

The Fickleness of Teenage Sexual Orientation

Adolescent change

Some of the most remarkable data on change is in adolescents. This is taken from a very large USA ADD-Health survey—Savin-Williams and Ream (2007).²⁵

We present the data in visual form to make them easier to follow. In the Figures below, black represents attraction to the opposite sex only, medium grey represents those who were attracted to both sexes, and

light grey those attracted to the same sex only. The diagram shows the changes in attraction in those three categories between ages 16 and 17. The survey used the term “romantic attraction” in its questions about attraction to one sex or the other, but we shall shorten it to “attraction.”

In the first diagram below (**Figure 36**), the bar on the left represents all males in the sample who were OSA at the age of 16. The three bars to the right show the percentage ending up in one of the three attraction classes a year later at age 17. The answers do not always add up to the height of the left-hand bar, because 15% of respondents who had romantic attraction in the first year, said they had none towards either sex in the second. Sometimes they did not answer the question at all.

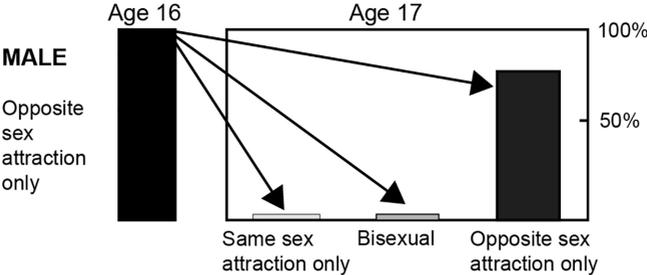


Figure 36: Male Opposite sex attraction

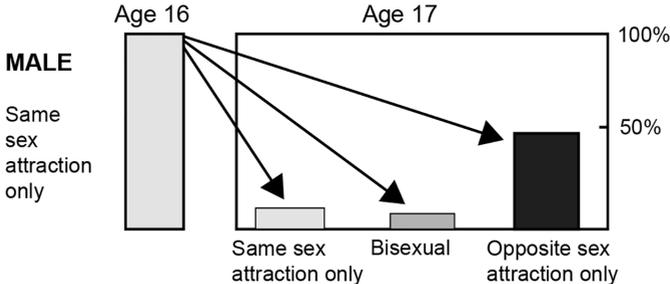


Figure 37: Male same sex attraction

The results for OSA females in Figures 36 and 39 were almost identical to the male figures, so are not shown.

For those (many fewer) who had attractions only towards the same sex, we see something interesting in **Figure 37**. A very small percentage remain attracted exclusively to the same sex, but the greatest proportion by far has no longer any attraction to the same sex but experiences only attraction to the opposite sex. Same-sex attraction ceases in the course of a single year, or changes to an opposite sex attraction or perhaps these are transient attractions and there are no compatible individuals of the same sex available at age 17.

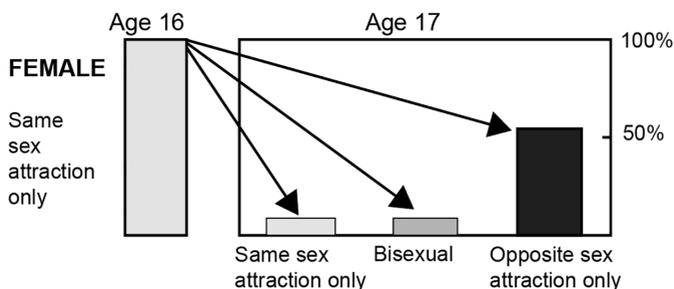


Figure 38: Female same sex attraction

Again, in **Figure 38** we see considerable change from exclusive same-sex attraction to exclusive opposite-sex attraction.

There was no intervention to bring about any changes between ages 16 and 17. It seems maturation or chance was mainly responsible **Figures 39-41** are data for ages 17-22.

This again confirms that exclusive opposite sex attraction persists, and for both sexes.

This again confirms that those who are attracted only to the same sex initially, in the usual course of events will mostly end exclusively attracted to the opposite sex. A surprisingly small percentage of those same-sex attracted in adolescence remain that way.

