

COVID-19: Should sexual practices be discouraged during the pandemic?



To the Editor: Patrì et al¹ recently reported that sexual transmission might be a new possible route of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection, and they strongly suggested that physicians, especially dermatologists, dissuade people from having sex during the pandemic outbreak of COVID-19.

Saliva and feces may both carry SARS-CoV-2. Glandular cells of oral mucosa and rectal epithelia express angiotensin converting enzyme II (ACE2). SARS-CoV-2 enters cells by binding with ACE2.

Fan et al² reported high messenger RNA expression level of ACE2 in the urinary tract, prostate, testis, endometrium, and ovary, which indicates that these human tissues could be a potential target of SARS-CoV-2. However the question of viable SARS-CoV-2 in semen or testis remains unanswered.

Sex and reproduction are primal human drives and calling on physicians to dissuade people from having sex during the pandemic may be a bit radical. Until more data are available, it may be best to focus on general guidelines regarding social distancing.

ZhiQiang Yin, MD, PhD

From the Department of Dermatology, First Affiliated Hospital of Nanjing Medical University, Nanjing, China.

Funding sources: None.

Conflicts of interest: None disclosed.

IRB approval status: Not applicable.

Reprints not available from the authors.

Correspondence to: ZhiQiang Yin, MD, PhD, Department of Dermatology, First Affiliated Hospital of Nanjing Medical University, 300 Guangzhou Rd, Nanjing 210029, China

E-mail: yzq2802@sina.com

REFERENCES

1. Patrì A, Gallo L, Guarino M, Fabbrocini G. Sexual transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2): A new possible route of infection? *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2020; 82(6):e227.
2. Fan C, Li K, Ding YH, Lu WL, Wang JQ. ACE2 expression in kidney and testis may cause kidney and testis damage after 2019-nCoV infection. *medRxiv*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.02.12.20022418>.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2020.04.140>