

Is zoophilia a sexual orientation? A study

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Abstract

Based on Francoeur's (1991) discussion about the three interrelated aspects of sexual orientation: affectional orientation, sexual fantasy orientation, and erotic orientation, the current study examined the question "Is there a sexual orientation toward animals?" The study involved a 350-item, 23-page, anonymous questionnaire, which was self-administered and returned by postal mail by 82 men and 11 women who had had sexual relations with animals. It was found that some people (the majority of the participants in the current study) have feelings of love and affection for their animals, have sexual fantasies about them, and admit they are sexually attracted to animals—three components that describe sexual orientation. The current study further reveals that the majority of its participants reported being happy and not wanting to stop having sex with animals.

Keywords: *bestiality, mental health providers, sexual fantasies, sexual orientation, zoophilia*

Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin's (1948) notorious study of the sexual behaviors of 5,300 American men revealed that one man in about 13 engaged in bestiality—sexual contact with animals. Although the majority of these men were farm boys who only had sex with animals on several occasions, the study also included men in their 50s who had sexual relations with animals, and even one man who was over 80 years old (Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin 1948). In 1953, Kinsey et al. found that about five percent of the 5,792 American women in their study engaged in bestiality, as well. The Hunt study (1974), which analyzed data from 982 men and 1,044 women who responded to sex information questionnaires, found the incidence of bestiality to be 4.9% for men and 1.9% for women.

Although these three studies provide evidence that bestiality exists, they are outdated and limited in their findings, since they did not focus on the issue of bestiality. Scientific studies on the motivations for engaging in bestiality, and studies describing the sexual, social, and mental health profile of individuals involved, have been scarce. Peretti and Rowan's study

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(1983) of 27 men and 24 women, did focus on “chronic bestiality,” and attempted to find what helps people to sustain their involvement in bestiality. The study, however, was limited to six pre-determined variables, and the sample size too small for generalization. Donofrio’s more recent study (1996) focused on zoophilia—sexual and emotional attraction to animals. However, the small number of “zoo” (as they like to call themselves) participants (8) limits his findings, as well.

In addition, there seems to be a major lack of knowledge among mental health care professionals in regard to treatment options for zoophiles. The renowned Krafft-Ebing (1935) instructed a patient “to be on his guard against masturbation and bestiality, and to seek more the society of ladies.” He further “prescribed anaphrodisiacs, advised frugality, slight hydrotherapy, plenty of open-air exercise, (and) steady occupation” (p. 569). Cerrone (1991) suggested family therapy, social assertiveness training, and sex education. The latter was provided to reduce the client’s “misperceived thoughts of sex and to educate (him) to the norms of sexual development” (p. 37). McNally and Lukach (1994) recommended a six-month behavioral treatment program comprised of masturbatory satiation, covert sensitization, and stimulus control procedures. Other psychotherapists have reportedly tried to force their zoophile clients to stop having sex with animals (Miletski 1999). Clients have been “locked up” in mental institutions for observations, and treated with drugs and electroshock therapy (Miletski 2001).

I have found the major void of knowledge regarding bestiality/zoophilia alarming. In my opinion, clinical sexologists and psychotherapists need to be equipped with a carefully researched base of knowledge in order to understand the phenomenon and the individuals involved. As professionals helping those who struggle with, and experience ego-dystonic feelings about bestiality and zoophilia, it is important that this research be available and on-going.

Dekkers (1994) and Fox (1994) reported that there are people who are sexually attracted to animals, to the point of preferring animals as sex partners to humans. The term, coined by the “zoo” community on the Internet, “zoosexuality,” implies a sexual orientation toward animals (Fox 1994; Tanka 1995; Shepherd 1996; Stasya 1996). And Donofrio (1996) reported that the concept of zoophilia being a sexual orientation was supported by his doctoral study. He therefore suggested using a scale resembling Kinsey’s sexual orientation scale, where those who have no interest whatsoever in sexual contact with animals would appear at the zero point of the scale, and those individuals whose sole sexual outlet and attraction was

animals would be assigned a score of 6. Along that continuum, between these two extremes, would be individuals who include animal sexual contact in their fantasy, or have had incidental experiences with animals, have had more than incidental contact with animals, place their sexual activity with animals equal to that involving humans, prefer animal contact but engage in more than incidental contact with humans, and those who engage primarily in contact with animals, with only incidental human sexual contact (Donofrio 1996).

