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BC's health research funding agency



#DEBUNKINGDESIRE

Social Media Campaign Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#DebunkingDesire was a social media campaign which sought to debunk myths and raise awareness about low sexual desire in women. The goal for the campaign was to share evidence-based information to create and amplify lasting dialogues with women, their partners, their health care providers, and the public. The campaign developed around a 90 second informational video of the same name, created in partnership with patients and produced by [UBC Studios](#).

The campaign ran for 10 months from November 2019 to September 2020 and was led by Dr. Lori Brotto, a Canada Research Chair in women's sexual health, Professor at the University of British Columbia, clinician, Director of UBC Sexual Health Research, and Executive Director of the Women's Health Research Institute in Vancouver, BC, Canada.



TEAM

Brynn Lavery

Brynn has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from UBC and is the Social Media Coordinator for the #DebunkingDesire campaign and has been managing the UBC Sexual Health Research social media for the past two years. She has worked to disseminate research findings from the team's various studies and understands how important it is to connect researchers with the public in improving sexual health awareness. She oversaw the dissemination of campaign materials on social media and organized events on #DebunkingDesire.



Diana Firican

Diana is a Project Manager, Business Analyst, Certified Coach and a patient partner, where Diana previously participated in a study providing sex education and mindfulness to women. Diana noted that her participation led to a fundamental shift in her attitude and approach regarding sexuality. Through her coaching practice, Diana was able to witness how simple tools and strategies can change lives of individuals, families and communities. Empowered by her personal experience of receiving accurate information about sexual desire and debunking women's sex-related myths, Diana is determined to use her personal experience to ensure that this valuable and life-changing information reaches women around the world. She brought the patient voice and experience to #DebunkingDesire.



Faith Jabs

Faith is a Master's student in the Clinical Psychology program at University British Columbia. Her research examines how sexual motivation influences sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction, as well as attentional processes to sexual stimuli. She also works at UBC Sexual Health Research as a study coordinator on a study that examines the efficacy of two kinds of group therapy for women with Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder. She participated as a trainee on #DebunkingDesire.



Julia O'Loughlin

Julia received her BA (Hons) in Gender and Sexuality Studies and is currently a PhD Candidate in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. Julia's current research projects focus on identifying physiological and psychosocial contributors to women's sexual interest and arousal difficulties and improving intimacy between couples post-prostate cancer treatment. Julia coordinated the study "Mood, Stress, and Sexual Desire in Women" (MODEST) and is a clinician at the West Coast Centre for Sex Therapy. She participated as a trainee on #DebunkingDesire.



Dr. Lori Brotto

Dr. Lori Brotto is a Professor in the UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and a Registered Psychologist. She is the Executive Director of the Women's Health Research Institute at BC Women's Hospital. Dr. Brotto holds a Canada Research Chair in Women's Sexual Health. She is the director of the UBC Sexual Health Research Laboratory where research primarily focuses on advancing the science of psychological and mindfulness-based interventions for women's sexual health. Dr. Brotto is an Associate Editor for the Archives of Sexual Behavior, has over 180 peer-reviewed publications, is passionate about knowledge translation, and as such, is frequently featured in the media on sexual health topics. Her book, *Better Sex Through Mindfulness: How Women Can Cultivate Desire* (Greystone Publishing) is a knowledge translation of her research over the past 15 years demonstrating the benefits of mindfulness for women's sexual concerns and genital pain. She was the lead on #DebunkingDesire.



Melissa Nelson

Melissa is the Communications Coordinator at the Women's Health Research Institute, where she previously managed social media for #ItsNotInYourHead, a social media campaign led by Dr. Brotto. On a daily basis, she creates and curates content for the Institute's various social media channels, website, and newsletter. Melissa has a keen interest in social media and its potential as a tool for social change, and enjoys seeking new ways to leverage these platforms to raise awareness about women's health issues. She oversaw metrics and assisted with event planning for #DebunkingDesire.

Nicole Prestley

Nicole is a Knowledge Translation Manager at the Women's Health Research Institute. Nicole has worked as health care research facilitator and patient partner liaison since 2006. She is passionate about engaging patients in the research and information sharing (knowledge dissemination) processes. Professionally, she is dedicated to accelerating the access to and use of evidence-based information for patient, community, and other knowledge user, audiences. Nicole has formal training from the Knowledge Translation Program at St. Michael's Hospital (Dr. Sharon Straus) and the University of Toronto/SickKids Hospital (Dr. Melanie Barwick). She managed the science of knowledge translation for #DebunkingDesire.



Rayka Kumru

Rayka is a sexologist, consultant and cultural advisor. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Critical Studies in Sexuality from UBC, a Master's Degree in Sexology from Curtin University, and a Master's Degree in Marketing Communication from Istanbul Bilgi University. She works with local and international sexual health & wellness brands and initiatives as a content/project consultant and strategist. Rayka was the International Digital Strategist for #DebunkingDesire.

WHAT IS LOW SEXUAL DESIRE

and why does it need to be debunked?

Up to 40% of women may experience ongoing low sexual desire at some point in their lives. Women of all ages, reproductive stages, ethnicities, cultures, geographies, sexual orientations, and walks of life can experience low desire.

