

REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

ADVANCES IN BEHAVIORAL BIOLOGY

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REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

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Foreword

Sexual compatibility between male and female partners is indispensable to normal and successful fertilization in mammals. Thus, the genes from males and females whose sexual behavior is characterized by awkwardness, ineptness, and miscues are eliminated from the gene pool of the species. In human societies, this compatibility is not always evident; and the behavior that precedes and accompanies copulation and fertilization is exceedingly complex and affected by many variables. As in most other species of animals, the entire repertoire of reproductive behavior of man is not well understood by man. When viewed, discussed, or reported, the topic is too often and most unfortunately regarded as an amalgam of emotion, mysticism, and biology.

In the past, such emotion-charged approaches to the biological fact of reproduction did much to obfuscate the subject; and as a result, much of the array of hormonal, neural, psychological, and social variables that control and insure the successful reproduction of the human species remains even now in Victorian ignorance. But with the recent rash of books and scientific treatises on the subject, some progress has been made in elucidating human reproduction and associated sexual behavior. However, so entrenched are some of our social taboos that the danger still lurks of equating social acceptance of the words with an understanding--all too lacking--of the process to which they refer.

It is precisely the purpose of this book and of the studies that preceded it to elucidate the various aspects of sexual behavior in man, nonhuman primates, and other mammals and to explain, if possible, the mechanisms that control them. Herein are the proceedings of a Conference on Reproductive Behavior held on July 16 and 17, 1973, at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center (ORPRC) in Beaverton, Oregon. The Conference was supported by the Center for Population Research (CPR) of the National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD), and was planned jointly by CPR and ORPRC to be held in association with the third annual

meeting of the Directors of the CPR-supported Population Research Centers and Program Projects. The authors of these articles are leading scientists in a field that covers the entire range of disciplines from neuroendocrinology to human reproductive behavior. They were chosen for their scientific acumen and achievement, the timeliness of their approach, and the thoroughness of their research. The format of the Conference was designed to stimulate discussion among scientists whose collaboration in population research has for too long been curtailed by the disparity of their disciplines and the discreteness of their individual approaches. The articles in this volume are grouped according to the Conference session in which each was presented. The three sessions were: The Central Nervous System and Sexual Behavior, chaired by Julian M. Davidson of the Department of Physiology of Stanford University; Pheromones and Hormones in Reproductive Behavior, chaired by Charles H. Phoenix of the ORPRC; and Behavioral and Social Determinants of Reproductive Behavior, chaired by Norman T. Adler of the University of Pennsylvania Department of Psychology. To conclude the Conference, a special lecture, Human Sexuality and Evolution, was given by the distinguished psychologist Franklin A. Beach, of the University of California in Berkeley; we are much indebted to him for his illuminating presentation.

The primary goal of the Conference was to disseminate new and significant research on reproductive behavior. Another goal was to synthesize a basis for predicting the acceptance, success, and impact of future attempts to regulate fertility and alleviate infertility. The first goal was achieved almost from the outset by the selection of participants who are specialists in population research. Whether and when the second goal will be attained is contingent upon a continuation of the dialogue begun at the Conference between biomedical, behavioral, and social scientists engaged in one common pursuit--population research. The success of this Conference, therefore, like that of any other, can be assured if the initial dialogue thus engendered leads to increased collaboration and coordination of efforts by these scientists and their colleagues.

We have been assisted in the preparation of these proceedings for publication by so many that to try to name them all would be to risk missing a few. Because of our singular indebtedness to them, however, we must mention Sonja Young of the CPR and Rosemary Low, Margaret Barss, Margaret Shininger, Hildegard Peterson, and Linda Cooper of ORPRC.

William Montagna, Ph.D.

March 1974

William A. Sadler, Ph.D.

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