I therefore conceptualized the basic research question to be: “Is there a sexual orientation toward non-human animals?” The definition of “sexual orientation” was adapted from Francoeur (1991) in his discussion of homosexuality, heterosexuality, and bisexuality. According to this definition, sexual orientation consists of three interrelated aspects: (1) affectional orientation—who or what we bond with emotionally; (2) sexual fantasy orientation—with whom or what we fantasize having sex; and (3) erotic orientation—with whom or what we prefer to have sex.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

Finding participants for the study turned out to be easier than expected (Miletski 2002). The majority of participants (68, 73%) heard about the study through the Internet, either by seeing a posting or through an Internet friend. Others heard about the study through various advertisements in professional and non-professional publications. More than 160 people contacted me about the study and every participant was required to make telephone or personal contact. This was important as I needed the opportunity to screen the participant for authenticity. Only individuals who had had actual experiences of sexual relations with animals were accepted in the study (many people who only fantasized about this behavior had to be eliminated from the study). I also wanted to know if I was talking to a woman, a man, or a child, and had better chances knowing this by talking to them on the telephone rather than through the Internet. Individuals under the age of consent were eliminated from the study.

The participants were required to provide their postal address, not an e-mail address, as I wanted some control over who received the questionnaire and who returned it. On the Internet people could have forwarded the questionnaire to others who never contacted me, and so I requested the postal address in an attempt to eliminate this possibility. Also, every questionnaire had my original signature on it. If it were to come back photocopied, the questionnaire would have been eliminated from the study.

Every participant received a packet consisting of a questionnaire, a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and a letter of explanation, which was also the consent form. The letter/consent form followed the relevant guidelines set forth by the revised edition of the *Code Of Federal Regulations* (21 CFR 50.20 & 50.25) (1995), which explains the requirements for informed consent of human subjects. Therefore the letter explained the purpose of the study, described the possible discomforts that the participant might experience as a result of filling out the questionnaire, discussed confidentiality and anonymity, pointed out whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions, and stressed that participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were requested to sign the bottom of the letter with their initials or any name they might choose, and to send it back together with the completed questionnaire. Questionnaires that were returned without a signature were eliminated from the study.

The study was conducted as a double-blind study. I was the only person who had access to the participants' addresses, which were destroyed after the questionnaires were sent out. The completed questionnaires were sent back without a return address (for the most part), so that I had no way of knowing who were the respondents.

On September 25, 1996, 25 questionnaires were sent out to 25 volunteers who were randomly chosen from the sample. By January 17, 1997, 15 completed questionnaires came back. These completed questionnaires comprised a pilot study, which was conducted for the purpose of assessing the face and content validity of the questionnaire. The data from this study were incorporated within the final results of the study.

During the month of March 1997, 125 additional questionnaires were sent out to all the volunteers who were not included in the pilot study. The total number of questionnaires which was sent out was therefore 150. Four envelopes were "returned to sender," two participants did not sign the consent form and thus were eliminated from the sample, and one questionnaire was returned blank. Several potential participants called in the months that followed, complaining that they had not received their questionnaire, which was probably lost in the mail.

Of the total 150 questionnaires that were sent out, 93 (62%) participants sent their completed questionnaires back, which comprised this study. Out of 132 men, 82 (62%), sent back their questionnaires, and out of 18 women, 11 (61%) sent back theirs. The study is based on these 82 men and 11 women.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 350 items over 23 pages. It included both open-ended questions and questions that required completion or checking off the best answer. This was done for the purpose of obtaining quantitative as well as qualitative information. Some questions involved various items that were measured on a Likert-type scale. The Likert scale was somewhat different for every question, to eliminate a response-set. There was also repetition of some questions with different wording to ensure reliability. The questionnaire included three sections: one section asked for general information and demographics (most of the questions in that section comprised the control variables); another section asked about the participant's psycho-sexual general development; and the third section covered information about sexual relations with animals. The last question simply stated: "Is there anything else you would like to share?"