Some of the ways that low desire is manifested are:

- ✓ **Reduced interest in sex¹**
- ✓ **No sexual thoughts**
- ✓ **Avoiding sex**
- ✓ **Reduced pleasure during sex**
- ✓ **Things that used to trigger your arousal are no longer working**
- ✓ **No arousal**

As sex, particularly good sex, becomes a more commonly discussed topic in mainstream media and private households alike, those who are experiencing low sexual desire might feel lonely, broken, and hopeless. Many women who are distressed by their low sexual desire feel as though it cannot be changed or that it's "just who they are," when there are often external factors - such as chronic stress - that can inhibit sexual desire. We developed this campaign to discuss how common low sexual desire is, explain some misconceptions around low desire, and offer evidence-based methods to help improve the stress that often contributes to low desire.

Another important part of the campaign was debunking what low sexual desire isn't -- namely, that it's not the same thing as Asexuality*.

Because a major effort in this campaign was debunking myths and misinformation, we named our campaign #DebunkingDesire.

* What is Asexuality?

Asexuality is a distinct sexual orientation in which a person feels little or no attraction to anyone, or feels attraction only in isolated circumstances with very specific people. Women who experience low desire feel distressed by their lack of desire, whereas Asexual persons are not distressed by their lack of attractions.

To find out more, AVEN is the leading Asexuality information hub. www.asexuality.org

¹ Note that by sex we mean any sexual activity alone or with a partner. This may include penetrative sexual activities, oral sex, and manual stimulation. By sex, we do not just mean intercourse.

JOURNEY TO THE #DEBUNKINGDESIRE CAMPAIGN

The Research

The #DebunkingDesire campaign was strategically planned to share the findings from **MODEST** and **DESIRE**, two large studies on women's sexual desire. Each study was funded by separate Operating Grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

MODEST

The Mood, Stress, and Sexual Desire study, MODEST for short, recruited women who met criteria for clinically low sexual desire, and measured hormone levels (cortisol and DHEA) through saliva samples. This provided a window into whether problems of their stress response systems (otherwise known as hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal cortex dysregulation) contributed to low desire. This study found that women who experienced sexual desire difficulties were more likely than women without desire difficulties to have a dysregulated stress response. This suggests that stress - particularly chronic stress - can directly contribute to problems with sexual desire.

DESIRE

The Discussion and Education for Sexual Interest and Response, or DESIRE for short, evaluated two different psychological treatments for low desire in women: 8-week group mindfulness therapy, and 8-week group sex education. Women in both groups showed significant improvements in their levels of desire and relationship satisfaction, and robust decreases in sexual distress. The experiences of previous DESIRE participants who participated in the #DebunkingDesire video focus group were used to guide the campaign's recommendation for stress-management techniques that help the connection to the present moment.



CIHR **IRSC**
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

Creation of the #DebunkingDesire video

The #DebunkingDesire video was developed in partnership with [UBC Studios](#) to serve as one of our main tools in our Knowledge Translation strategy. The 90-second video was created in consultation with a patient advisory group composed of previous DESIRE study participants.

The video features a woman discussing the ways that low sexual desire causes her personal and relational distress, then moves on to demystify common misconceptions about sexual desire, emphasizing that chronic stress is often a factor that inhibits sexual desire. The video ends with the woman offering strategies like meditation and exercise that could help improve sexual desire, with the final call-to-action urging women to talk to their healthcare provider.



Reach Award

[The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research](#) REACH Program provides a funding award of \$15,000 for teams of researchers and research users to support the dissemination and effective uptake of research evidence to inform and improve further research, practice and policy-making. We were successful in being awarded a MSFHR REACH grant to support our Knowledge Translation campaign focused on disseminating women's sexual health information to the public.

Disseminating the video²

The [#DebunkingDesire video](#) was published on YouTube and publicly released in September 2019, two months prior to the start of the #DebunkingDesire social media campaign. This was done to leverage World Sexual Health Day (annually on September 4th) as a platform to generate attention and interest in the video. Until the beginning of the campaign, the video was housed only on YouTube and the UBC Sexual Health Research (UBC SHR) webpage (www.brottolab.com). After the campaign launched, the video was added to the newly-created #DebunkingDesire website (www.debunkingdesire.com).



The video was one of the primary measures of the campaign's success and was advertised through posts on the UBC SHR social media pages (@ubcshr). Images and quotes from the video were also used in other social media graphics throughout the campaign.

Notably, during the campaign the #DebunkingDesire video won a [Platinum AVA Digital Award](#), which honours excellence in digital creativity, branding, and strategy.

² "Dissemination is the active approach of spreading evidence-based interventions to the target audience via determined channels using planned strategies."

Brownson, R. C., Jacobs, J. A., Tabak, R. G., Hoehner, C. M., & Stamatakis, K. A. (2013). Designing for dissemination among public health researchers: findings from a national survey in the United States. *American journal of public health*, 103(9), 1693–1699. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.301165>

CAMPAIGN GOALS

A major goal of the #DebunkingDesire campaign was to increase reach of our messages and materials. Although we recognize that attitude change and behaviour change are major long-term targets in any information campaign, we agreed at the outset that reach would be our primary measure of success. In other words, we sought to share the evidence-based messages about women's sexual desire as broadly as possible.

In addition to reach, we identified four key metrics to evaluate our efforts: URL clicks, hashtag clicks, quiz completion rate, and metrics associated with ads and podcasts. These metrics were selected as they most clearly suggested behaviour change. That is, we not only reached users with our content, but compelled them to take some sort of action.

URL Clicks

URL clicks refer to the number of times users clicked links that directed them to campaign content (often DebunkingDesire.com or our YouTube video).

Hashtag Clicks

Content on social media was aggregated using the hashtag #DebunkingDesire. This metric therefore demonstrates an interest to learn more about the campaign or to seek similar information.