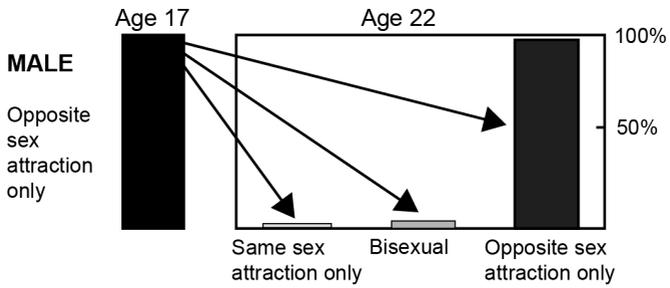


Figure 39: Male opposite sex attraction, 17-22 years

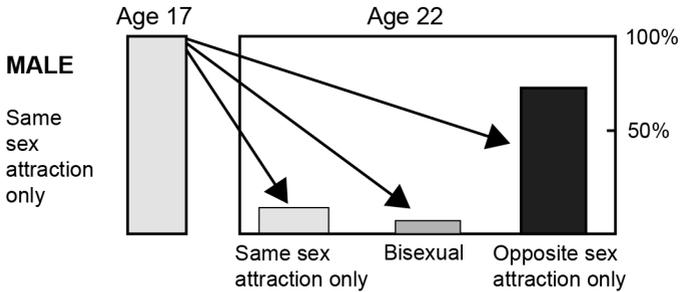


Figure 40: Male same sex attraction, 17-22 years

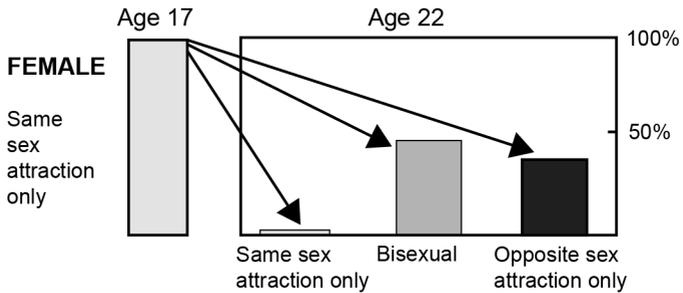


Figure 41: Female same sex attraction, 17-22 years

The pattern for females is that only a very few stay exclusively same-sex attracted long term. Many become bisexual, i.e., they acquire an attraction to the opposite sex as well.

If an initial attraction was opposite sex, but a succeeding one was same-sex, depression increased.⁹⁰

The conclusion of this is that there is a huge amount of change in attraction with time, certainly over five years, but even over as short a period as a year. These changes are profound, even compared with those for adults.

Are these (largely teenage) feelings real? Are they true SSA? It could easily be argued that whether OSA or SSA they not the mature form of these attractions. However, they are certainly real enough to trigger suicide when the person is rejected by their special friend, particularly if the attraction is SSA or bisexual.

From the above data for 16-17-year-olds, it is possible to estimate the degree of change from bi- or SSA, compared with the degree of change from OSA. Making the mathematical assumption that those with missing data will not affect the results, it is possible to calculate how much more likely it is that a homosexual orientation will become heterosexual than the reverse.

Men: SSA compared with OSA. 38x more likely

Bi/OSA. 57x as likely

Women: SSA compared with OSA. 28.9x more likely

Bi/OSA. 29.8x more likely

To err on the conservative side, Bisexual or Exclusive SSA is at least 25x as likely to change as OSA. (That is, 16-year-olds saying they have an SSA or Bi-attraction are 25 times more likely to change towards heterosexuality at the age of 17 than those with a heterosexual orientation are likely to change towards bisexuality or homosexuality.) This is comparable to, but even higher than, the figures derived earlier in this chapter from other papers.

Most teenagers will change from SSA. In fact, in the 16 to 17 year age group, 98% will move from homosexuality and bisexuality towards heterosexuality, perhaps experiencing some or exclusive opposite sex attraction for the first time.

Most teenagers thinking they are gay/lesbian/bi and will be for the rest of their life, will in fact probably be different the following year. It is therefore totally irresponsible, and flatly contradicted by the facts, to counsel affirmation of same-sex feelings in an adolescent on the grounds that the feelings are intrinsic, unchangeable, and the individual is therefore homosexual.

Taken from Ch 12 of My Genes Made Me Do It!