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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.

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