Quiz Completion

In partnership with Traction Creative Communications, we created a 5-item True or False quiz to debunk some common myths about sexual desire. Our quiz provided users the opportunity to test their knowledge about women's sexual desire, and provided them with evidence-based information after they selected each answer.

Ads*

We ran an ad campaign for 25 days using Facebook's built-in marketing tools. Ads were delivered to users on Instagram and Facebook and led to our YouTube video. In studying the metrics provided by Facebook, Google, and YouTube's analytics platforms, we were able to see clear trends in users' engagement in the time-frame we ran our ads (i.e., users who clicked from Facebook through to the YouTube video, and then from YouTube through to the website). The ads were also the single largest contributor to our YouTube video traffic, suggesting that this was another highly effective strategy.

* Should you purchase ads?

We paid \$374 for 25 days' worth of ads using Facebook's built-in marketing tools.

In the days our ads ran we generated 2334 views on our YouTube video and 1107 users visited our website. Additionally, during this time period we had 544 users visit the page on our site that housed our quiz, and 218 users clicked through to our resources page.

Ad metrics:

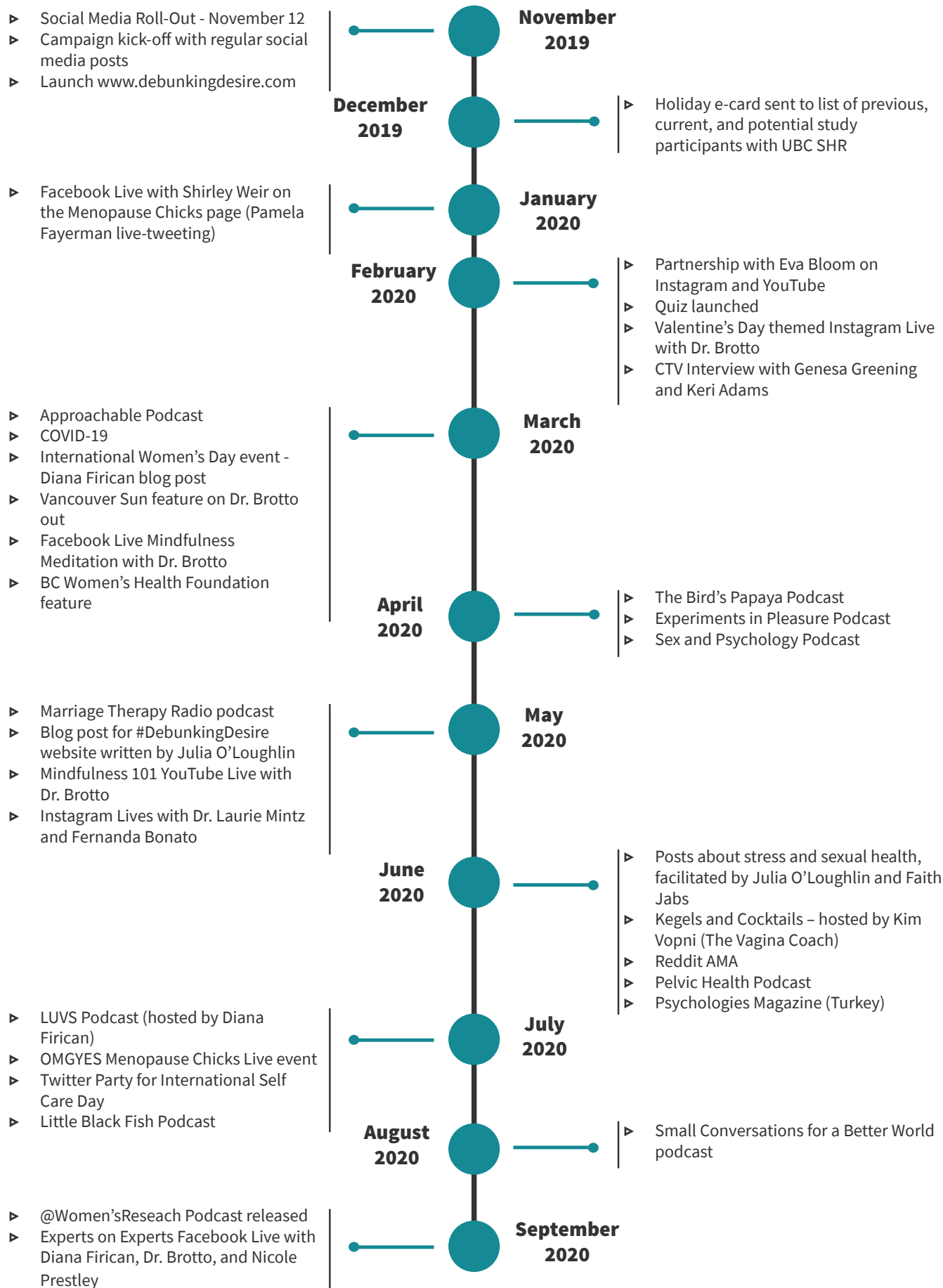
- ▶ 2.7k URL Clicks
- ▶ 59.6k users reached

CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

The team created a series of strategically planned activities and also leveraged opportunistic strategies presented to us as the campaign built traction. Certain external factors, like the COVID-19 pandemic, prompted us to pivot activities throughout the campaign.

