



Canadian Sex Research Forum 2021
Abstract Booklet
October 13-16, 2021

Invited Plenaries

Title: A scripted sexuality: Media use, gendered sexual scripts, and consequences for youths' sexual socialization

Speaker: Monique Ward

Moderator: Lucia O'Sullivan, PhD

Time: Thursday, October 14th 2021, 11:10am - 12:10pm EST

Abstract

The mainstream media have emerged as prominent forces in the sexual socialization of North American youth, with teens consuming nearly 8 hours of media a day. However, media portrayals of sexuality and sexual relationship are not neutral, and often follow a rigid, gendered script, outlining different goals and expectations for women and men. Within this script, men are expected to actively pursue sexual relationships, to value women mainly for their physical beauty, and to avoid commitment and emotional attachment; conversely, women are expected to be sexually passive, to set sexual limits, to use their body and looks to attract men, and to prioritize emotion and commitment. Although these cultural scripts are presented as "normative" and "traditional," internalizing these expectations can be confining, and has been linked to challenges to adolescents' well-being. In this talk, I present findings from several studies addressing the prevalence of these scripts in the media, and their impact on viewers' own beliefs. I then discuss evidence documenting the consequences of internalizing these scripts for young people's mental health, sexual health, and experiences of intimate partner violence. Finally, I explore these dynamics among youth of color, and African American youth, specifically, who also navigate racialized sexual stereotypes (e.g., Jezebel).

Title: The revolutionary new genetic findings on same-gender sexuality: What do they mean and where do we go from here?

Speaker: Lisa Diamond, PhD

Moderator: Natalie Rosen, PhD

Time: Thursday, October 14th 2021, 2:50pm - 3:50pm EST

Abstract

A mini-revolution is underway regarding our understanding of the genetics of same-gender sexuality, but it has received little scientific or media attention. In 2019, a top-notch team of geneticists published a landmark study in *Science* analyzing the full genomes of nearly 500,000 US and UK adults. The “take-home” message trumpeted in media coverage of the study was that *“Many genes -- not just one -- are associated with same-gender sexual behavior.”* This is certainly an important finding, but *not* the only one. Buried a little deeper in the study is an additional discovery, one that *none* of the geneticists expected, and which has the potential to completely transform our understanding of “sexual orientation.” In this talk, you’ll learn what it is, and why it changes *everything*.

Title: Critical Consciousness and Sex Positivity: Experiences and Reactions to Race Salient Sexuality and Relationships

Speaker: James Brooks, PhD

Moderator: Amy Muise, PhD

Time: Friday, October 15th 2021, 11:05am - 12:05am EST

Abstract

Within sex-positive communities, members emphasize risk-aware consensual kink and advocate a non-judgmental approach to sexuality, “don’t yuck someone’s yum” or “not my kink” as a way of relieving sexual shame or embarrassment within themselves and for others. This is meant to provide an environment and network of acceptance. Members of these communities may feel conflicted when their personal values regarding justice, anti-racism, or race-based power structures bump against their sex-positive values. Tension is likely to be experienced when an individual is eroticized, stereotyped, or objectified based on their racial group membership or when they are confronted with other race salient relationships such as race play. This talk explores how individuals’ understanding of the importance and relevance of race, a construct termed racial worldview, and their acceptance of diverse sexuality inform their reactions to and experiences with race salient relationships. Using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the program of research reviewed outlines how individuals experience the counterculture of sex positive communities while navigating topics of race.

Diversity and normativity in the lives of trans and non-binary people: a symposium

¹Leo Rutherford, ¹Kai Jacobsen, ²Bre O'Handley

¹University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada. ²Trent University, Peterborough, Canada.

Symposium Introduction

Trans and non-binary people are a diverse population made up of individuals whose gender identities do not 'match' what is typical for the sex they were assigned at birth. In this symposium, we will cover topics related to the experience of trans and non-binary people, including those that fit and diverge from existing narratives about trans lives. These can be coalesced into themes of common trans experiences, normativity, and diversity.

Research has shed light on experiences common to trans people which include high rates of suicidality, depression and anxiety, being financially less comfortable and struggling to access trans-competent healthcare. During this COVID-19 pandemic, emerging research is suggesting the effects of social isolation and reduction of accessing to transition-related surgeries is worsening these challenges trans people already face.

