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The road to hell is paved with good intentions, as they say: the more housework married men do, the less sex they have, according to a new study published Wednesday.

Husbands who spend more time doing traditionally female chores -- such as cooking, cleaning, and shopping -- reported having less sex than those who do more masculine tasks, said the study in the *American Sociological Review*.

"Our findings suggest the importance of socialized gender roles for sexual frequency in heterosexual marriage," said lead author Sabino Kornrich, of the Center for Advanced Studies at the Juan March Institute in Madrid.

"Couples in which men participate more in housework typically done by women report having sex less frequently. Similarly, couples in which men participate more in traditionally masculine tasks -- such as yard work, paying bills, and auto maintenance -- report higher sexual frequency."

His study, "Egalitarianism, Housework, and Sexual Frequency in Marriage," looks at straight married couples in the United States, and was based on data from the National Survey of Families and Households.

The study was co-authored by University of Washington sociologist Julie Brines and doctoral candidate Katrina Leupp.

Men in the study reported having had sex an average of 5.2 times in the month prior to the survey, while women reported 5.6.

But both men and women in couples with more traditional household labor divisions said they had more sex.

"The results suggest the existence of a gendered set of sexual scripts, in which the traditional performance and display of gender is important for creation of sexual desire and performance of sexual activity," Kornrich said.

However, the study's authors stop short of arguing that house husbands should hang up their aprons.

"Men who refuse to help around the house could increase conflict in their marriage and lower their wives' marital satisfaction," Kornrich said.

"Earlier research has found that women's marital satisfaction is indeed linked to men's participation in overall household labor, which encompasses tasks traditionally done by both men and women."

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