuality. Notwithstanding, given the aforementioned reasons, it seems plausible to adopt the perspective presented by the inmate, as truthful.

The results also found differences concerning the number of female inmates who listed each strategy. The most frequently mentioned (n=6) were intimate visits, and homosexual relationships. A possible explanation for the greater frequency of response to intimate visits could be the fact that four of the participants were benefiting from that regime, or they had knowledge about their existence. In turn, since there are homosexual relationships in women's prisons (Castro et al., 2017), participants may have expanded their knowledge to male prisons. It was also observed that the second most reported strategy was the change of correspondence. Given this form of contact is accessible to the whole prison population, it is possible that this is the explanation that motivated half of the participants to refer this strategy. Both abstinence and masturbation were mentioned twice. Regarding masturbation, it is recognized that in male prisons, this is a frequently used strategy (Hensley et al., 2001; Marcum & Castle, 2014), so the fact that only two female inmates mentioned it, may be due to their lack of knowledge or for being reluctant to approach the topic. As for abstinence, it was difficult to obtain an explanation for the frequency of participants who mentioned it but the fact that only two inmates referred to it could be the result of previous experiences they supported. Similarly, they may also have had partners who engaged in that strategy due to knowing they would be with their love ones sooner. Lastly, only one inmate has speculated that temporary leaves are used to preserve sexuality, although four participants are currently benefiting from this regime. This outcome possibly arises from the practices that inmates may have had on their temporary release. It should be emphasized that although some strategies are more frequently cited than others, this does not imply they occur more frequently in male prisons.

In general, the topic of sexuality was approached with an emotional and intimate component, being this one of the characteristics associated with female imprisonment (Castro et al., 2017). Besides, some discomfort was also felt towards the topic being addressed relative to the opposite sex. Frequently, before enumerating a strategy, some women prisoners claimed to be unaware of the topic. It is hypothesized that in a study in which the purpose was to understand the strategies adopted by women in prison, the female inmates would be more participative and would have a better knowledge of the

subject (Castro et al., 2017), due to being inserted in the environment they would have to describe. Equally, it was observed that in their perspective, the participants did not include simultaneous behaviors. For instance, if they considered that a male inmate had a relationship outside he would have intimate visits or would not engage in any other sexual behavior. However, since intimate visits are only permitted once a month, it is plausible that autoerotic behaviors may exist simultaneously.

Conclusion and Future Perspectives

The present research showed that female inmates prospect six behaviors to preserve male inmate's sexuality, namely intimate visits, homosexual relationships, masturbation, abstinence, correspondence and temporary leaves. Nevertheless, future research to corroborate the use of these strategies in male prisons is needed, since in this study were collected the opinions of female inmates and not the reports of men in reclusion. Moreover, it is important to understand the motivations to adopt these behaviors and also the advantages of each one in Portugal correctional system.

In addition, practical components were presented such as increasing the perception of sexual behaviors adopted in Portuguese prisons and attempting to develop solutions in prison facilities for intimate contacts. As some authors suggest, sexual activity in prison is usually sanctioned and stigmatized (Moazen et al., 2018; Wilkinson, 2003), as it is often difficult to establish the difference between consensual and coercive activity (Eigenberg, 2000). Therefore, and assuming the existence of sexual activity in Portuguese prisons, similarly to other prison systems (Baltieri, 2014; Rowell-Cunsolo, Szeto, Sampong, & Larson, 2016), and as suggested in the present investigation, it is necessary to provide those working in prison with education in this area in order to demystify and eliminate the existing taboo. Likewise, it is necessary to include intervention programs that allow guards to differentiate coercive and consensual activity. On the other hand, it is important to consider those individuals who abstain themselves from sexual activity. In this case, it would be relevant to adopt new policies and new interventions, such as the insertion of the inmate in practical activities (e.g., school, gymnasium). Finally, the absence of privacy for sexual activity, whether or not with another individual, is an important factor regarding sexuality in prison. However, given the overcrowding, it is an issue that will take longer to resolve.