Despite the commonplace nature of these experiences, trans people are diverse in their desires to transition, access trans-related healthcare or have surgeries. Normative conceptions of the trans experience include intense dysphoria or uncomfotability with one's body, a strong desire to alter sex characteristics and remove reproductive organs.

While many trans people experience dysphoria and seek to have medical interventions including taking hormones, having top or bottom surgery, some people do not need these to feel comfortable or content in their bodies. Normative assumptions about trans people are harmful for those whose experience of their gender or transition differ from what is 'typical'. In research and practice, avoiding assumptions of transnormativity is essential to understanding the complexity and diversity of trans experiences.

Mental well-being, social support, and unique experiences of transgender and non-binary people during the COVID-19 pandemic

¹Bre O'Handley, ²Erin Leigh Courtice, ¹Rhea Ashley Hoskin, ³Karen Blair

¹Trent University, Peterborough, Canada. ²University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada. ³University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada. ³ University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.

Abstract

Within sex-positive communities, members emphasize risk-aware consensual kink and advocate a non-judgmental approach to sexuality, “don’t yuck someone’s yum” or “not my kink” as a way of relieving sexual shame or embarrassment within themselves and for others. This is meant to provide an environment and network of acceptance. Members of these communities may feel conflicted when their personal values regarding justice, anti-racism, or race-based power structures bump against their sex-positive values. Tension is likely to be experienced when an individual is eroticized, stereotyped, or objectified based on their racial group membership or when they are confronted with other race salient relationships such as race play. This talk explores how individuals’ understanding of the importance and relevance of race, a construct termed racial worldview, and their acceptance of diverse sexuality inform their reactions to and experiences with race salient relationships. Using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the program of research reviewed outlines how individuals experience the counterculture of sex positive communities while navigating topics of race.

Trans Experiences of Gender Euphoria and Sexuality

Kai Jacobsen

University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada.

Abstract

Trans identities and lives are typically understood through the lens of gender dysphoria, which emphasizes distress and suffering resulting from a perceived incongruence between one's assigned gender and gender identity. The term gender dysphoria is nearly synonymous with transness itself. However, many trans people also experience positive emotions related to their gender and being trans, such as joy, affirmation, pride, and contentment, which some term gender euphoria. Through qualitative interviews with five trans individuals, I argue that gender euphoria can be defined as positive emotions resulting from affirmation of one's gender identity or expression. I describe when and how gender euphoria may be experienced, and propose a theoretical model of the relationship between gender affirmation, dysphoria and euphoria that integrates the gender minority stress model. In particular, I will highlight the role of sexuality in gender affirmation and euphoria. I argue that focusing on gender euphoria challenges the normative medical model of transness by de-emphasizing dysphoria and instead drawing attention to the importance of gender euphoria to trans people's understandings of themselves. Finally, I highlight the role of trans communities and practices of care and solidarity in gender euphoria, and suggest ways that mental health professionals and service providers who work with trans people can learn from this research to support trans people in developing resilience and experiencing gender euphoria.

Trans masculine surgical goals in the context of cis normativity

Leo Rutherford

University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada.

Abstract

Some transgender and non-binary people undergo gender affirming surgeries as part of their transitions. A small number of trans men and non-binary assigned female at birth choose to have gender-affirming genitals surgeries. These procedures (phalloplasty and metoidioplasty) are performed to masculinize genitals and take between 1 and 5 surgeries in total. Prospective patients may choose to have surgery for a number of reasons yet literature on surgical outcomes focuses on those with clinical relevance to surgeons only such as complications with surgery, surgical revision, an acceptable aesthetic appearance, and erotic sensation, which all point to success of the surgeon or technique. To understand what trans community members consider important aspects of their surgeries and outcomes I undertook a review of popular literature and YouTube videos created by trans people who have undergone surgery. Videos and written content were then organized into themes. These media show a diversity of wants and needs in relation to genital surgeries and point to clear gaps in current academic literature. This presentation will first share the normative assumptions both popularly and academically centred about trans people in relation to surgery then will focus on the diversity of community members' surgical needs as documented through my thematic review of popular content. The inclusion of diverse trans experiences in literature and common discourse is necessary to view trans selves and bodies as individuals and to move beyond cis normativity as standard.

