

Women who engage in S/M (sadoomasochistic) interactions for money: A descriptive study

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Previous research has not systematically studied S/M (sadoomasochistic) professionals. In this questionnaire study, 31 women who engaged in S/M interactions for money on a regular basis were obtained by a variety of sampling techniques. Results show that these women were S/M practitioners and tended to be dominant in their personal lives. They maintained primary relationships, reported satisfaction with their lives, tended to be sexually adventurous, and often had experience in other areas of sex work. They saw themselves as different from traditional prostitutes. They were no more likely to report a history of sexual abuse than women in the general population. The implications of these results are discussed and possibilities for future research outlined.

Keywords: BDSM, prostitute, sadoomasochism, sex work.

ALTHOUGH S/M (sadoomasochism) is a relatively modern term and should not be imposed on earlier behavioural patterns, similar behaviour descriptions can be designated as S/M-type behaviour. S/M-type activities have probably existed throughout history; suggesting that some individuals would have requested these acts and some prostitutes probably offered these services. Ancient Greek vases (~450 B.C.) depict scenes of hetaera (prostitutes) being beaten or appearing to be forced to engage in certain sex acts (Keuls, 1985). From the 1700s until the present, there are numerous reports of brothels and prostitutes catering to customers requesting bondage or flagellation (Chivers & Blanchard, 1996; Gebhard, 1969; Krafft-Ebing, 1965; Stein, 1975; Tannahill, 1982). It should be noted that these individuals were prostitutes in the usual sense of the term and probably provided other sexual services to their non-S/M clientele; we do not know if these women were involved in S/M activities in their private lives. Stein (1975) clearly indicated that her participants were motivated by money not personal interest.

Studies of S/M practitioners have suggested the existence of individuals who

provide S/M interactions for a monetary fee (Breslow *et al.*, 1985, 1986; Spengler 1977; Weinberg *et al.*, 1984; Weinberg & Falk, 1980); we define these individuals as S/M professionals. Spengler (1977) distributed an anonymous questionnaire by responding to personal ads and having the questionnaire distributed to S/M club members. He was able to secure a sample of 245 West German men. He found that 13 per cent of his total sample reported engaging 'prostitutes' as S/M partners, although a larger percentage (23 per cent) of the male heterosexual subsample reported this behaviour. Breslow *et al.* (1986) used a variety of methods (reprinting the questionnaire in S/M magazines, sending the questionnaire to members of the mailing list of another magazine, answering personal advertisements in S/M magazines, and distributing them to members of S/M clubs) to obtain their sample. They found 34 per cent of the heterosexual participants, 31 per cent of the bisexual participants and 12 per cent of the homosexual participants used the services of S/M professionals.

Some early researchers believed that the vast majority of women involved in S/M were prostitutes. To challenge this, other studies

removed S/M professionals from their survey studies of S/M practitioners. Breslow *et al.* (1985) excluded 12 of 52 (23 per cent) female respondents, who affirmed being prostitutes. Levitt *et al.* (1994) excluded 11 of 45 (24 per cent) women who reported a large number of sexual or S/M partners as possible prostitutes. Nevertheless, these excluded respondents may also have been involved in personal (non-professional) S/M activities.

From the literature and our own previous fieldwork in this area, we know that contemporary S/M professionals who do not overtly offer other sexual services exist. These individuals may be S/M practitioners in their private lives as well as providing these experiences to others for a fee. Their professional activities provide an income source and may facilitate their own personal S/M exploration. They provide an opportunity for individuals experimenting with S/M to engage in the behaviour in a relatively safe environment. Some S/M practitioners believe that S/M professionals are usually submissive or not actually interested in S/M in their personal lives. Until now S/M professionals have not been systematically studied.

Method

Procedure

The present study arbitrarily defined an S/M professional as an individual who engages in S/M interactions for money on a regular basis. Attempts at securing a male sample were not successful. All the potential male participants we approached were fearful that we were police agents trying to entrap them; we must assume these individuals are more prone to arrest or police harassment. We excluded two transgendered respondents from the present analysis, as we believe the transgendered professional population has unique features which will be explored in future research.

We recruited a convenience sample by contacting 'professional houses' (venues specifically set up for professional S/M interactions), responding to advertisements

placed by S/M professionals in local adult media, and by asking respondents to invite other S/M professionals to participate in the study. The authors sought cooperation from individuals who managed professional houses to distribute their questionnaires. These houses provide safety, access to specialised equipment, an opportunity for group advertising, and a sense of community. One manager distributed questionnaires to the women working in her house, as well as to women working in similar establishments in the San Francisco Bay Area.