Results and Discussion

Demographics and Psycho-Social Information

Age

The participants in the study were older than the stereotypical farm, adolescent boy of the Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin (1948) study. The average age of the men was 38 years, ranging from 19 to 78 years ($SD = 13.65$, median = 37, mode = 21). Five men were 21 years of age, one man was 70 and another was 78 years old. The average age of the women was 36 years, ranging from 21 to 48 years ($SD = 9.17$, median = 35, mode = 47).

Place of Residency

Seventy-one men (87%) and all the women were from the United States. Four men were from Germany, three were from Canada, another three were from the United Kingdom, and one participant was from Australia. The majority of the men (65, 79%) and all but one woman (91%) reported they were connected to the Internet at the time of the study (1997).

Religion

More than half the participants (54, 59%) reported they never attended religious services. Yet, seven men (9%) and one woman reported attending religious services approximately once a month, and another six men (7%) and one woman attended religious services at least once a week. Among these men and women, only two men and one woman reported they no longer engaged in bestiality. These data seem surprising since no current religion condones human-animal sexual contact; in fact, most religions condemn such behaviors.

Education

Concurring with Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin (1948) and Kinsey et al. (1953), who concluded that people who have sex with animals are often more educated than the general population, in the current study, almost half of the participants (44, 47%) were college graduates or above. One man in the College Graduate category was a graduate of a seminary.

Marital/Relationship Status

Twenty-one men (26%) and three women (27%) reported they were never married or lived in a sexual relationship with another person for more than a month. Almost half the men (37, 45%) and the majority of women (7, 64%) were single at the time of the study. Twenty-six men (32%) and one woman (9%) were married, and ten men (12%) and two women (18%) were divorced (Table 1). Under the category "Other," four men chose to describe their marital/relationship status as it applied to their relationship with their animal lover. One man wrote: "(I am) married to my female horse," and another wrote: "(I am) in an intimate relationship with my animal lover." Moreover, at the time of the study, 21 men and one woman reported being married, living with their spouse, and having sex with animals at the same time.

Other findings in the study show that some of the participants started and/or were having sex with animals at the time of the study, partially because they had no other available sex partners, they were too shy to have sex with humans, they were lonely, and/or they suffered from lack of social interaction. The majority of participants, however, reported this was not the case for them.

Table 1. The participants' marital/relationship status at the time of the study.

Marital/Relationship Status	Men (82)	Women (11)
Single	37(45%)	7(64%)
Married	26(32%)	1(9%)
Divorced	10(12%)	2(18%)
Intimate relationship with a human male lover	6(7%)	0
Intimate relationship with a human female lover	6(7%)	0
Other	5(6%)	0
Living with a human female lover	3(4%)	0
Living with a human male lover	2(2%)	1(9%)
Separated	0	2(18%)
Widowed	1(1%)	0

Mental Health

Menninger (1951) proposed that sexual relations with animals that persists in adult life suggests an “inconclusiveness or unsatisfactoriness in reality,” thus the need of a “deviant” love object. Ramsis (1969) suggested that most people who engage in bestiality share a common theme of sexual unhappiness. In the current study, more than half of the participants (47, 57%) had been in psychotherapy, with (an average of) more than two different psychotherapists. It should be noted, however, that this information by itself does not provide any data about the participants’ mental nor happiness status; many people, nowadays, go to therapy for a variety of reasons.

Since many consumers of mental health care don’t receive a formal diagnosis from their psychotherapists, only 20 participants were able to report they had been diagnosed with mental health disorders. Most of them were depressed, three men were diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, another three men reported they had a “nervous breakdown,” two were diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, and two men were diagnosed with paraphilic disorders.