The present research presents some limitations. First, due to the current circumstances, it was not possible to obtain the male prison data. As a result, it was impossible to compare findings, as well as to understand what kind of sexual behaviors would be adopted by inmates. In addition, the strategies

INMATES PERCEPTIONS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

mentioned may not correspond to the male prison reality. Finally, even if saturation occurred, it would be relevant to discuss these issues with a larger group of participants.

In conclusion, this study appears to be innovative presenting the feminine perspectives in relation to the sexual behavior of inmates. In this way, it is believed that it is possible to hypothesize male prisoners' sexual activity. At the same time, it demonstrates the need to further knowledge about sexuality in prisons.

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Legislation

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Approval of Ethics Commission for Research in Social and Human Sciences of the Minho University



Universidade do Minho

Conselho de Ética

Comissão de Ética para a Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas

Identificação do documento: CEICSH 017/2020

Relatores: Emanuel Pedro Viana Barbas Albuquerque e Marlene Alexandra Veloso Matos

Título do projeto: *Perspetivas de reclusos sobre o comportamento sexual no sexo oposto*

Equipa de Investigação: Patrícia Isabel Rafael Bastos, Mestrado Integrado em Psicologia, Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho; Professor Dr. Rui Abrunhosa Gonçalves (Orientador), Escola de Psicologia, Universidade do Minho

PARECER

A Comissão de Ética para a Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas (CEICSH) analisou o processo relativo ao projeto de investigação acima identificado, intitulado *Perspetivas de reclusos sobre o comportamento sexual no sexo oposto*.

Os documentos apresentados revelam que o projeto obedece aos requisitos exigidos para as boas práticas na investigação com humanos, em conformidade com as normas nacionais e internacionais que regulam a investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas.

Face ao exposto, a Comissão de Ética para a Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas (CEICSH) nada tem a opor à realização do projeto, emitindo o seu parecer favorável, que foi aprovado por unanimidade pelos seus membros.

Braga, 26 de maio de 2020.

O Presidente da CEICSH

(Acílio Estanqueiro Rocha)

Anexo: Formulário de identificação e caracterização do projeto

Appendix B

Approval of Direção Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais (DGRSP)



REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

1976

Exmo(a) Senhor(a)
Prof. Doutor Rui Abrunhosa Gonçalves

Patricia Rafael Bastos

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V/ referência	N/ referência	Ofício N.º	Data
		12/CCRF	14.01.2020

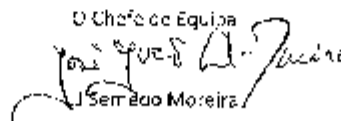
Assunto: Investigação académica para Mestrado em Psicologia na Universidade do Minho

Tenho a honra de informar V. Exa que, por despacho do Sr. Diretor-Geral, Dr. Rómulo Mateus, datado de 14/01/2020, a aluna de Mestrado, Patrícia Rafael Bastos foi autorizada, a realizar a investigação académica nos Estabelecimentos Prisionais de Braga e Santa Cruz do Bispo Ferradina.

Considerando o interesse do projeto, este estudo, foi autorizado, mediante as seguintes condições:

- a calendarização e modo de organização da pesquisa seja acordada com a Direção do Estabelecimento Prisional, por forma e que se conciliem os objetivos académicos com a exequibilidade do trabalho, sem perturbação do quotidiano;
- o desenvolvimento do estudo esteja sempre dependente da disponibilidade dos reclusos para, após consentimento informado, colaborar, reservando-se-lhes o direito de, a qualquer momento, poderem interromper a sua cooperação;
- a investigadora fique obrigada a preservar o anonimato dos dados e das pessoas que vierem a cooperar;
- do resultado final do trabalho, deve ser remetida cópia ao Centro de Competências de Comunicação e Relações Externas.

Com as melhores cumprimentos

O Chefe de Equipa

Rui Mateus
Serrão Moreira

ML/2020