Planned	Executed
Design a Social Media Toolkit for influencers.	Designed a Social Media Toolkit that was sent to influencers and stakeholders and was housed on the #DebunkingDesire website. The Toolkit included information about low sexual desire and the campaign; a list of graphics and tweets created for influencers to post about the campaign; and a list of resources on sexual health and desire.
Publish 2-3 original posts per week on the UBC Sexual Health Research's social media pages.	Published 3 original posts per week on UBC Sexual Health Research's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages. Posts were accompanied by unique graphics or videos taken from the #DebunkingDesire video or used to promote live events throughout the campaign.
Create original content from the #DebunkingDesire video.	Created original content from the #DebunkingDesire video using the design elements, stills, and quotes to disseminate through social media.
Live Twitter Q&A with Dr. Brotto discussing campaign.	Worked with our Research Trainees to create an educational blog post for the #DebunkingDesire website, which was then translated into an infographic Instagram and Facebook Post.
Attend the Canadian Sex Research Forum, and other conferences such as Society for Obstetrics and Gynaecologists and International Academy of Sex Research as a way to disseminate campaign information.	Featured in a presentation at the International Academy of Sex Research by Research Trainee Julia O'Loughlin. In addition, appeared on 12+ podcasts where Dr. Brotto, and/or other members of the team, discussed low sexual desire and the campaign to a diverse range of audiences.
Create a quiz debunking 5 common myths about sexual desire with Traction Creative Communications.	Collaborated on a quiz with Traction Creative Communications that addressed some common myths and misconceptions about sexual desire, which over 2,000 users completed.
Hold regular team meetings to discuss the metrics of the campaign.	Held regular team meetings to discuss updated campaign social media metrics, review our timeline, and solicited ideas for future campaign activities.
Host live events across UBC SHR's social media platforms and align with awareness days to increase reach.	Hosted several live events across social media platforms. These events usually aligned with awareness days and featured Dr. Brotto and other guests discussing various aspects of sexual desire and women's health.
Create a website to hold all campaign information.	Developed a website using Wix to serve as a hub for all campaign educational materials, events, and media appearances for users to readily access throughout the campaign.
Contact a previous participants from one of our studies to contribute to the campaign as a Patient Partner.	Leveraged the expertise and lived experience of our Patient Partner to create a blog post for International Women's Day centered on her experiences and recommendations for low sexual desire.

Campaign Timeline: November 2019 - September 2020



SOCIAL ACCOUNTS

DebunkingDesire.com

Our #DebunkingDesire website was created through Wix by Rayka Kumru. The website hosted the #DebunkingDesire video, quiz, social media toolkit, links to media appearances, and team blog posts.

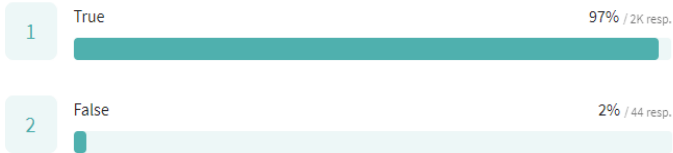
The #DebunkingDesire YouTube video was initially embedded on the homepage of the website, but was changed to pop up shortly after a user arrived at the page. While this was meant to draw interest to the video right away, we did not find that this method translated into increased views on the video when we compared website traffic by date to video views. This indicated that visitors to the website likely clicked away from the video soon as it popped up on their screen.

Website metrics:

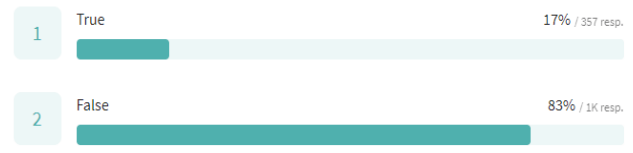
- ▶ 7.9k users
- ▶ 110 countries
- ▶ 20k page views



It's normal for sexual desire to fluctuate over time.



Feeling stressed should not interfere with my sexual desire.



Quiz

Our quiz, which debunked 5 common myths about low sexual desire, was one of the most visited pages on our website. Of the 3119 users that viewed the quiz page, 2060 users fully completed the quiz, showing a completion rate of 66%. According to the quiz results, the most commonly misunderstood myth was the first question in the quiz: “Feeling stressed should not interfere with my sexual desire.” 17% of users answered “True” to this question when it is, in fact, false. Our campaign focused heavily on debunking this myth which the quiz results reinforced as being a worthwhile area of focus.

- ▶ 2060 respondents
- ▶ 3119 users visited the page on the website

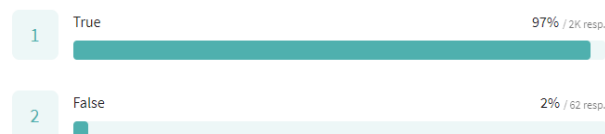
Feeling low sexual desire means that I'm not attracted to or don't love my partner anymore.



There is a “normal” amount of sex that someone should be having.



There are ways that sexual desire can be improved without taking medications.



