

For 80 per cent young adults, oral sex is not sex

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Most of the young adults in the US think that oral sex is not really sex, according to a 2007 survey of undergraduate college students.

While majority of youngsters agree penile-vaginal intercourse is sex, less than one in five think that oral-genital contact counts as "having sex," revealed the survey.



The attitude toward oral sex represents a dramatic and sudden shift in thinking since 1991, when a similar survey found that nearly twice as many young adults (about 40 percent) would classify oral-genital contact as sex.

Pointing to former President Clinton's infamous statement, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman," as the pivotal turning point in society's changing views about oral sex, researchers dubbed this attitude shift as the "Clinton-Lewinsky" effect.

"Like President Clinton, adolescents and young adults often interpret these words with a degree of latitude, depending on whether they want to maintain an image of being sexually experienced or inexperienced," CBS News quoted Jason D. Hans and colleagues at the University of Kentucky, Lexington as saying.

The authors said that a surge in abstinence-only education and sex education programs that focus primarily on vaginal-penile intercourse also may play a role in the disassociation of oral-genital stimulation from sex.

The survey involved 477 undergraduate students, mostly white heterosexual females, enrolled in a human sexuality class.

The survey found that only 20 percent of those surveyed said oral contact with their partner's genitals would constitute sex.

Less than 80 percent of participants considered penile-anal intercourse as sex.

Males were much more likely than females to say sex included the following behaviours -- their partner touched their genitals, orally stimulating a partner's breasts or nipples, touching a partner's breast or nipples.

The article will be published in the June 2010 issue of Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health