For his contribution to this list.

http://www.indiana.edu/~kinsey/ki-pubs.html

by Kinsey staff past and present, visit

For a complete list of publications

“Research and Publications” web page at

For more information, visit our

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arousal.

Bancroft and Erick Janssen at the institute, each individ-
ual has personality traits that can affect behavior at a
relatively unconscious level. “To fully understand why,
in a given situation, one person takes a risk and another does not, we
need to appreciate how these traits interact with conscious parameters of risk.”

“I was astonished to find that virtually all the relevant
studies assumed that the risky behavior is under volun-
tary control, that people appraise the risk and then use that
appraisal to decide whether or not to act. Not one
Case 1 involved what the sexual process itself might play a
role. I saw a gap that the Kinsey Institute was well
served to fill.”

According to a theoretical model developed by Ban-
croft and Erick Janssen at the institute, each individ-
ual has personality traits that can affect behavior at a
relatively unconscious level. “To fully understand why,
in a given situation, one person takes a risk and another does not, we
need to appreciate how these traits interact with conscious parameters of risk.”

People have different levels of sexual inhibition and excitation, differ-
ent relationships between mood and sexuality, and different
degrees of assertiveness,” says Janssen, associate scientist at the
institute. “We believe all of these factors decide to take or avoid risk.

We are postulating that they operate in a kind of matrix: high excita-
tion alone might not lead to risky behavior, but high excitation com-
bined with low inhibition might. Someone who is depressed, or has
low self-esteem, and at the same time is not assertive in a relationship,
might give in to risky behavior even when he or she knows better. The
wrong combination of factors can be a recipe for disaster.”

To test their theory, the Kinsey researchers are dividing their
new Kinsey Institute study is approaching that question from
a three-part method of survey, lab, and interview. It is unusual—other
studies might use only one of those—but in the end it will provide a
lot of possible angles for looking at the data.”

“Sometimes I feel more like Sherlock Holmes than a scientist,”
Strong laughs. “It’s kind of like detective work, trying to figure out why
these smart people do these dumb things.”

David Strong, one of the team who has been active in both the
survey and interview portions of the study, says they already have
more than 1,000 sets of questionnaires completed.

“We are striving for a balance of factors—gay/straight, black/
white, older/younger, blue collar/white collar, and so on,” says Strong, “and believe me, it has been an
adventure. Identifying the right places to find
certain risk groups has been a challenge. We’ve visited
everything from churches to ‘leather bars’; some-
times we actually set up a table. We have met some
fascinating people.”

Strong has conducted some 50 interviews also, and
so far it seems the theory is being borne out. “We ask
people to relax a recent sexual episode that they now
regret, and ask why they did it. They always talk
about knowing better, but ‘the heat of the moment’
carried them away. Often they say they literally forgot
the risk, only to now have the realization of what they had
done come crashing back on them, even in the split
second after orgasm.”

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these smart people do these dumb things.”

Erick Janssen agrees that the projects first year has been an
adventure, and he feels a strong link to the work of Alfred Kinsey.

“Dr. Kinsey was interested in variations across society,” he notes, “and we’ve got a real unmediated. I think he would also approve of the
shoeshop method of survey lab, and interview. It is unusual—other
studies might use only one of those—but in the end it will provide a
lot of possible angles for looking at the data.”

Ultimately, the scientists hope the study will suggest new ways to
reach people who know the rules but still act. “We don’t think our model
will explain all risky behavior,” says Janssen, “but it could go a long
way. If we can help people understand why they do what they do,
what their weaknesses are, we might help them increase their control.”