Oral Presentations

Group 1:

Moderated by: Samantha J. Dawson, PhD

Do couples' pornography use frequency and motivations matter? Prospective bidirectional associations with sexual satisfaction and distress

¹Beáta Bóthe, ²Marie-Pier Vaillancourt-Morel, ¹Alice Girouard, ¹Maude Massé-Pfister, ¹Sophie Bergeron

¹Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada. ²Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Trois-Rivières, Canada.

Abstract

Both the Antecedents-Context-Effects model of pornography use and cross-sectional findings suggest that pornography use frequency and pornography use motivations (e.g., sexual curiosity, sexual pleasure, emotional distraction, boredom avoidance, stress reduction, fantasy) may be important predictors of couples' sexual well-being. In parallel, other cross-sectional results indicate that lower sexual well-being might also be related to more pornography use. However, no prior longitudinal study has examined the directionality of the associations between partners' pornography use frequency, motivations, and sexual satisfaction and distress. We collected self-report data from 329 couples (46 sex/gender diverse couples; Mage= 32.7 years, SD= 9.6) at baseline and six-month follow-up, and conducted an autoregressive cross-lagged analysis within an actor-partner interdependence framework, using gender as a moderator. Regardless of gender, actors' prior higher fantasy motivation was associated with their later lower sexual satisfaction. Moreover, actors' prior higher sexual satisfaction was associated with their later higher sexual pleasure motivation, and prior higher sexual distress was associated with their later lower sexual curiosity motivation. Important gender differences were also observed. Men's prior higher boredom avoidance motivation and women's lower sexual pleasure motivation were associated with their own later greater sexual distress, and non-binary individuals' prior higher emotional distraction motivation was associated with their later lower sexual satisfaction. No partner effects were observed. Our findings highlight that the associations between pornography use characteristics and sexual well-being are complex and bidirectional, with important gender differences, providing a more nuanced understanding of pornography use's association with couples' sexual well-being.

What's in a Construct?: A Theoretical and Mixed-Methods Exposé of Models of Intrapyschic Sexuality-Related Entities

¹Stéphanie Gauvin, ²Kathleen Merwin, ³Kilimnick Chelsea, ⁴Jessica Maxwell, ⁵John Sakaluk

¹Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. ²Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada. ³University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, USA. ⁴University of Auckland, Auckland, Australia. ⁵Western University, London, Canada.

Abstract

Background: If measurement is the assignment of numbers to entities according to systematic rules (Stevens, 1946), then the process of measuring intrapsychic constructs that often feature in sexual science is complicated indeed! Measurement models are the algebraic statements—or rules—following from different psychometric theories for how psychological constructs are structured, and how individual differences in these entities manifest in questionnaire responses. Thus, measurement models should be carefully selected as they reflect our assumptions of what psychological constructs are, how they can be assessed, and how they can be intervened on. For decades, sex researchers have defaulted to a particular measurement model—the reflective dimensional latent variable model—without considering its implications or alternatives.

Methods: In this presentation, we will provide a theoretical exposé on different families of measurement models for representing psychological constructs, including those following from classical test theory, latent variable theory, and psychometric network theory, as well as variants therein (e.g., latent variables as categories vs. dimensions). Drawing upon example data from the Measurement of Sexuality and Intimacy Related Constructs (MOSAIC) study—a large (n= 979) psychometric-focused study of different sexuality and relationship measures (k= 21)—we will then illustrate the application of both quantitative (model-implied consistency tests) and qualitative (causal thought experiments) methods for making principled selections among competing plausible measurement models.

Conclusion: Our presentation will highlight the prominent features of a plurality of contemporary (and often undervalued) measurement models, and connect attendees to mixed-methods that they can apply when adjudicating their measurement-related decisions.

Mind the (sexual desire) gap: A daily diary investigation of perceived sexual desire discrepancy and sexual and relationship satisfaction postpartum

¹Marta T. Kolbuszewska, ²Natalie O. Rosen, ²Gracielle C. Schwenck, ¹Samantha J. Dawson

¹University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. ²Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