Surprisingly, only about half of the participants (23, 49%) who had been in psychotherapy told their psychotherapists they have had sex with animals. Almost half (11, 48%) reported they experienced negative reactions from their psychotherapists. Particularly noteworthy, some participants reported their therapists lacked knowledge of zoophilia, laughed upon hearing their client was having sex with animals, or tried to force their clients to stop having sex with animals.

Suicide Attempts

Nineteen participants (23%) reported they tried to commit suicide, on average, more than twice. Another nine noted they had thought about it. It is common knowledge that suicide rates are high among gays and lesbians. They tend to grow up feeling different, lonely, isolated, and unable to talk to others about their homosexual feelings. Since zoophiles have similar experiences, and if zoophilia/zoosexuality is a form of sexual orientation, it may not be surprising that 19 participants in this current study reported they tried to commit suicide, and nine others reported they had thought about it.

Level of Happiness

During the 12 months prior to the study, however, the majority of men (57, 69%) and women (9, 82%) reported they were pretty happy with their personal life (Table 2).

The participants’ contentment with life was also evident when, in response to a question, at least 78 participants (94%) reported they did not

Table 2. The level of happiness reported by respondents.

Level of Happiness	Men (82)	Women (11)
Extremely happy	13(16%)	1(9%)
Very happy most of the time	17(20%)	5(45%)
Generally satisfied, pleased	27(33%)	3(27%)
Sometimes fairly unhappy	20(24%)	1
Unhappy most of the time	5(6%)	1

want to stop having sex with animals. The following is a response given by one of the participants to the above question:

“Definitely not! I enjoy it very much, so do the animals. Neither my friends or my employers think less of me because of it, and I do not believe it to be unethical. It can be a bit frustrating that the majority of society has yet to emerge from the ethical Dark Ages and still believe that we are somehow nasty individuals, but I believe in my own ethical code sufficiently that I have no desire to give up something that I enjoy so much, and which does no harm to anyone else. I can live an enjoyable life, have many friends and enjoy success in my work, without having to stop enjoying animal sex.” (Miletski 2002).

The current study revealed an abundance of data about the life, behaviors, values, thoughts, and feelings of its participants, which are beyond the scope of this paper. For a better understanding of the phenomena of bestiality and zoophilia, the reader is invited to read Miletski’s recent book (2002).

Is There a Sexual Orientation Toward Animals?

Based on Francoeur’s definition of sexual orientation (described earlier), the participants in the current study were asked a variety of questions, throughout the questionnaire, in an attempt to find out whether their relationships with animals corresponded to the three components of sexual orientation.

The Dependent Variable—Sexual Relations with Animals

All the participants reported they had had sex with animals. Eighty-four participants (93%) reported they “enjoyed it very much.” None of the participants reported he/she “did not like it” or “hated it.”

Fourteen men (17%) and two women reported they had not had sexual relations with animals in the year prior to the study, which means that 68 men (83%) and nine women (82%) had sex with animals during that

year. Of the 14 men who did not have sex with animals, five indicated they did not have sex with animals in the previous year only because of situations beyond their control—not because they did not want to have sex with animals. In other words, nine men (11%) in the current study had completely stopped having sex with animals. Four of them explained that for them sex with animals was merely something they did during adolescence, and one man reported that sex with animals was a way of acting out for him, before he was “cured.”

The Existence of Affectional Orientation Toward Animals

Forty-nine men (60%) and six women (67%) reported the statement “I began having sex with animals because I wanted to express love or affection to the animal” was “completely true” or “mostly true” for them. This was “reason number three” the men (after sexual attraction and curiosity) and “number two” the women (after sexual attraction) provided as to why they initiated sexual relations with animals. Eighteen men (22%) and one woman (11%), reported this sentence was “not true” for them.

Fifty men (74%) and six women (67%) reported the sentence “I am currently having sex with animals because I want to express love or affection to the animal” was “completely true” or “mostly true” for them. This was the “number two reason” (after sexual attraction) for both men and women, which they provided as to why they currently had sexual relations with animals. Six men (9%) and one woman (11%) reported this sentence was “not true” for them.

