



# Investigating the precipitating and exhibiting factors of marital infidelity: a qualitative study

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## Abstract

**Aim:** This study was conducted to investigate the precipitating and exhibiting factors of marital infidelity. **Methods:** This was a qualitative study based on grounded theory and semi-structured and problem-oriented interviews and investigated the process of emergence of marital infidelity. For this purpose, 12 women and 15 men who experienced marital infidelity and were willing to cooperate with the researcher were selected as the sample by purposive sampling. The subjects were examined in depth using semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using grounded theory. **Results:** After analyzing the data obtained from interviews with women and analyzing them through open coding, 100 initial codes, 14 axial codes, and 3 main codes were extracted. In this way, sensation-seeking, low self-esteem, negative self-image, and suppressed excitement were classified as the initial codes, intrapersonal causes, non-satisfaction of emotional needs, inconsistency of desires and goals, lack of attention to boundaries, marital disputes, revenge on the spouse, and lack of attractiveness of the spouse were classified as the axial codes, and marital conflicts, curiosity about sexual experiences, premarital sexual experiences, and sexual failure were classified as the main codes. 76 initial codes, 13 axial codes, and 3 main codes were extracted as a result of content analysis on interviews with men in open coding. Causes of male infidelity were categorized as emotional causes (marital conflicts, life crises, loss of self, and sharing feelings and thoughts), sexual causes (lack of freshness and happiness due to a boring marriage, gaining new sexual experiences, lack of wife care of her body, and sensation-seeking), and external causes (power, having the opportunity to commit marital infidelity, receiving support from friends, rightfulness, and disinhibition due to substance abuse). **Conclusion:** The results indicated that men and women involved in this relationship initiated marital infidelity against this phenomenon. The consequences of these strategies were disclosure, divorce, concealment, and the discontinuity of married life.

**Keywords:** Marital infidelity, women, men, precipitating factors, exhibiting factors

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