

## **Question in Project:**

FReDA-W2b - Questions on the topics of women's fertility, affective touching behavior, sexual orientation, and transnational families (English Version)

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## **Question Topic:**

Society & social affairs/ Relationships

## **Construct:**

Affective touching behavior (arm around shoulder)

## **Introduction:**

Please look at this picture.

## **Question Text:**

How often have you and your partner touched each other in this way in the last week?

## **Answer Categories:**

Not at all

1 time

2 to 5 times

6 to 10 times

11 to 20 times

More than 20 times

## **Cognitive Techniques:**

Specific Probing, Recall Probing

## **Findings for Question:**

### **Aim of the pretest:**

Questions 6 and 7 were designed to assess how often respondents and their partners had touched each other in this way in the past week and whether this frequency corresponded to their wishes, using an unspecified picture showing a friendly embrace. Cognitive

follow-up questions were used to examine how respondents interpreted the picture, how they determined their answers to question 6, and whether the two questions were correctly related.

### **Findings:**

Table 11 shows the frequency distributions of questions 6 and 7. There was no **item nonresponse** for either question, i.e., all 240 respondents answered both questions. The test persons used the full range of the answer scales for both questions. The frequency distributions of question 6 are slightly left-skewed and of question 7 are significantly left-skewed, i.e., the majority of respondents selected answer categories at the upper end of the answer scale. About one-third of respondents were asked open-ended follow-up questions about questions 6 and 7 (n = 81).

### **How do respondents interpret the picture?**

The majority of respondents (n = 58) interpreted the image as a hug. Of these, eight respondents specified that it was an "affectionate, partnership hug." More often, however, the gesture was understood as a "friendly hug" (n = 21), and six thought it was a "hug while walking." Eight respondents stated that the image showed one person "putting an arm around another's shoulder" without this constituting a hug. The remaining mentions remained rather unspecific and described the gesture as "stroking" or "kissing" (n = 2) or as a general expression of affection, friendship, or love (n = 4). The exact interpretation of the image did not systematically affect response behavior.

### **How do respondents determine their answer to question 6?**

Respondents used different strategies to estimate how often they had hugged their partner in a friendly way in the past week. Again, by far the most common response strategy here was a rough estimate (n = 38):

- *"I estimated that. We touch a lot, in a lot of ways, so twenty times in a week is not a lot."* (TP251)

Twenty respondents oriented their daily routine and explained the occasions on which they put their arm around the other:

- *"I counted at least three situations per day: in the morning to say goodbye or after getting up, in the afternoon to say hello."* (TP382)

### **Do respondents relate their answers to questions 6 and 7 in a meaningful way?**

Of the 240 respondents, 65.8% (n = 158) chose the same answer category to both questions, 30.8% (n = 74) gave a higher value to question 7 than to question 6, that is, that they would have preferred to hug their partner in a friendly way more often, and 3.4% (n = 8) gave a lower value to question 7, expressing that they would have preferred to touch their partner in this way less often.

Those who answered both questions the same way mostly justified this by saying that

their relationship met their expectations and needs in this regard. This was true both of respondents who said they frequently touched in this way and those who did not:

- *"Don't want to be touched by my partner anymore."* (TP408, both question answered 'Not at all')
- *"It's perfectly adequate."* (TP283, both questions answered '2 to 5 times')
- *"Because we touch frequently and I think that frequency is just right, too."* (TP275, both questions answered with 'More than 20 times')

Two respondents stated that the gesture seemed very mate-like to them and they did not feel it was appropriate in the context of their partnership:

- *"In my opinion, this is a mate-like touch and I prefer more intimate touches with my partner."* (TP182, answered both questions with 'Not at all')
- *"Because the touch is not particularly romantic."* (TP406, both questions answered '2 to 5 times')

The respondents who gave a higher value in question 7 than in question 6 all justified their answers by saying that they would have liked more frequent touches of this kind. Various reasons were given for this discrepancy between the actual and desired state, including a lack of time or the basic attitude that more physical closeness should be viewed positively. In doing so, they logically related the two answers to each other:

- *"The first answer [I chose] because it's like that, and the second answer because I would like more."* (TP289)
- *"Because I think we don't get to touch enough in everyday life."* (TP299)

The few respondents who indicated that they would have preferred to hug their partner in a friendly manner less often did not provide evaluable responses when asked why they had given this combination of answers. Thus, it remained unclear whether the respondents' answering behavior reflected their real situation or whether they selected wrong answers by mistake or disinterest.

In summary, it can be stated that the image was understood by the respondents as an embrace or laying your arm around each other. However, the respondents differed in whether this type of touching was typical for a romantic relationship in their eyes. The selection of answers did not cause any problems for the test persons, but most of the test persons estimated the number of this kind of touching in the partnership in the past week (instead of systematically remembering their daily routines, for example). Respondents' explanations for why they selected their particular combination of responses were consistent with their answers.

## **Recommendations:**

Picture: If the picture is to represent a touch that occurs primarily in romantic relationships, the picture should be replaced or specified with words. If this is not the case, the image can be left.

Question: No changes recommended