One of the authors (KS) responded to all of the professional S/M advertisements in an issue of the major local adult newspaper and on a local adult entertainment website. This resulted in 50 telephone contacts, 13 did not respond to a message and there were 37 direct conversations. Of the 37 telephone conversations, 21 women requested to receive the questionnaire by mail, one completed it in person, one completed it over the phone, one completed it by e-mail, 10 indicated they already had received the questionnaire through other means, and three declined to participate. The mailings consisted of a brief covering letter assuring confidentiality, contact information for the authors, the questionnaire and a stamped self-addressed return envelope. All data were collected in 2000.

The survey instrument (see Appendix A) was created specifically for the present study; it consisted of a four-page questionnaire with approximately 100 multiple choice, one-word fill-in and checklist-type questions.

Participants

The respondents comprised a convenience sample of 31 biological females, ranging in age from 21 to 56 years old; the mean was 34.2 (SD=8.60). The respondents largely self-defined as Caucasian (74 per cent, [23/31]), with two Asian, two Hispanic, one African-American and three mixed-race respondents. A majority of the respondents indicated that they had never married (55 per cent [17/31]), but eight were currently

married (four for the second time), one was currently separated, and five had been through a divorce. While not necessarily married, more than three-quarters (24/31) of the respondents reported a personal primary relationship.

Their reported total income (all currency data presented is in US dollars) for the previous year ranged from \$3500 to \$80,000, with a mean of \$29,852 (Mdn=\$25,000). Professional S/M was the only source of income for 31 per cent (9/29) of the sample; the women with other sources of income reported a mean of 63 per cent of their total income came from professional S/M activities. Other sources of income included employment as an emergency room technician, web designer, writer, actor, computer programmer and stripper. All but one respondent had completed some college education, 11 had graduated from college and two had Master's degrees. Approximately 32 per cent (10/31) were currently students.

Results

Throughout this paper, we make a distinction between 'personal' and 'professional' lives. 'Professional' pertains to the S/M acts the respondent engages in for money. 'Personal' pertains to the acts in which the respondent freely chooses to engage. The 'professional' acts may or may not be an accurate portrayal of the individual's core S/M interests. 'Personal' also includes the effect of being a 'professional' on the life of the respondent.

Personal life

Sexuality

We constructed two different seven-point scales (0–6), analogous to the Kinsey *et al.* (1948) seven-point heterosexuality – homosexuality scale, to measure relative self-reported preference for male versus female sex partners and for sexual dominance versus sexual submission. All these terms were self-defined by each respondent.

More than two-thirds (21/31) of the sample reported a predominant sexual

interest in men, 10 per cent (3/31) exclusively. An exclusive sexual interest in women was reported by 16 per cent (5/31) of the sample and an additional 16 per cent (5/31) reported a predominant or equal interest in female sex partners as compared to male sex partners. Grouping the respondents by predominant sexual interest, those interested in men (0–1) comprised 35 per cent (11/31) of the sample, those interested in both men and women (2–3–4) and those predominately interested in women (5–6) comprised 45 per cent (14/31) and 19 per cent (6/31) respectively.

The respondents' personal S/M interests clustered towards the dominant end of the continuum, with 57 per cent (16/28) of the respondents indicating that they were exclusively or predominantly dominant, 25 per cent (7/28) equally dominant and submissive, and 18 per cent (5/28) exclusively or predominantly submissive. Only two women described themselves as exclusively dominant and one woman described herself as exclusively submissive; three respondents did not answer the question.

The questionnaire elicited the number of different personal sexual and S/M partners they had interacted with over the past six months. The respondents reported a range of 0–30 non-S/M sexual (NSMS) partners and 0–31 S/M partners. Half (15/30) of the respondents reported NSMS interactions with a male partner, 32 per cent (9/28) with a female partner, 10 per cent (3/30) with both male and female partners, and 32 per cent (10/31) reported no NSMS interactions. Similarly for S/M interactions, 10 per cent (3/31) did not engage in personal S/M interactions, 30 per cent (9/30) with men only, 23 per cent (7/31) with women only, and 37 per cent (11/30) with both men and women. One woman reported one S/M interaction with a transgendered partner. Only one woman did not participate in interpersonal sexual interactions in the prior six months.

