

NIH-Backed Study Examined Effects of Penis Size in Gay Community



National Institutes of HealthAP

The federal government helped fund a study that examined what effect a gay man's penis size has on his sex life and general well-being.

The study was among several backed by the [National Institutes of Health](#) that have come under scrutiny from a group claiming the agency is wasting valuable tax dollars at a time when the country is trying to control its debt. This particular research resulted in a 2009 report titled, "The Association Between Penis Size and Sexual Health Among Men Who Have Sex with Men."

The study reported, among its findings, that gay men with "below average penises" were more likely to assume a "bottom" sexual position, while those with "above average penises" were more likely to assume a "top" sexual position. Those with average penises identified themselves as "versatile" in the bedroom.

Though it's difficult to trace exactly how much federal funding went to the project, the study was one of many linked to an \$899,769 grant in 2006. The grant was administered by NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse, and went first to a group called Public Health Solutions and a researcher with the National Development and Research Institutes before going to individual researchers.

Those researchers then compiled data from a survey of more than 1,000 gay and bisexual men at events in New York City for the gay community.

"This country is broke and we cannot spend money on this kind of stuff," said Andrea Lafferty, president of the Traditional Values Coalition, which drew attention to the report as part of a six-month investigation into NIH grants for examples of "institutional waste."

"We're spending money on wacky stuff," Lafferty said.

But one of the researchers involved with the report told FoxNews.com that NIH funding was only used to help "analyze and write up" data that had already been collected without the use of taxpayer funds.

"The data were not collected using taxpayer funds," Jeffrey Parsons, a professor with Hunter College, said in an email. "NIH funds were not used to measure anyone's penis size."

"This study was funded by the Hunter College Center for HIV / AIDS Education Studies and Training," the National Institutes of Health said. "Dr. Christian Grov was supported as a postdoctoral research fellow at the time the research was conducted by a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-funded training grant."

Parsons took issue with Lafferty's description of the grant.

A Traditional Values Coalition release stated that at least \$9.4 million went to a 10-year study that included the penis-size research -- but Parsons said it appears that references a much broader "post-doctoral training program" of which the penis-study funding was a "small" part.

Other studies stemming from the same 2006 grant examined topics ranging from the drug market in Houston following Hurricane Katrina to the connection between contraceptives and STD prevention in [Madagascar](#).

"To suggest that 9.4 million dollars was spent to study penis sizes is factually inaccurate and simply designed to create news," Parsons wrote.

The study, which last year was published in the Archives of Sexual Behavior, claimed there previously had been "little research among men who have sex with men assessing the association between penis size and socio-sexual health."

The study found that men with larger penises were more likely to contract certain [sexually transmitted diseases](#). It also found that men with above-average penises enjoyed more satisfaction with their lifestyle.

The original survey had a relatively high response rate -- with 83 percent of those approached agreeing to participate. "As an incentive, those who completed the survey were given a voucher for free admission to a movie," the study said.

Lafferty's group drew attention to several other studies Monday that it claimed were "bizarre" in the current fiscal climate. Among them was one that asked individuals to "mail in their toenails" to measure "toenail nicotine," according to the values coalition.

"The president has said he's going to hunt down waste. Well, I'm going to give it to him on a platter," Lafferty said.