"For more about the model, see the Fall 1997 issue of Kinsey Today. Available online at http://www.indiana.edu/~kinsey/kinseytoday2.html"
In preparing for a recent lecture to Indiana University students on “Sex in the 21st Century,” I set myself the task of looking back over the second half of the 20th Century to identify the principal changes in sexuality and society to correspond to the implications of those trends for the future. These are no immediate signs that society’s problems with sex are in decline, and we may feel bewildered as we strive to make sense of the increasing pace of change. With the rise of individualism we are seeing a decline in the traditional family, an increase in the breakdown of marriage, and the destabilized parenting that results for many children. We see a move toward the ‘jungian’ perspective, founded on the ongoing benefits to the two individuals concerned, whatever their gender, while demonstrating programs more for relationships between men and women in heterosexual relationships. We see an increasing fragmentation of ideas into relationship and non-relationship forms, particularly for men, as the opportunities for non-relationship sexual expression expand with new information technologies like the web. Health problems related to sex too are now obvious declines.

The literature on this state of affairs comes from the ‘sloppy truth’ who’s aim is to set the clock back to pre-Kinsey times, a futile goal as it was doubtful Kinsey, of course, would re-take as responsible for the changes that they so much dislike. On the other extreme, less audible but present is the political incorrectness of focusing on the individual, particularly the disarmed individual, when society is to blame. In between these extremes, we must assume, is the slant majority. The time has come to actively engage this majority in a debate about responsible sexual behavior, at both the national and community level, as we set about shaping 21st-Century sexual values. We should have the humility to acknowledge that what seems right today for any given 30 year housewife should have the wisdom to accept that whereas there will be a substantial “common ground” of shared values, there will continue to be differences. We should build on that “common ground.” That debate, that building process, should be informed by good scientific evidence. And that is where the Kinsey Institute comes in.

You simply never know the importance any single document might have.”

In another room, surrounded by scores of pocket-sized pornographic comic books (“8-pagers”) from the 1930s to the 50s, volunteer Frank A. Hoffmann develops a complete “catalogue analysis” of the comics. Hoffmann, a retired fisheries biologist from SUNY-Buffalo, has a unique relationship to the Kinsey, having used the collection for his PhD research at IU in the 60s. Now, he has made it possible for the Kinsey to purchase the archival boxes and folders necessary to preserve the material that he is cataloguing. In his analyses Hoffmann explains the source for the characters and plotlines of the comics that he is cataloguing. “I have to go back to my childhood to remember some of these characters.” He explains, “who were based on both sad and fictional figures of the time.” His next project—to catalogue over 1,200 erotic manuscripts, typed or handwritten by military personnel during WWII—likewise draws on his experience, this time as a veteran of the war. Hoffmann has otherwise.”

The Kinsey Institute has always had friends, from the late Herman B. Wells to professionals and academics around the world. In 1997, director Dr. John Bancroft, several staff members and their friends decided their friends should be official. The result was the formation of the Friends of the Kinsey Institute.

“The research can be a very lonely pursuit,” says Dr. William Yarbrough, Professor of Health Education at IU Bloomington and the new president of the board of directors of the Friends of the Kinsey Institute. “It’s a controversial area for society, and it’s therefore often misrepresented in the public arena. Having advocates who recognize the importance of the institute’s work is a big plus.”

The Friends were always supposed to be more than an informed group, and they have proved themselves to be an active organization. Besides spreading the word about the Kinsey Institute, they have been able to offer financial support. “The Friends’ Board decided to allocate money for grants to graduate students studying sexuality,” says Professor Yarbrough. “That’s a tangible way that the Friends can help, and I’m very happy that just the thought of the wisdom it would implement it.”

The importance of encouraging students to study in this field cannot be understated, says Professor Yarbrough. “There’s currently a ‘graying’ of the leaders, and we need to prepare and train the next generation of researchers.”

The Friends of the Kinsey Institute are shaping up to be valuable allies in this effort, through their support of scholarships and their promotion of the work carried out at the institute. “A society like this can give some extra edge to the institute,” explains Professor Yarbrough. “It gives the institute some藿the power of scholarships and the leverage it gives to the institute,” says Dr. William Yarbrough. “There’s always supposed to be more than an informed group, and they have proved themselves to be an active organization. Besides spreading the word about the Kinsey Institute, they have been able to offer financial support. “The Friends’ Board decided to allocate money for grants to graduate students studying sexuality,” says Professor Yarbrough. “That’s a tangible way that the Friends can help, and I’m very happy that just the thought of the wisdom it would implement it.”

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