When asked if they had had sexual interactions with adults when they were minors, 57

per cent (17/30) of the participants responded affirmatively; of these, 53 per cent (9/17) felt those interactions were harmful to them. Childhood sexual interactions with another minor occurred for 77 per cent (24/31) of the sample with 25 per cent (6/24) of those reporting that they felt the interaction had been harmful to them; 8 per cent (2/24) felt the interaction was harmful to the other minor. Of the entire sample, 14 (45 per cent) reported harm from either an experience with an adult or another minor or both; 9/30 (30 per cent) reported harm only from interactions with adults. The terms 'minor' and 'harmful' were left to the respondent to interpret; we recognise that these terms are quite imprecise. The definition of 'minor' varies among states (see <http://www.ageofconsent.com/ageofconsent.htm>) and has changed over time; we did not ask if these acts took place in the US. Our purpose was to take a first step towards addressing the belief that child sexual abuse is a cause of both S/M and engaging in sexual activities for money.

Life satisfaction

The respondents rated their levels of satisfaction with four aspects of their lives (sex, S/M, friendships, and intimate relationships). Of the 30 participants who responded to these questions, none reported that they were completely dissatisfied with any of these aspects of their lives. Two respondents reported some dissatisfaction with sex life and intimate relationships, three respondents reported some dissatisfaction with their S/M life, and one reported some dissatisfaction with her friendships. We then asked about the impact being an S/M professional had on 14 other aspects of the respondents' lives (see Table 1). With the exception of the respondents' relationship with their families, they reported that being an S/M professional exerted positive effects on these other aspects of their lives. A highly positive effect (≥90 per cent) was reported for 'overall quality of life,' 'acceptance of others sexual interests,' 'feelings about self,' and 'personal S/M life.' However, only 13 per cent (4/30) of the respondents felt that

Table 1: Professional S/M's impact on their personal lives.

	Positively (%)	Negatively (%)	No effect (%)
Personal S/M life	90.0	6.7	3.3
Personal sex life	67.7	9.7	22.6
Personal Dominant S/M interest	83.3	0	16.6
Personal Submissive S/M interest	60.0	0	40.0
Personal S/M identity	83.3	0	16.6
Acceptance of others sexual interests	90.3	0	9.7
Friendships	58.1	9.7	32.2
Feelings about women	65.6	0	34.5
Feelings about men	58.6	13.8	27.6
Social life	61.3	6.4	32.2
Relationship with family	13.3	23.3	63.3
Feelings about self	96.5	0	3.4
Feelings about future	73.3	3.3	23.3
Overall quality of life	90.3	0	9.7

the impact on their 'relationship with family' was positive, and 63 per cent (19/30) felt it had no effect.

Relationships

More than three-quarters (24/31) of the respondents reported a personal primary relationship, 19 with male sex partners and five with female sex partners. None of the five same-sex relationships was sexually exclusive and all involved S/M (the respondent was dominant in two, submissive in one, and switched roles in two). Of the 19 respondents with a male primary partner, 10 were sexually exclusive and 13 indicated their relationship included S/M. Of these 13 primary relationships involving S/M, the respondent assumed the dominant role in nine, the submissive role in one, and switched roles in three. Respondents attempted to live these roles full-time in three of these relationships, assuming the dominant role in two and the submissive role in one. All of the primary partners were aware of the respondents' professional S/M activities. It was a source of conflict with three of the male partners and 'sometimes' a source of conflict with one of the female partners.

Alcohol and drug use

When asked about alcohol or drug use, 29 per cent (9/31) of the respondents reported that it had been a problem; 10 per cent (3/31) reported never using either. In their professional sessions, 26 per cent (8/31) indicated that clients had brought drugs to a session; four of these said they had used the drugs with the clients, though not necessarily during the session. Only two respondents conducted professional sessions under the influence of drugs or alcohol in the last year. There was no correlation between having a history of alcohol or drug problems and having a history of sexual contact as a minor.

Professional Life

Sessions

The respondents reported working in commercial S/M from two months to 35 years (Mdn=3 years; M=5.2 years). The number of professional S/M sessions they conducted over the previous six months ranged from five to 200, with a mean of 74 – approximately three sessions per week. Extrapolating from the maximum, 200 sessions in 26 weeks, results in a frequency of slightly more than one a day.

Over the previous six months, respondents indicated a range of four to 140 different clients with a mean of 44. The vast majority of clients were men, although five participants reported occasional single female clients and 15 reported seeing couples. Nearly all (29/31) participated in professional S/M sessions involving another S/M professional in the previous six months.