Instagram

@ubcshr

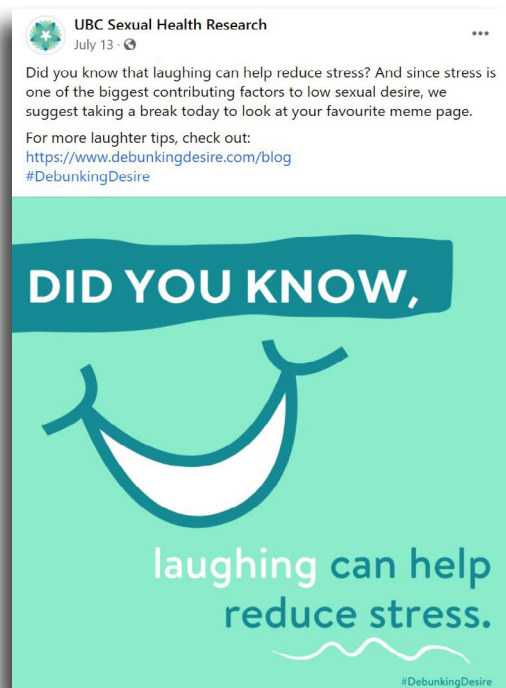
- ▶ 49.1k impressions
- ▶ 2.3k likes
- ▶ 173 URL clicks
- ▶ 201 bookmarks
- ▶ 213 DMs
- ▶ 54 follows



Facebook

ubcshr

- ▶ 35k users reached
- ▶ 38.4k impressions
- ▶ 2.2k engagements



YouTube

UBCSexualHealthResearch

The #DebunkingDesire video was published through the UBC Sexual Health Research YouTube channel, alongside other campaign-related videos.

- ▶ 3.5k views
- ▶ 0:54 average duration viewed

Twitter

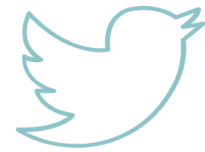
@ubcshr

- ▶ 185.3k impressions
- ▶ 5.2k engagements
- ▶ 61 hashtag clicks
- ▶ 457 URL clicks
- ▶ 39 follows
- ▶ 2.4k media engagements



EVENTS

Over this 10-month campaign, the team hosted 7 events across 5 social media platforms, and collaborated on several more with influencers and other health advocates. Each event had a different theme, and we experimented with hosting the events at different times of day. We saw varied levels of success with each event.



Twitter

International Self-Care Day Twitter party

For International Self-Care day, the team hosted a Twitter Party on the UBC SHR Twitter page. The party was intended to create conversation around low sexual desire and to suggest that practicing self-care can help lower stress which in turn can increase sexual desire. We created five prompts to release over a one-hour period, and those who participated were entered into a draw to win one of five \$100 VISA gift cards.

Even with attractive prizes and prompts for easier conversation, we found it difficult to engage participants. Outside of our team members, we only had twelve users contribute to the party, and of those twelve users, three were suspected to be bots or duplicate accounts, which was against our contest rules.

There are several suspected factors that contributed to the lack of participation in our Twitter Party. The event took place between 9-10am PST, which for many within BC is an inopportune time due to it falling within traditional working hours and potentially a busy time for those with childcare responsibilities, particularly with the increase in work from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, we did not engage any influencers to participate in or bring awareness to the Twitter Party in the days leading up to it. Since our social media accounts have a smaller following, we weren't able to reach as wide of a range of people without the contributions of influencers.



Reddit

Reddit r/TwoXChromosomes AMA

- ▶ In June, Dr. Brotto and Julia O'Loughlin, one of the campaign's Research Trainees, participated in an AMA* on the r/TwoXChromosomes subreddit, which is a community focused on women's experiences.
- ▶ 62 comments
- ▶ 333 upvotes

* What is an AMA?

“AMA” stands for “Ask Me Anything” and is a popular type of post content on the website Reddit. These AMA posts allow experts, celebrities, and others with special stories to engage directly with the Reddit community through being asked questions by the community. AMA's are an excellent way to engage directly with your audience, particularly because you can host an AMA on any subreddit (community based on a topic) allowing for better targeting of your content.



Facebook

We held the most events over Facebook, as we found the greatest user engagement with those events.

Menopause and Sexual Desire with Menopause Chicks Community

- ▶ Dr. Brotto was a guest on the Menopause Chicks Private Community Facebook page, where she and Shirley Weir discussed the intersects of menopause and sexual health with the Menopause Chicks audience.

Mindfulness Meditation

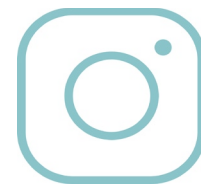
- ▶ At the beginning of the pandemic, when stress levels were at their highest, Dr. Brotto conducted a live 30-minute mindfulness meditation that was open to the public and could be referred back to for future use.
- ▶ 26 peak live viewers
- ▶ 576 users reached

Experts on Experts with Diana Firican and Nicole Prestley

- ▶ Our final event of the campaign was a dialogue between Diana Firican and Dr. Brotto, moderated by Nicole Prestley, our Knowledge Translation (KT) Expert, to discuss their experiences with sex research and a KT campaign from two different levels of expertise.
- ▶ 9 peak live viewers
- ▶ 479 users reached

OMGYES with Shirley Weir and Rayka Kumru

- ▶ While the OMGYES event did not take place on Facebook, it was advertised heavily on the Menopause Chicks Facebook Page and the majority of attendees were from the community. Dr. Brotto and Rayka Kumru were joined by Shirley to discuss sexual desire, orgasms, and sexual health among menopausal women.



Instagram

Valentine's Day Instagram Live

- ▶ Dr. Brotto went live on the UBC SHR Instagram page to answer common questions around relationships, sex, and Valentine's Day pressures.
- ▶ 28 people tuned in
- ▶ 12 people max viewed at any one point

Dr. Brotto as a guest on other Instagram Lives

- ▶ Over the course of the campaign, Dr. Brotto appeared on several other sexual health accounts' Instagram Lives. While conversing with the hosts, Dr. Brotto would often discuss the work the campaign was doing and reference the website.