Seventy-one men and 10 women responded to a question about how old were they when they first realized they were psychologically/emotionally attracted to animals. The purpose of this question was to see if the participants would admit they were psychologically/emotionally attracted to animals. Indeed, 71 men (87%) and 10 women (91%) related that they were psychologically/emotionally attracted to animals. Of the 11 men who did not respond to this question, eight commented that they had never been psychologically/emotionally attracted to animals (the men realized they were psychologically/emotionally attracted to animals at an average age of 11.5 years, and the women at an average age of 8.4 years).

When asked if they would allow other people to have sex with their animal(s), only 16 men (23%) and four women (40%) reported they would not allow it. It is interesting to note, however, that seven men (10%) and three women (30%) reported they would not allow other people to have sex with their animals, as they regarded their animals as mates. Another seven men in this category described love and/or jealous feelings for their animals.

Analysis of the responses of the 76 men and 11 women responding to a question which asked the participants to explain why they defined themselves as “bestialists” or “zoophiles,” revealed only eight men (11%) in the sample who appeared to qualify for the definition “bestialist only,” as they seemed to have had sex with animals only for the sake of sex. The majority of men (59, 78%) and women (8, 73%) were both “bestialists” and “zoophiles/zoosexuals,” since, as some of the participants noted, “a person who has sexual relations with an animal is a bestialist by definition,” and “a person who has a love of animals is a zoophile (or zoosexual), from the dictionary definition (zoos = animals + philos = love).”

Obviously, this categorization was subjectively created by myself. But more than the actual numbers, what matters is the way the participants explained their views and described their feelings toward their animals. Expressions such as: “I define myself as a zoophile because my relationships with animals are about love and trust—sex is merely an expression of that love,” clearly define the individuals’ feelings. Even if the numbers are wrong and there are more “bestialists only” and less “zoophiles/zoosexuals,” the participants’ reports are loud and clear: there were some participants who seemed to be in love with their animals, and there were others who seemed to have no emotional attraction to animals.

The Existence of Sexual Fantasy about Having Sex with Animals

The majority of men (57, 70%) and women (7, 64%) reported that sexual fantasies about having sex with animals contributed, on some level, to their first sexual encounter with an animal. This means that these participants were fantasizing about having sex with animals before they actually had sex with animals.

The majority of men (61, 76%) reported they “primarily” or “always” fantasized about having sex with animals, at the time of the study. This fantasy was far more popular than any other sexual fantasy reported by the men. Only four men reported they “never” fantasized about it (three of them no longer had sexual relations with animals at the time of the study), and one man reported he “rarely” fantasized about having sex with animals. In comparison, 19 men (24%) never fantasized about having sex with a woman, and 36 men (45%) never fantasized about having sex with a man.

Almost half the women (5, 45%), too, fantasized “primarily” or “always” about having sex with animals, at the time of the study, while the only other popular sexual fantasies mentioned by the women involved watching other humans have sex with animals (40%), and having sex with a man (27%). None of the women reported “never” fantasizing about having sex with animals, and only one woman said she “rarely” fantasized about it.

Again, the participants' reports undoubtedly articulate their fantasy life: the majority of participants fantasized about having sex with animals, and only a few did not. More importantly, the majority of participants began fantasizing about having sex with animals before they had had their first sexual encounter with an animal.

The Existence of Erotic Orientation Toward Animals

All but four men (which makes for 78 men), and all 11 women reported being attracted to certain animals, when asked "To what animals are you most attracted?" In another question, 62 men (76%) and seven women (70%) reported the sentence "I began having sex with animals because I was sexually attracted to the animal" was "completely true" or "mostly true" for them. This, in fact, was the "number one reason" the participants provided for this question. Only eight men (10%) and one woman (10%) said this sentence was "not true" for them.

Sixty-two men (91%) and nine women (100%) reported the sentence "I am currently having sex with animals because I am sexually attracted to the animal" was "completely true" or "mostly true" for them. Again, this was the "number one reason" the participants provided for this question. Only three men (4%) and none of the women said this sentence was "not true" for them.