The respondents used the Internet and referrals from their professional S/M houses as their primary methods for soliciting clients. Most (48 per cent, 15/31) saw their clients in a professional S/M house; 29 per cent (9/31) saw clients in a rented 'dungeon' space and 23 per cent (7/31) in their own 'dungeon' space. The mean percent of initial inquiries leading to a professional session was 39 per cent, with a mean of 36 per cent of these becoming 'regular clients'. 'Regular clients' averaged 1.76 sessions per month.

The median length of a session was one hour; the shortest session was 50 minutes and the longest was three hours. The mean fee in US dollars per session was \$156 (Mdn=\$150, range=\$70 to \$300). To verify the income estimates, we multiplied the average fee by the average number of sessions, which, extrapolated to one year, was \$23,088. This was not significantly correlated ($r=0.39$) with the \$16,958 income estimate calculated by multiplying the respondent's estimated yearly income by the estimated percent of the total income derived from professional S/M activities. This suggests that the differences in the estimates were random; there was no tendency for the

respondents to over or underestimate their income from S/M professional activities.

We found 14/30 women had assumed the submissive role during their professional sessions in the last six months. They indicated the number of 'submissive' sessions ranged from one to 110; the mean was 36. By extrapolation, in about 22 per cent of all professional S/M sessions reported, the S/M professional assumed the submissive role. Two women worked exclusively as submissives; one reported five sessions and the other reported 50 in the last six months. Both these women reported their personal S/M orientation as predominately, but not exclusively, submissive.

Although all the ads we contacted specifically indicated 'no sex,' we asked about the likelihood of the male client's erection and orgasm, and the respondent's sexual arousal and orgasm during professional interactions on Likert scales (1=never and 5=always). The respondents reported frequent client erections ($M=4.0$); 97 per cent (30/31) allowed their clients to masturbate during a session and the clients usually reached orgasm ($M=3.9$). The respondents reported personal sexual arousal 'sometimes' ($M=2.8$), but rarely achieved personal orgasms during professional interactions ($M=1.7$). Only one woman indicated she had never been aroused during a session.

When asked if they would engage in sex with clients if it was 'absolutely legal,' 14/30 indicated that they would not, 15/30 indicated that they would do so only rarely with the right partner, and one indicated that she already had engaged in sex with clients. As expected, the client's erection and orgasm were significantly correlated ($r=0.66$), but there were no other significant correlations among these variables.

Branding, kissing, forced gay sex and scat play were among the least common behaviours reported; bondage, cock and ball torture and spanking were among the most common. Interestingly, kissing on the lips was correlated ($r=0.52$) with allowing the client to masturbate the respondent, but we

found no other significant correlations among S/M behaviours and masturbation. See Table 2 for a complete list of professional activities.

Clients

The respondents reported a variety of extra-professional interactions with clients. These included friendships (58 per cent [18/31]), seeing the client socially (42 per cent [13/31]), having an S/M session without charging (35 per cent [11/31]), and using the client's business or professional services (35 per cent [11/31]). Additionally, some respondents reported having a personal S/M relationship with a client (29 per cent [9/31]), having a personal sexual relationship with a client (19 per cent [6/31]), and falling in love with a client (10 per cent [3/31]). All the respondents that fell in love had both a sexual and S/M relationship with the client.

Other sex work

A majority of respondents (74 per cent [23/31]) reported having engaged in other sex work. Of these, 14 had worked as exotic dancers (three concurrently with being an S/M professional), eight as phone sex workers, five as adult movies/video performers, four as prostitutes, four as escorts, and five in other, unspecified types sex work. Approximately 35 per cent (11/31) reported a history of at least two other types of sex work.

Satisfaction

The majority of women reported positive feelings about engaging in professional S/M. Of these, 29 per cent (9/31) said, 'It was the best job they could imagine,' and 68 per cent (21/31) said they 'liked most aspects of it, but that it got to them on occasion.' Only three per cent (1/31) said they could 'imagine better and worse jobs.' The respondents expected to continue working as S/M professionals for a median and mode of five more years (range three months to 100 years).