YouTube

Live Mindfulness 101

- ▶ Dr. Brotto appeared on our UBC SHR YouTube channel to break down mindfulness for those looking to try it, and answered some frequently asked questions about mindfulness.
- ▶ 9 peak live viewers
- ▶ 479 users reached

While some events led to an increase in visitors to our #DebunkingDesire website, we found that overall, without the contributions from influencers, events were not always worth the time, effort, and funds they required. Other methods of awareness, like podcasts and ads, were deemed to be much more fruitful.

INFLUENCERS



Eva Bloom

Eva has created a brand as a Canadian LGBTQ2IA+ sexual health researcher and educator with a following on YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. We approached Eva because she had a personal connection with the team through the Canadian Sex Research Forum, and her online brand had a strong alignment with our vision for the campaign. In the week leading up to Sexual and Reproductive Health Week, Eva released a YouTube video discussing low sexual desire and debunking some common myths. She also posted several times to her Instagram feed and stories advertising the campaign and discussing low sexual desire, and advertised our Valentine's Day Instagram Live event.



Shirley Weir

Shirley has created a massive online community titled Menopause Chicks to support women going through menopausal changes. Shirley is not only an influencer but a strong advocate for evidence-based education on women's health, and fills her social spaces with informative materials and frequently hosts experts on her pages. Dr. Brotto has a close working relationship with Shirley, as she is a community partner with the Women's Health Research Institute and regularly collaborates on public events. Shirley hosted the first event of the campaign, a Facebook Live on her Menopause Chicks private Facebook page, discussing the intersections of low sexual desire and menopause with Dr. Brotto. Shirley went above and beyond her influencer contract by frequently posting about the event, the #DebunkingDesire campaign, and Dr. Brotto.



Pamela Fayerman

Pamela Fayerman is a freelance health journalist in BC who often writes articles for The Vancouver Sun. She frequently live-tweets health briefings in Vancouver on her Twitter account @MedicineMatters. Pamela held a smaller role as an influencer for #DebunkingDesire, as an attendee of the Menopause Chicks Facebook Live event and live-tweeted vital information to her Twitter following.



* What is an influencer?

Influencers are people who have large followings on social media, and whose “pre-existing presence ... makes them a useful launching pad for brands in search of credibility” (<https://sproutsocial.com/glossary/influencer/>).

For our campaign we partnered with three influencers who each had a unique presence on social media: Eva Bloom, whose audience skews younger and whose content focuses on sexual health; Shirley Weir, whose content and primary audience is focused on the perimenopausal period; and Pamela Fayerman, who is a local health journalist known and credible figure that people throughout the province look to for evidence-based information.

In selecting our influencers, we wanted to ensure we were well-positioned to reach different demographics, and that they were known for facilitating open and honest conversations around women’s health.

Metrics from all Influencers*

Twitter

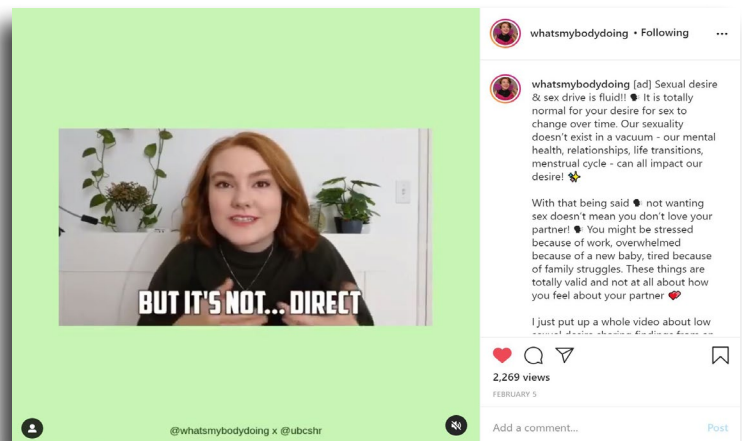
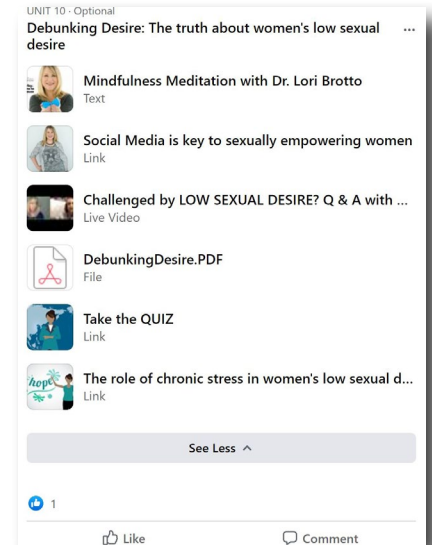
- ▶ 18.4k views

Instagram

- ▶ 23.7k Impressions
- ▶ 937 Likes
- ▶ 119 Bookmarks
- ▶ 46 shares

Youtube

- ▶ 11.9k Impressions
- ▶ 696 Engagements
- ▶ 73 URL clicks
- ▶ 136 Likes
- ▶ 30 Retweets



TEAM EFFORTS

Noticeable Impact in Turkey and Romania

While we recruited the help of various influencers to spread awareness about #DebunkingDesire, we also encouraged our team members to promote the campaign among their own networks. We were able to measure this particularly through two team members, Rayka Kumru and Diana Firican.

Through analyzing the countries reached by the campaign we were able to see that the targeted efforts of these two members put Turkey and Romania (countries to which these team members have personal connections) in the top 3 countries reached through our website and YouTube page. Rayka's posts about the campaign also lead to spikes in visitors to our website and social media pages.



Dr. Brotto's Contributions

Dr. Brotto also readily contributed her time and expertise to the campaign's live events and media appearances. As Dr. Brotto was often the featured speaker for these events, we were able to leverage quotes, images, and videos were taken from them to promote the campaign.

