

## 20.2: Flatulence

### Learning Objectives

- Flatulence: Are you embarrassed by your flatus?

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### Overview

The purpose of this study was to find out whether or not people are embarrassed by their flatulence. The participants were 35 University of Houston – Downtown students. Flatulence is a normal part of being human, but it can cause an alarming rate of embarrassment in certain situations. How many times have you been subjected to the unpleasant odor emitted from someone around you? Medical research indicates that it is normal to have anywhere from 7 to 20 episodes of gas in a day.

Would you believe that women produce more of the bad smelling stuff than men do, and that women are more likely to complain to their doctors about the smell of their flatulence? The smell comes from sulfur gasses, the most offensive of which is hydrogen sulfide; it smells like rotten eggs. Still, everybody does it, we just don't know how embarrassed they are by it.

### Questions to Answer

Are people without male siblings more embarrassed by their flatulence than people with one or more male siblings? Do people that come from households where flatulence was acceptable report less embarrassment than people that come from households where it was not acceptable? Are women or men more embarrassed by their flatus?

### Design Issues

Embarrassment scores were reported on 14 different measures and tallied as a total embarrassment score, then divided into seven categories, producing one number per category. Only the scores on the seven categories are reported here. The data in this research is self report data, and because the topic is sensitive some people may have been less than honest about their reported flatulence.

### Descriptions of Variables

Table 20.2.1: Description of variables

Variable	Description
Gender	1 = male, 2 = female
famaccp	Household acceptance of flatus 1 to 7, 1=very acceptable and 7=very unacceptable
brother	Number of brothers the participant has
howlong	How long before farting in front of partner? 1 = 1 year, .5= 6 months, .25=3 months, and smaller decimals represent portions of a year. Numbers larger than 1 indicate longer than 1 year.
perday	Number per day

Embarrassing Situations	The following variables were rated on this scale: 1=extremely embarrassed and 7= not really embarrassed
mtgwork	Meeting at work
talkprof	Talking to a professor
romint	Romantic interest

## Data files

flatulence.xls

## References

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