Table 2: How often do you include the following acts during your Professional S/M sessions? (N=30)

Activity	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	No data
Anal Fisting	12	11	7	0	0	0
Anal Play	7	4	7	11	1	0
Bondage	0	0	1	25	4	0
Breath Play	4	10	7	8	1	0
Branding	28	2	0	0	0	0
Caning	1	6	13	9	0	1
Cock & Ball Torture	1	2	2	21	4	0
Cross-Dressing	1	5	13	10	1	0
Dildo Play	3	4	12	10	1	0
Electric Play ¹	11	7	9	3	0	0
Enemas	14	11	5	0	0	0
Face Slapping	2	8	14	6	0	0
Fetish Play	0	3	5	18	3	0
Flogging	1	0	5	23	1	0
Forced Gay Sex ²	22	5	3	0	0	0
Hot Wax	11	8	6	5	0	0
Humiliation	2	9	9	9	1	0
Ice	5	9	10	5	1	0
Infantilism ³	13	12	4	0	0	1
Kissing on Lips	21	5	1	2	0	0
Masturbation	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
by client of client	1	1	4	17	7	0
by client of you	26	3	0	1	0	0
by you of client	27	3	0	0	0	0
by you of you	14	7	5	1	0	0
Oral-Genital Contact	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
your genitals	30	0	0	0	0	0
client's genitals	29	0	0	0	0	1
Piercing or Cutting	13	11	4	2	0	0
Scat (Shit)	27	2	1	0	0	0
Sensory Deprivation	0	4	17	8	1	0
Sexual Intercourse	30	0	0	0	0	0
Sex with Animals	30	0	0	0	0	0
Spanking	1	1	19	9	0	0
Vaginal Fisting	20	7	1	1	0	0
Water Sports (Urine)	4	4	13	7	2	0
Whipping	6	9	14	1	0	0
Worship	1	2	7	17	3	0

¹ Use of devices that deliver electric shocks.

² Forcing a heterosexual to engage in homosexual acts for its humiliation value.

³ Acting, dressing, and playing the role of an infant.

Discussion

The present study investigated a small, geographically specific, convenience sample; the generalisability to the population of S/M professionals is not clear. Our estimate, which was supported in our interviews with several S/M professionals, is that we sampled approximately half of the San Francisco Bay Area population of female S/M professionals active at that time. Our data is self-reported and the respondents may not have been completely honest. Additionally, some women may have tried professional S/M, had negative experiences, and stopped the activity. These women would not have been sampled by our method.

The authors are aware of several women who support themselves full-time by their professional S/M work. These women furnish and maintain 'dungeons' for these activities, which require significant capital expenditure. They are supported by a small number of regular clients, do not advertise, and accept new clients only on referral from trusted sources. Our survey techniques would have missed these individuals.

Comparisons to non-professional female S/M practitioners

Comparisons to the two descriptive studies of non-professional female S/M practitioners in the literature (Breslow *et al.*, 1985; Levitt *et al.*, 1994) are problematic due to differences in the methods and small sample sizes. Nevertheless, the comparisons are intriguing, see Table 3.

The belief that female S/M professionals are inherently different from other S/M practitioners was not confirmed. Both Breslow *et al.* (1985) and Levitt *et al.* (1994) removed S/M professionals from their samples to show that non-professional female S/M practitioners existed. Their samples suggested that S/M-identified women are more likely to self-identify as submissive. However, by their removal of probable S/M professional women, who probably identified as dominant, they may have introduced selection bias. The present sample by its methods may have intro-

duced the opposite selection bias, towards self-identified dominant women. It is reasonable to conclude that S/M-identified women are more evenly distributed along the dominant and submissive continuum than previously thought. The belief, that S/M professionals are usually submissive in their personal life, is not supported.

In comparison to Breslow *et al.* (1985) and Levitt *et al.* (1994), S/M professionals have more formal education, but all three samples are better educated than the general population. S/M professionals marry less often, but many maintain primary relationships (not asked in the previous studies). They also are more likely to have an interest in same-sex sexual activity more frequently than the women in the other studies. All samples reported similar ages and frequency of personal S/M experiences.

Comparisons to traditional prostitutes

In our preliminary interviews with S/M professionals, these women made it exquisitely clear that they did not consider themselves prostitutes. They denigrated women who engaged in sex with their clients as 'prostitutes with whips.' They were adamant that they did not provide genitally focused activities for money, but rather allowed for role play and fantasy enactment.

In the same way that a customer may find a nude dancer a fantasy object, the women we studied felt they were providing their customers a fantasy object. They did not feel that the sexual gratification of the client was their goal and they made no agreement to provide sexual services for a fee. If the customer achieved sexual gratification it was merely an artifact of the interaction to which they paid little attention.

Accordingly, our participants felt their activities should not be subject to local prostitution laws. They clearly drew a distinction between overt sexual acts with clients and fantasy fulfillment. The law draws the same distinction. In most jurisdictions it is legal to engage in erotic dance, telephone sex, make a sexually explicit film or video, or act as an

Table 3: Comparison to non-Professional S/M samples.