Seventy-eight men (95%) and 10 women (91%) admitted they were sexually attracted to animals when asked how old were they when they first realized they were sexually attracted to animals. The purpose of this question was to see if the participants would admit they were sexually attracted to animals, and all but four men and one woman reported they were (both, the men and women realized they were sexually attracted to animals at an average age of 13 years).

Nineteen men (27%) and three women (38%) reported believing that bestiality was not a perversion because for them it was the natural thing to do and/or it was like a sexual orientation. And, as mentioned before, 78 (94%) of the participants reported they did not want to stop having sex with animals, mostly because zoophilia was part of who they were, and they liked it.

It is also interesting to note that nine men commented (throughout the questionnaire) about their attraction to animals' pheromones. For example, one of them related: "I enjoy stimuli that are not often found in human sexual relationships; for example, I am highly turned on by olfactory stimuli, and humans by convention rarely allow themselves to have any natural human aroma. Artificial perfumes leave me completely cold, as do conventional standards of 'attractiveness' and 'beauty.' There is something altogether more straightforward and earthy in the experience of animal sex,

and it is that which I seek in my sexual activities.” Another man commented that his “order of sexual preference is consistent with the sexual appeal of a species’ sexual fragrance.” This is an example of sexual/chemical attraction on a very basic/biological level.

As mentioned before, analysis of the responses of the 76 men and 11 women responding to a question which asked the participants to explain why they defined themselves as “bestialists” or “zoophiles,” revealed only eight men (11%) in the sample who appeared to qualify for the definition “bestialist only,” since they seemed to have had sex with animals only for the sake of sex—not because they were sexually attracted to the animals. The majority of men (59, 78%) and women (8, 73%) were both “bestialists” and “zoophiles/zoosexual.”

Again, this categorization was subjectively created by myself, and the numbers are less relevant than the way the participants explained their views and described their feelings toward their animals. Expressions such as: “While I have lust for a large number of animals, it is the relationship formed with the animal that is the important part,” reinforce the notion of a sexual attraction toward animals. The participants’ reports revealed that there were people who had sexual feelings toward animals, while others had none.

One man, in response to the question: “How would your life be different if you had a close intimate/sexual relationship with a human being?” related the following: “...I am zoo exclusive and the very thought of having sex with a human disgusts me. Ask a homosexual if he wants to have sex with someone of the opposite gender.”

Eighty-one men and all 11 women rated themselves on a Kinsey-like scale, describing the participants’ sexual inclinations toward humans vs. animals. The participants were asked to take into consideration both actual sexual behavior and fantasy. More than half of the men (48, 58%) perceived themselves as having more sexual inclinations toward animals than humans (between 4 and 6 on the scale—Table 3). The majority of the women (9, 82%), however, perceived themselves as being sexually inclined to both humans and animals (between 2 and 4—Table 3).

The findings of the above question, supported by other related questions, clearly indicate that different people have different levels of sexual inclination toward animals. The current study shows that some people (the majority of the participants in the current study) have feelings of love and affection for their animals, have sexual fantasies about them, and admit they are sexually attracted to them. “Is there a sexual orientation toward non-human animals?”—yes, so it appears.

Table 3. The sexual inclinations of the respondents.

Sexual Inclination	Men (82)	Women (11)
0=Exclusively with human beings	2(2%)	0
1=Only incidental animal sex	6(7%)	1(9%)
2=Both animal sex and human sex, but more human sex	14(17%)	4(36%)
3=Equally animal and human sex	12(15%)	3(27%)
4=Both animal sex and human sex, but more animal sex	15(19%)	2(18%)
5=Only incidental human sex	22(27%)	1(9%)
6=Exclusively animal sex	10(12%)	0

Limitations of the Current Study

Unfortunately, the participants' responses could not be statistically analyzed and compared with a "non-zoo" population, as the current study did not include a control group. Comparing the results of the current study with other studies was not a satisfactory option, as studies of "non-zoos" do not ask questions about the participants' feelings, fantasies, and sexual attraction to animals. In addition, the sample size (too small) and the fact that the participants were not randomly chosen for the study do not allow for any meaningful statistical analysis. This lack of statistical analysis renders the study merely a descriptive one (which was the original intent). It is therefore important to remember that the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other "zoos" or bestialists. This study merely describes the lives and some of the behaviors of its 93 participants, as it was intended to be an exploratory, descriptive study.