Dr. Brotto is also a well-respected member of her field who regularly receives international media recognition for her research efforts. During the campaign period, she used these interviews as opportunities to promote the campaign.

✓ **Our team shared content to four Facebook groups**

✓ **On Instagram, our team's content generated:**

- ▶ 4.3k likes
- ▶ 386 shares
- ▶ 783 bookmarks



PODCASTS

By tracking the number and reach of our podcasts where #DebunkingDesire made an appearance, this allowed us to get a glimpse of more active engagement with our campaign. Arguably, having a message about the campaign show up on one's social media feed is a more passive exposure to the campaign, whereas podcasting requires behavioural involvement to click and listen!

A strategy that proved to be successful for this campaign was collaborating with podcasts. To initiate these opportunities, our team both reached out to influential Canadian podcasters, such as Samantha Ravndahl and Alyssa Anderson of [Approachable Podcast](#) and Sarah Nicole Landry of [The Papaya Podcast](#), and facilitated requests for Dr. Brotto to appear on podcasts like [The Pelvic Health Podcast](#), [Sexy Marriage Radio](#), [LUVS Podcast](#), [Small Conversations for a Better World Podcast](#), [Marriage Therapy Radio](#), [The Little Black Fish Podcast](#), [Experiments in Pleasure Podcast](#), [@WomensResearch Podcast](#), and [The Sex and Psychology Podcast](#).

There were several important takeaways from this strategy, the first of which being that all of Dr. Brotto's appearances were free. This alleviated our influencer and advertising budget and is the result of these collaborations being mutually beneficial in nature. Podcasts are often in search of guests - especially content experts - to generate content or to add credibility to their conversations. In hosting Dr. Brotto, podcasts were able to promote our campaign leading to increased exposure for our content, while the podcasts received exposure to a new audience through the UBC SHR channels.

In selecting podcasts to collaborate with, we considered factors like listener demographics, alignment of values between the podcast and campaign, and potential reach based on estimated audience size.

Metrics from Podcasts

Collecting consistent metrics from these collaborations proved to be more difficult than initially anticipated. First, different podcasters had access to a various range of metrics, which made evaluating these efforts throughout the campaign challenging. For instance, some had access to a total number of episode plays, others downloads; some had access to comprehensive demographic information, and others still had access to both streaming information and views on YouTube where they cross-posted their content. Second, since we had not specified before the episodes aired that we wanted access to metrics for any promotional posts, we do not have a full picture of the impact these collaborations made on important metrics like reach or engagement.

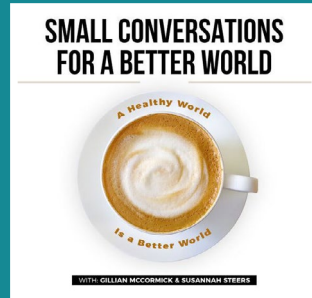
In future campaigns, if funds were allocated to podcasting collaborations, prioritizing this request for comprehensive metrics would be an important part of any formal contract when initially approaching podcasters. As these podcasts' support for #DebunkingDesire was offered in kind, we did not feel it was appropriate to request metrics of this nature due to the added labour and intrusion on their projects.

- ▶ 154.7k downloads/plays across all 11 podcasts





Experiments in Pleasure Podcast



Small Conversations for a Better World Podcast



The Pelvic Health Podcast



The Papaya Podcast



The LUVS Podcast



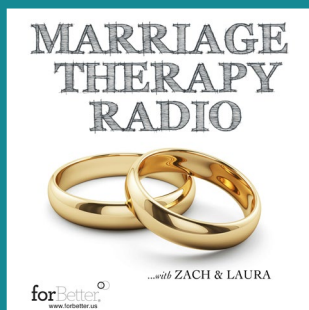
The Approachable Podcast



Sex and Psychology Podcast



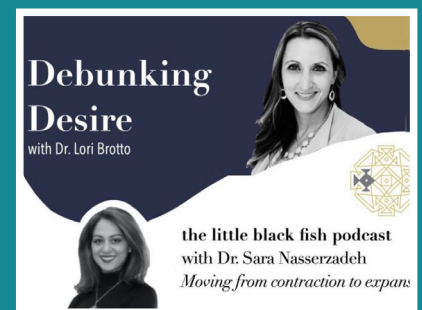
@WomensResearch Podcast



Marriage Therapy Radio



Sexy Marriage Radio



The Little Black Fish Podcast



EXTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

COVID-19 Pandemic

Halfway into the campaign, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world. For the majority of the month of March 2020 and leading into April, the topic overwhelmed social media as collective anxiety about the new virus was at an all-time high. Our campaign had to adjust its content and planned events to reflect the current state of the world.

Since March 2020, all planned in-person events were cancelled. In place of planned in-person conferences to spread awareness, we instead planned more social media live events to combine the focus of #DebunkingDesire with pandemic anxieties. This took form in our Facebook Live Mindfulness Meditation with Dr. Brotto, as well our YouTube Live Mindfulness 101. Our social media content began to not only include more information about how stress due to the pandemic could impact sexual desire and some ways to help manage stress at-home, but also spoke about how mindfulness can have mental-health benefits outside of just improving sexual desire.

