Dear Alice,

What's the deal with Traumatic Masturbatory Syndrome? Is it real or some sort of hoax?

Thanks,
Worried about TMS

Answer

Dear Worried about TMS,

Although the name itself might bring up a touchy subject, rest assured that Traumatic Masturbatory Syndrome isn't as scary as it sounds. In 1998, Dr. Lawrence Sank proposed a theory of sexual dysfunction called Traumatic Masturbatory Syndrome (TMS). In his journal article, he described the cases of four men who had erectile dysfunction and delayed orgasms (anorgasmia) while having sex with a partner. He claims that these disorders came about because the subjects usually masturbated while lying face down?the men tended to rub their penises against their hand, the surface of the floor, bed, pillow, or whatever they were laying on, in order to ejaculate. Once they were retrained to masturbate laying face up with their penises in their hands, their anorgasmia and erectile dysfunction supposedly became a thing of the past.

Pro-prone proponents of masturbating shouldn't worry about taking this theory lying down. Sank's theory isn't widely recognized in the medical community, and there hasn't been follow-up research to see if his claims are valid. Other researchers have cited that problems with getting and maintaining an erection or ejaculating may be related to more pressing issues, such as how often a guy masturbates. However, because sexual dysfunction can be caused by stressors in a person's emotional, psychological and/or physical well-being, there might be other issues at hand.

Masturbating is healthy and normal, as long as you're not getting hurt and it's not interfering with other aspects of your life. Feel free to enjoy yourself in whatever position you like best! But, if you're having problems enjoying the ride, it may help to try different techniques.

Alice!
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Published date:
Nov 17, 2006
Last reviewed on:
Aug 10, 2007

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