The majority of subjects (73%) found out about the study through the Internet, which means they were sophisticated enough to use both a personal computer and the Internet. The "zoos" on the Internet may have been more open about their sexual behaviors with animals, about sexuality in general, and about participating in this study as a result of exposure to the Internet and to their peers. It is important to keep in mind that if the sample had been made of more people outside the Internet, the results might have been different.

Other than a short telephone conversation with the volunteers for the study to verify authenticity, and making sure they sent back the original questionnaires, I had no guarantees the subjects were who they said they were, or that their answers were genuine. Although the questionnaires

included some repeated questions with different wording to ensure reliability, there is still a chance that participants may have been lying or under- or over-reporting in some of their answers.

Another limitation of the study was the use of open-ended questions, which were primarily analyzed and categorized by myself. As often happens in situations like this, sometimes it was difficult to understand what exactly the participants wanted to convey in their responses.

When it came to the structured questions in the questionnaire, the participants' answers were obviously subjective, and therefore may not have been accurate. For example, when the participants were asked to define themselves in terms of being a "bestialist" and/or a "zoophile," it appeared that they perceived themselves and the various definitions in different ways (making it very confusing). Analysis of their explanations revealed different results from what the participants reported.

Conclusions

The current study did not provide a prevalence rate for people who have this sexual orientation, nor did it provide the causes for having such a sexual orientation. However, the current study very clearly shows that some people (the majority of the participants in the current study) have feelings of love and affection for their animals, have sexual fantasies about them, and admit they are sexually attracted to animals—three components that describe sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation, as we know it, can be fluid, and changes with time and circumstances. People are not "black or white." We can place people on all levels of the Kinsey scale, even when we apply this scale to sexual orientation toward animals. It is logical to assume that the majority of the human race will be placed around the zero point of this Kinsey-like scale (sexual inclination exclusively with human beings), but the current study shows that there are some humans whose place on this scale is definitely not zero. In fact, there are some (probably very few) individuals whose place on this scale would be the other extreme (6 = sexual inclination exclusively with animals).

Moreover, the current study—albeit with its inherent flaws, and the inability to generalize its results, or even to be considered significant—did provide some important insights into the lives of 82 men and 11 women who had sexual relations with animals. One important finding was the fact that the majority of the participants in the study reported being happy and not wanting to stop having sex with animals. In many ways, this study was a breakthrough, as nothing like this had ever been done before and most of

the data were new information that could begin to fill the void sexologists have been experiencing about the phenomena of bestiality and zoophilia.

The current study has already opened doors for other studies such as Beetz's (2002) and Williams and Weinberg's (2003), and hopefully, other researchers will follow their path. Future studies should incorporate a larger, random sample, with a control group. A face-to-face interview rather than a self-administered questionnaire, may assure both the participants' understanding of the questions, and the researchers' understanding of the responses in a more objective manner. Standardized tests, such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) could be employed in future studies, where data from the general population is available/known, so that comparison between the general population and people who have had sex with animals could be accomplished.

Lastly, but most importantly, although the majority of participants in the current study reported being pretty happy with their personal lives, zoophiles and bestialists may come to the attention of mental health providers for a variety of reasons (Miletski 2001). They may be dealing with having to live a life of secrecy filled with fear of being outed, anxiety, stress, guilt, shame, low self-esteem, depression, anger, grieving the loss of animal sex partners, coming out, or even wanting to stop having sex with animals. Whether they feel their bestiality is ego-dystonic or they want to work on other issues, it is the mental health provider's professional responsibility to be prepared to assist them. In order to be able to successfully work with zoophiles and bestialists, it is essential to learn more about the phenomena of bestiality and zoophilia and to be prepared to be non-judgmental, open-minded, accepting (which is not the same as condoning), and confidential. Otherwise, zoophiles and bestialists will not reveal their true selves, and this secrecy may negatively impact the therapeutic milieu and progress.

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