

More Netflix, Less Chill: Millennials Are Having Less Sex Than Gen Xers

By Paige Towers • August 3, 2016 at 5:09pm

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Should you ever misguidedly embark on a game called “Let’s list words that describe Millennials!” with anyone who ages out of that generation, prepare yourself.

‘Entitled!’ ‘Disrespectful!’ and ‘Narcissistic!’ are often the first adjectives to be played. ‘Lazy!’ may follow closely behind — along with looselyconnected examples like, “Well, they spend all their time on Facebook...” In fact, there seems to be a persistent fear that Millennials do nothing but sext, selfie, hook up with strangers and wait for somebody to reward them for a job well done. Yet the reality of young people’s behavior seems to (unsurprisingly) be much more complicated than that — particularly when it comes to sex.

In a recent study published in the

Archives of Sexual Behavior,

researchers from San Diego State University, Florida Atlantic University and Widener University found that an increasing number of millennials may not necessarily be the casual hookup fiends that the media and popular culture portray them to be. That’s right, Millennial naysayers: after analyzing data from the General Social Survey,

which has been collecting data on

Americans’ social behavior for decades,

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researchers found that the number of young people not

engaging in sexual behavior is much higher than past generations.

There's no data linking a decline in amount of sex or the number of sexual partners to young adults who live at home, but we can take a guess and say that 'Netflix and chill' is more Netflix than chill when mom is home.

According to the study, in 2014, 15 percent of 20 to 24-year olds born between 1990 and 1994 reported having no sexual partners after the age of 18. Compared to the Baby Boomer generation, this nada

response to the question of "how much sex you having?" is, well, weirdly high. The General Social Survey found that only 6% of 20 to 24-year olds born between 1965 and 1969 reported having no sexual partners. To be fair, the notion that few young people in the late 60's were donning purity rings instead of mood rings is about as shocking as a

cat knocking shit off a table.

(We see it coming every time.) But in the age of swiping right on Tinder, how is it that the number of young people who abstain from sex is rising?

Before you go making assumptions about the humping tendencies of an entire generation, it's important to note that this study doesn't indicate that all

millennials are increasingly forgoing sex or having less sex than their flower child counterparts. It just means that the number of young people choosing not to have sex at all

— whether that choice is voluntary or, you know (*sigh*) involuntary — has grown. Beyond that, theories for the growth of young people who fall into the “chastity” corner are abundant.

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First off, as cited in the study, the recession may have turned down the collective heat as more young adults are shacking up with their parents. A Pew Research Center report

showed that as of early 2015, 26 percent of adults ages 18 to 34 were living in a family household, despite steady improvements in the job market since 2010. There's no data linking a decline in amount of sex or the number of sexual partners to young adults who live at home, but we can take a guess and say that 'Netflix and chill' is more Netflix than chill when mom is home.

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Furthermore, as stated in a from Florida Atlantic University, the researchers believe there could be a link between Millennials being less sexually active and “more sex education and awareness of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, easy access to pornography because of technology or perhaps even differences in defining what sexual activity is [...]” As Millennials grew up shortly after the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, the fear and highly negative risks associated with ‘free love’ may be affecting young people’s sexual behavior, similar to how turning to the internet on a lonely night instead of a real life human may be an actual behavioral trend at this point — like it or not.

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Lastly, as noted by NYMag,

the quickly falling marriage rate shouldn’t be ignored either.

According to a different

Pew Research study

, 48 percent of the 18 to 32yearolds born in 1965 to 1979 were married. But what, dear friends, is the Millennial marriage rate? As of 2014, the number of married people dropped to just 26 percent for the same age group. Since marriage has traditionally been an outlet for sex (at least in those early years before everything about your spouse — including their face — annoys you), this may be another factor to blame for the change in behavior.

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So whatever the reason — or more likely may be for the sexual shift in Millennials, the results of this survey might prove one thing: Making broad assumptions about the choices, behaviors and beliefs of entire generations of people can easily be labeled as “lazy.” And that’s not a game we’d like to play.

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reasons —