Black Lives Matter Movement

In June 2020, social media erupted with calls for justice against police brutality and systemic racism, particularly in North America. Public attention online shifted quickly toward education and awareness on these subjects, and UBC Sexual Health Research's social media accounts similarly shifted their content to join these important conversations. As a result, UBC SHR did not post #DebunkingDesire content for the month of June. Attention to the movement also brought up important questions about the diversity within our own team and those we collaborate with, which we valued as critical learning opportunity for future campaigns.

LESSONS LEARNED

Paid articles

In the campaign's third month, the team chose to feature the campaign in a local newspaper The Vancouver Sun for their Women in Leadership feature on International Women's Day 2020. The article featured Dr. Brotto and her achievements as a woman in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). The team paid \$1500 for the full page spread in the print version of the newspaper, and an accompanying web story in a special section of The Vancouver Sun website.

This feature had two considerations. The print copy began with large text disclosing the article was an advertisement and the web copy was available only in a section that specified it was sponsored content. While our agreement with the publication stated that the piece would say it was promoted by the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, the final copy ended up looking differently than we had anticipated because we were unable to see what it would look like before it was published.

The second consideration was that we were unable to collect metrics for these print and website articles. Since the feature was published in a newspaper, which is a form of traditional media, we were unable to directly measure how many people read the piece or visited our website as a result of reading it. The piece mentioned our #DebunkingDesire campaign but did not include our website URL, which means that interested readers would have needed to search for the campaign independently.

Community

While the campaign did an excellent job at generating impressions and reach, something that could be built out further is a strategy to promote lasting engagement with our content. The campaign content was disseminated primarily through UBC Sexual Health Research's social media pages, which regularly share content outside the scope of our campaign's focus (i.e., managing stress to help improve low desire). This meant that users who discovered #DebunkingDesire and the UBC SHR social media pages through the campaign are now left without a regular source of information on low sexual desire. Similarly, the #DebunkingDesire website, while effective in acting as an information hub during the campaign, will stagnate unless regular effort is made to keep it active.

#DebunkingDesire video on our website

A few weeks into the campaign Rayka Kumru amended the website to have the video appear on the homepage as a popup rather than a box that the website visitor would click. This was in an effort to draw attention to the video, however when we looked at the metrics from our website's homepage and compared the views to the video, we saw that those who visited the website largely did not choose to watch the video.



SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, we believe the #DebunkingDesire campaign was successful with its goal of building awareness of low sexual desire in women. Thanks to our team's flexibility and creativity, we were able to pursue activities outside the scope of our original plan that led to significant impacts on our overall reach and engagement. In total, our team's efforts alone generated over 304.9k impressions and reached 110 countries around the world.

Based on our learnings, we have three recommendations for those pursuing future MSFHR Reach campaigns:

1. Collaborate with Patient Partners and Influencers on campaigns

Throughout our campaign, we engaged with both our Patient Partner and influencers whose followings fit our target audiences. Engaging with our Patient Partner's lived experience allowed us to shape our content to be the most applicable to our target audience. The influencers we worked with were able to amplify the reach of this content so that it was seen by more women who might resonate with it.

2. Drive reach by paying for social media ads

A strategy we had not originally planned on implementing was paid social media advertisements. After researching several options for ads we decided to use Facebook. We paid a nominal fee of \$374 to run the ad, which directed viewers to our YouTube video. In the 25 days that it ran, the views on our video increased by over 200%. The ad was incredibly successful in helping us reach our campaign goals.

3. Consider pursuing podcasts to disseminate your message

When we were initially planning the campaign we had not considered contacting podcasts to help us share our messages. As we researched potential influencers to collaborate with, we landed on several podcasts we felt strongly aligned with our campaign values, and approached them to request paid promotion. We found a mutually beneficial relationship as hosts were willing to offer in-kind support to host Dr. Brotto, who brought an interesting topic and expertise to the table.

NEXT STEPS

Although the campaign is over, we have grown an audience on our social media platforms who want to learn more about low sexual desire. We plan to continue sharing information about sexual desire with our followers, especially as we will be publishing the results of the DESIRE study in the coming months. The podcasts, videos, events, blog posts, and data we have compiled over the past year will be recycled or used to inform new content to continue the conversation about low sexual desire.

Among our strategies to keep this conversation alive is to look back on the results of our quiz, which reveal some of the more prominent myths about sexual desire. We also plan to reach out to some new and familiar podcasts as platforms for Dr. Brotto and other team members to share their results and stories, and to keep the #DebunkingDesire website updated with new publications, media appearances, and resources.

In future, we would also like to broaden this conversation to include healthcare providers. Since many women consult their healthcare providers for the most up-to-date information on mental and physical health, equipping therapists, family doctors, and other healthcare providers with evidence and resources about low sexual desire could help legitimize the experience of low sexual desire .

To help bring these plans to fruition we intend to apply for future funding opportunities through the MSFHR.



GLOSSARY

Influencer

- ▶ a person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by promoting or recommending the items on social media

Reach

- ▶ the total number of people who saw our content

Impressions

- ▶ are the number of times our content was displayed to viewers, no matter if it was clicked or not

Engagement

- ▶ measures how our audience interacts with our content
- ▶ this varies across social media platforms, with each platform having different metrics to measure user engagements (e.g., Facebook: likes, shares, comments)

Media engagement

- ▶ how many times people engaged with the media (i.e. pictures or videos)

Upvote

- ▶ Used to show that users “like” or agree with a post on the social media platform Reddit



The #DebunkingDesire campaign was funded by the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR), which helps develop, retain and recruit the talented people whose research improves the health of British Columbians, addresses health system priorities, creates jobs and adds to the knowledge economy. The #DebunkingDesire team is grateful to MSFHR for funding the campaign.

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