



“I Got Busy in a Sex Lab”



Mélanie peaked for posterity.

Scientists at Rutgers University are studying female arousal by having participants masturbate inside MRI machines. Our gutsy writer signed up to be their guinea pig and reveals all the bizarre details.

BY MÉLANIE BERLIET

As I sat nearly naked (except for a medical gown) on the exam table, it suddenly hit me: I was about to masturbate in front of six strangers in lab coats.

WTF?

I couldn't believe I had signed myself up for this. I mean, I'm all for giving blood or donating my organs, but my orgasm?

I first heard about the study through a friend, and in a moment of temporary insanity, I decided to have scientists track my brain activity while I went at it solo in an MRI machine. Although it seems crazy now, I figured it was an

opportunity to find out if my orgasms were, well, normal. The research was led by Barry Komisaruk, PhD, a professor at Rutgers University and coauthor of books like *The Orgasm Answer Guide* and *The Science of Orgasm*. His goal: to create a map of the female brain during climax in order to figure out why some women can't orgasm.

A week before I arrived at the lab, Komisaruk's colleague, neuroscience coinvestigator Nan Wise, called to prep me for my visit. Her first question: Would I need a dildo? God, this was awkward. I got my bearings and told her no, since I masturbate by rubbing my clitoris. Then she went over a few more specifics (lube would be provided, but no visual stimuli, like porn) before she hit me with the most important rule: I would only be able to move my hand. Any bodily movements like hip thrusting (my normal MO) can mess with the brain scan. Well, at least I had time to practice.