	Breslow et al. (1985)	Levitt et al. (1994)	Current study
Mean age (years)	33.4	30.7	34.2
Educational level			
High School & <	35.6%	11.8%	3.3%
Some college	35.5%	47.1%	53.3%
College graduate & >	28.8%	41.1%	43.4%
Marital status			
Currently married	57.5%	32.4%	25.8%
Divorced/separated	22.5%	26.5%	19.4%
Never married	20.0%	41.2%	54.8%
Mean income	\$32,365 ^{1,2}	\$26,989 ^{1,3,4}	\$29,852 ⁵
Sexual orientation			
Heterosexual	57.9%	67.6%	35%
Bisexual	39.5%	20.6%	45%
Homosexual	2.6%	11.8%	19%
S/M orientation			
Dominant	27.5%	11.7%	57%
Interest in both roles	32.5%	41.2%	25%
Submissive	40.0%	47.0%	18%
No. of personal S/M contacts in the past year	53	132 ⁶	136 ⁶

¹ Mean income was corrected for inflation using the inflation calculator located at <http://www.bls.gov/>

² Corrected for inflation 1983-2000.

³ Corrected for inflation 1978-2000.

⁴ Excluding the probable prostitute subsample

⁵ Data collected in 2000.

⁶ Extrapolated to one year.

escort. These acts may lead the client to become aroused and/or masturbate, but all without direct physical contact between the sex worker and client. Different from most other forms of 'legal' sex work mentioned, however, these women did allow the client to masturbate openly in their presence.

Most state and community laws do not clearly address the legality of S/M activities in general or the specific activities of S/M professionals. The authors are aware of several S/M professionals who have been arrested and charged with prostitution in the absence of allegations that they engaged in coitus, oral sex, anal sex, or manual sex.

The willingness of some of our respondents to adopt a submissive role during a professional session also distinguishes them from traditional prostitutes (see Stein, 1975). The number of women in our sample, who engaged in professional sessions as a submissive, and the number of those sessions, is surprisingly large. The submissive role is clearly more dangerous; an inexperienced customer may accidentally cause a real injury, a customer with mental health problems may truly want to injure the professional, and the physical demands on the body probably affect the submissive more than the dominant. Our respondents usually

not different from the expected result of a general sample of women. The belief in both the professional literature and the lay press that women who engage in sex work must be victims of childhood sexual 'abuse' is not substantiated by the present study.

It is not clear what role, if any, respondents' childhood sexual experiences played in these women becoming S/M professionals. By the respondents' own assessment of their lives, any harm suffered appears to have been significantly mitigated. A more complete study of the influence of childhood sexual experiences on adult sexuality is needed for the general population as well as in specific subgroups.

Conclusions

The women in the present sample are generally happy with their lives, and indicate that their professional S/M work has an overall positive effect on them. Most have other jobs and many are students; their professional S/M activities provide a significant, but not necessarily the primary, source of income. They maintain personal primary relationships in which they are open with their partners about their professional activities. They are most likely members of the S/M subculture, and except for being more likely to identify as a dominant and express greater interest in same-sex partners, they differ little from other S/M-identified women who do not engage in professional S/M activities.

Future research issues and questions include:

1. What are the motivations for becoming an S/M professional, if money is not the primary motivation?
2. What is the influence of gender on S/M partner choice?
3. What is the role of non-S/M sexual activity during S/M interactions?
4. How does a history of child abuse or child-adult sexual activity affect the S/M desires and expression?
5. How are women who engage in S/M for money different or similar to other S/M participants?
6. How are women who engage in S/M for money different or similar to other sex workers?
7. What are the differences between S/M practitioners who have a specific interest in S/M versus those who primarily are interested in exploring 'new' sexual activities?
8. Describe the continuum of S/M role preferences among S/M practitioners.
9. Compare and contrast female, male, and transgendered S/M professionals.
10. How do the individual's gender and the partner's gender affect S/M interests?
11. Determine the reasons and mechanisms that being an S/M professional exert a positive effect on the individual's personal life.
12. What effect does being an S/M professional have on the individual's primary relationship?
13. What are the characteristics and effects of substance use, abuse, and misuse in the S/M population in general and S/M professionals specifically?
14. Who are the clients of S/M professionals?
15. How do the sexual interests of the S/M professional influence the activities within the S/M professional interaction and vice versa?
16. What factors led the respondents who had a history of sex work to choose professional S/M work at this time?

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Appendix A: S/M Professional Questionnaire.

