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The features marked with a star (*) are based entirely on material taken straight from standard research (and other Official and Therefore Always Correct) literature. Many of the other articles are genuine, too, but we don’t know which ones.

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On the Front Cover

Two of the many commonplace sources of noise.

On the Back Cover

Sign posted at the entrance to a cemetery near Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK.
Photo: Alice Shirrell Kaswell.

Some Coming Events

See IMPROBABLE.COM for details of these and other events:

June 5, 2018
Dead Duck Day, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

July 10, 2018
Ig Nobel Ceremony Tickets go on sale

September 13, 2018
Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony, Harvard U

September 15, 2018
Ig Informal Lectures, MIT

September 2018
Japan

October 3, 2018
Orlando, FL, USA

October 4, 2018
Harvard University

October 10, 2018
Hartford, CT, USA

Autumn 2018
Ig Nobel Fall EuroTour

November 23, 2018
Annual “Science Friday” radio broadcast

Where There's More

There’s always new improbable — it’s not what you expect! — stuff on the Improbable Research blog at IMPROBABLE.COM
**Improbable Sex: Sounds**

Improbable, stimulating investigations

compiled by Alice Shirrell Kaswell, Improbable Research staff

Non-Word and Word Noises During Sex

“An Examination of Predictors of Nonverbal and Verbal Communication of Pleasure During Sex and Sexual Satisfaction,” Elizabeth A. Babin, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, vol. 30, no. 3 2013, pp. 270-292. (Thanks to Ig Nobel Prize winner Geoffrey Miller for bringing these to our attention.) The author, at Cleveland State University, reports:

Verbal communication during sex did not predict sexual satisfaction. The findings draw attention to the need for scholars to examine both verbal and nonverbal forms of sexual communication, as well as factors that might influence the extent to which individuals communicate sexual pleasure during sexual encounters....

The original scale reported in Brogan et al. (2009) asked participants to report on their partner’s communication during sex. To fit the needs of this study, the SCSS [Sexual Communication Style Scale] was adapted to measure participants’ own communication during sex.

Vocalised Sounds During Sex


[An] early study of the coital behaviour of a single Caucasian married couple (Fox & Fox, 1969)...

Perhaps the oldest and fascinating, but so far unvalidated, documented account (El-Khalidi, 1970) of the diversity of vocalisations at orgasm, supposedly of 10 women of the female entourage of a 13th century Arabic physician (Al-Sayed Haroun Ibn Hussein Al-Makhzoumi), has been published from a claimed translated ancient Arabic document. The range included piercing screams (“Ayee”), groaning, moaning and crying, snorting, grunting, heavy breathing and speech vocalisations including repeated “Please, Please, Please” (because so much pleasure experienced), “Oh’s! and ah’s!”, “No, No, No” (could not believe the pleasure experienced) and “Faster, faster”. None of these would be out of place in a modern report, which of course may be the case if the document is a fake!...

There is even less data about sounds made during the male orgasm than there is about the female.... Kinsey et al. (1948), in their study of the sexual behaviour of the human male, described the different reactions that occur in young males at orgasm into six categories.