

**Dry-sex Practices in the Afro-Surinamese Population:
A Brief Comparative Analysis**

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Brief Comparative Analysis of Dry-sex Practices in the Afro-Surinamese Population

Amongst the people of the Republic of Suriname, a common practice for Afro-Surinamese women is the act of “Dry-sex”. Dry-sex is the process of artificially drying the vagina, often through herbal steam-baths, with the intention of tightening the vaginal muscles. Using a blend of local herbs, a bath is steeped and boiled such that a cloud of steam is created. Sitting along the edge of the steam bath, the women expose their genitalia to the steam to begin the drying process. The resultant vaginal tissue is notably dryer and tighter, yet far more brittle in terms of interaction; damage during sex is significantly increased. Amongst male populations, a notable increase in sexual pleasure from dry-sex is reported, with the practice used as a way of decreasing cheating in male partners. It is believed that having a tighter vagina will reduce the number of other mates their male sexual partners have, at a seeming detriment to the women’s own sexual pleasure.

Alongside the increase in male sexual arousal, this practice is seen a method of cleaning one's genitals. Amongst the Afro-Surinamese being clean is an incredibly important point of pride, and the use of herbal-steam baths is viewed as a way of reaching this cleanliness. This practice is especially common amongst menstruating women and those who have recently given birth, both of which have genitals viewed as “unclean” in their culture.

Contrastingly instead of being a desirable vaginal condition, dryness is often considered a medical issue within the dominant culture of Canada. A woman whose vagina is not able to self-lubricate may be diagnosed with conditions such as medical Vaginal Dryness (VD) or Vaginal Atrophy, and prescribed lubricants for sexual intercourse. Even amongst the population of women who can self-lubricate, additional lubrication is highly encouraged in Canada. For example throughout its sexual information pages, the Government of Canada makes many suggestions of additional lubrication on already-lubricated condoms to reduce the chances of condom-breakage.

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