For the purpose of this questionnaire, an S/M Professional is someone who engages in S/M interactions for money on a regular basis. This questionnaire distinguishes between your Professional interactions (what you do for money) and Personal interactions (what you do for yourself). Please look for these distinctions. Many people have strong feelings concerning the correct term to describe their S/M or sexual orientation. We apologise if we have not used your preferred term; please answer the question as best you can with the terms provided. All responses are anonymous and confidential.

Part I – The following questions pertain to your Personal life

- Do you define yourself as an S/M professional? Yes No
- What is your current age? ___ years old
- How do you define your gender? Male Female Transgendered
- What is your marital status?
(circle all that apply) Never Married
Married (no. of times ___)
Separated (no. of times ___)
Divorced (no. of times ___)
- What is your race? Caucasian/White
Hispanic
African American
Asian
Other _____
- With whom do you currently live?
(circle all that apply) Alone Roommate(s)
Sexual partner(s) My children
S/M partner(s) Other children
Friend(s) Adult family member(s)
- Last grade of school you completed? Did not finish High School
College Graduate
High School Graduate/GED
Master's Degree
Some College
Doctoral Degree

Are you currently a student? Yes No

What was your total income last year from all sources? \$ _____ (guesses OK)

What per cent of your total income comes from Professional S/M work? _____ %

Besides working as an S/M Professional, do you work at another occupation? Yes No

If yes, please specify the other occupation _____

How do you define your personal sexual orientation?

- Exclusively interested in men
- Predominantly interested in men, only insignificantly interested in women
- Predominantly interested in men, but with a significant interest in women
- Equally interested in men and women
- Predominantly interested in women, but with a significant interest in men
- Predominantly interested in women, only insignificantly interested in men
- Exclusively interested in women
- I am not interested in personal sexual interactions with either sex

How do you define your personal S/M orientation?

- Exclusively submissive
- Predominantly submissive, only insignificantly dominant
- Predominantly submissive, but with a significant dominant component
- Equally submissive and dominant
- Predominantly dominant, but with a significant submissive component
- Predominantly dominant, only insignificantly submissive
- Exclusively dominant
- I am not interested in personal S/M interactions with anyone

In your personal life, during the last six months, how many times have you engaged in the following behaviours? (guesses OK) (If you have not engaged in the behaviour, please write zero in the appropriate space)

Masturbation?	_____times	Heterosexual intercourse?	_____times
S/M play as a dominant?	_____times	<u>Heterosexual</u> sex acts?	_____times
S/M play as a submissive?	_____times	<u>Homosexual</u> sex acts?	_____times

In your personal life, during the last six months, how many different partners have you had? (If you have not had any partners, please write zero in the appropriate space, guesses OK)

_____ Male <u>Non-S/M</u> sex partners	_____ Male <u>S/M</u> partners
_____ Female <u>Non-S/M</u> sex partners	_____ Female <u>S/M</u> partners
_____ Transgendered <u>Non-S/M</u> sex partners	_____ Transgendered <u>S/M</u> partners

On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied are you with the following aspects of your personal life: (1 = completely dissatisfied to 5 = completely satisfied)

Sex life	1	2	3	4	5
S/M life	1	2	3	4	5
Friendships	1	2	3	4	5
Intimate relationships	1	2	3	4	5

Has alcohol or drug use ever been a problem for you? Yes No Never used

As a minor, were you ever involved in sexual interactions with an adult? Yes No
 If yes, do you feel it was harmful to you? Yes No

As a minor, were you ever involved in sexual interactions with another minor? Yes No
 If yes, do you feel it was harmful to you? Yes No
 If yes, do you feel it was harmful to the other minor? Yes No

Are you currently involved in a Personal Primary relationship? Yes No

(If yes, please answer the following questions):

What gender is your primary partner? Male Female Transgendered

Do you live with your primary partner? Yes No

Do you engage in S/M with your primary partner? Yes No

If yes, which role do you usually assume? Dom Sub

If yes, do you attempt to live in S/M role all the time (24/7)? Yes No

Do you engage in non-S/M sex with your primary partner? Yes No

Do you and your partner have an agreement to be sexually exclusive? Yes No

Is your primary partner aware of your professional S/M activities? Yes No

If yes, has it been a source of conflict in the relationship? Yes No

How has being an S/M Professional impacted your personal life?

	Positively	Negatively	No Effect
My personal S/M life			
My personal sex life			
My personal dominant S/M interests			
My personal submissive S/M interests			
My personal S/M identity			
My acceptance of the sexual interests of others			
My friendships			
My general feelings towards women			
My general feelings towards men			
My social life			
My relationship with my family			
How I feel about myself			
How I feel about my future			
Overall quality of my life			

Part II – The following questions pertain to your Professional S/M activities

How long have you been involved in Professional S/M? _____ years _____ months

Over the last six months, what is the total number of Professional S/M sessions you have done?
 _____ (guesses OK)

Over the last six months, what is the total number of different S/M clients you have seen?
 _____ (guesses OK)

Over the last six months, what is the total number of Professional S/M sessions as a submissive you have done? _____ (guesses OK)

Over the last six months, number of your Professional S/M clients that are single women? _____

Over the last six months, number of your Professional S/M clients that are couples? _____

Over the last six months, how many Professional S/M sessions have included one or more other S/M Professionals? _____ (guesses OK)

Per cent of initial inquiries that culminate in a Professional S/M session? _____%

Per cent of first-time clients that become regular clients? _____%

On an average, how often do you see a regular client? _____ times a _____ week/month/year

Your primary source for obtaining new clients is: (please circle one)

The professional house refers	Internet	S/M parties
Other clients refer	Newspaper advertising	S/M organisations
Other dom/mes refer	Other (please specify) _____	

What is your average fee for a Professional S/M session? \$ _____

What methods of payment do you accept? Cash Credit Card Check Barter

Do you always insist on payment at the time of the session? Yes No

What is the average duration of your Professional S/M sessions? _____hour(s)_____minute(s)

Where do you usually conduct your Professional S/M sessions? (please circle one)

Own space Rent dungeon space Client's room/house Professional house
Other _____

During your Professional S/M interactions, how often do you engage in formal role-playing? (e.g. mistress/slave, owner/pet, parent/child, lady/servant, school room, nurse/patient)

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

During your Professional S/M interactions, how often do male clients have an erection?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

During your Professional S/M interactions, how often does the client have an orgasm?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

During your Professional S/M interactions, how often do you become sexually aroused?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

During your Professional S/M interactions, how often do you have an orgasm?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

If sex with clients was absolutely legal, would you consider it?

- Absolutely not, never
- On rare occasion with the right partner
- Only if I had to, so as not to lose my clients
- Probably, with appropriate guidelines
- Yes, I would
- Already engage in sex with clients

Have you ever had an S/M interaction with a client without charging? Yes No

Do you ever see your clients socially? Yes No

Have you ever developed an ongoing friendship with a client? Yes No

Have you ever developed a personal S/M relationship with a client? Yes No

Have you ever developed a personal sexual relationship with a client? Yes No

Have you ever fallen in love with a client? Yes No

Have you ever lived with a client? Yes No

If yes, did this involve S/M interactions in exchange for rent? Yes No

Do you ever use the business or professional services of your clients? Yes No

Have the police ever discussed your Professional S/M activities with you? Yes No

Have your Professional S/M activities led to police 'pay offs' by you or others? Yes No

Do clients ever bring drugs or alcohol to your Professional S/M sessions? Yes No

If yes, do you ever use the drugs or alcohol with that client? Yes No

Do you ever engage in Professional S/M while under the influence of drugs/alcohol? Yes No

If yes, please circle one: Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

Have you ever worked as any of the following?

Stripper/exotic dancer	Phone sex worker	Escort
Adult movie/video performer	Prostitute	Other sex work _____

How long do you expect to be doing Professional S/M work? _____more months/years

Which statement best describes your feelings about being an S/M Professional?

- I love it, the best job I could imagine
- I like most aspects of it, but it gets to me on occasion
- I can imagine better and worse jobs
- It is clearly just a way to make money
- There are many problems with it, but it will do for now
- It is pretty awful and I want to get out of it as soon as possible

Women who engage in S/M (sadoomasochistic) interactions for money

How often do you include the following acts during your Professional S/M sessions?

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Always</i>
Anal Fisting					
Anal Play					
Bondage					
Breath Play					
Branding					
Caning					
Cock & Ball Torture					
Cross-Dressing					
Dildo Play					
Electric Play					
Enemas					
Face Slapping					
Fetish Play					
Flogging					
Forced Gay Sex					
Hot Wax					
Humiliation					
Ice					
Infantilism					
Kissing on Lips					
Masturbation	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
by client of client					
by client of you					
by you of client					
by you of you					
Oral-Genital Contact	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
your genitals					
client's genitals					
Piercing or Cutting					
Scat (Shit)					
Sensory Deprivation					
Sexual Intercourse					
Sex with Animals					
Spanking					
Vaginal Fisting					
Water Sports (Urine)					
Whipping					
Worship					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

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