Abstract

Declines in sexual and relationship satisfaction are common following the birth of a child, with up to 50% of new parents reporting that they are sexually and relationally dissatisfied. Sexual desire, too, changes in the postpartum, and many new parents express concern about sexual desire discrepancies. While recent research has explored the link between actual desire discrepancy and sexual and relationship satisfaction, little is known about how perceptions of desire discrepancy relate to satisfaction for new parents – despite perceptions of desire discrepancy more meaningfully predicting satisfaction than actual desire discrepancy. In the current study, we examined links between perceived desire discrepancy and sexual and relationship satisfaction among new parent couples (N = 99). Starting 3-months postpartum, individuals reported on sexual desire (own and perceived partner) and sexual and relationship satisfaction for 21 days. Using response surface analysis with scores averaged over 21 days, we assessed whether a greater match in own and perceived partner sexual desire was associated with greater sexual and relationship satisfaction for new parents. For both individuals who gave birth and partners, those reporting higher own and perceived partner desire were more satisfied than those reporting lower desire. However, perceiving a match on sexual desire between partners was not related to higher satisfaction for either partner. Together, these findings suggest that inaccurate perceptions of partner desire (i.e., perceiving own desire as higher than a partner's or vice-versa) may not impair romantic relationships postpartum. Rather, focusing on maintaining desire may benefit new parents' sexual and relational well-being.

Gender inequities in household labor predict lower desire in women partnered with men

Emily Harris, [Aki Gormezano](#), Sari van Anders

Queen's University, Kingston, Canada.

Abstract

Low sexual desire in women is usually studied as a problem, one that is located within women in relation to their physiology or stress. However, other possibilities exist, including known gender inequities related to heteronormative gender roles. In this study, we provide the first test of the theory that heteronormativity is related to low sexual desire in women partnered with men (van Anders et al., under review), focusing specifically on inequities in the division of household labor. In a survey of 677 women who were partnered with men and had children, performing a large proportion of household labor was strongly associated with lower sexual desire for a partner, and this association was partially mediated by perceiving the partner as a dependent. These results support the heteronormativity theory of low sexual desire in women partnered with men (van Anders et al., under review), and show that gender inequities are important, though understudied, contributors to low desire in women partnered with men.

Hanging on a moment: Savouring positive sexual experiences in relationships

¹Stephanie Raposo, ²Sarah Vannier, ³Natalie Rosen, ³David Allsop, ¹Amy Muise

¹York University, Toronto, Canada. ²St. Thomas University, Fredericton, Canada. ³Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

Abstract

Maintaining a satisfying sex life is crucial for many couples but doing so is not an easy feat. Savouring—or holding onto—positive experiences can prolong and intensify benefits and may be one strategy, if applied to sexual experiences, that could help couples maintain desire and satisfaction. In Study 1—a 21-day diary study (N = 121 couples)—using multilevel modeling, we found that on days when people reported more sexual savouring (enjoying positive experiences during sex), sexual anticipation (thinking about future positive sexual experiences), or sexual reminiscing (thinking about past positive sexual experiences) than they typically did, they reported greater relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, and sexual desire. However, more chronically, sexual reminiscing was associated with lower relationship satisfaction and higher sexual distress, whereas sexual anticipation was associated with lower distress. Sexual savouring (but not anticipation or reminiscing) mitigated sexual distress three months later. In Study 2—an experimental study (N = 358)—people were instructed to sexually reminisce or anticipate a positive sexual experience, and using MANCOVA models, people in the sexual anticipation and reminiscing conditions both reported higher sexual desire compared to control conditions. In Study 3—a pre-registered experiment that is in progress—people were instructed to savour their sexual experiences for one week (compared to a relational savouring and control condition) and we will test whether sexual savouring boosted their desire and satisfaction and reduced sexual distress. Overall, this research advances the existing savouring literature by demonstrating the effects of implementing such strategies in the bedroom.

Group 2:

Moderated by: Meredith Chivers, PhD

Whose fault is it? Locus of control theory applied to Incels online discourses

Marie-Aude Boislard, David Lafortune, Mélanie Millette, Matvei Morozov

Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Canada.

Abstract

Introduction: Incels (involuntary celibate men often blaming women for their lack of sexuality) receive increasing attention for claiming at least seven feminicides in North America in recent years. Grasping Incels' personal perception of control over their life could help comprehend their hatred, misogyny, or helplessness discourses.

Theoretical background: Rotter's (1990) locus of control (LoC) theory posits that individuals vary in the degree of contingency perceived between their characteristics, behaviors, and life outcomes, with some expecting a high contingency (internal LoC) and others expecting that life events are contingent to others, luck (or lack thereof), or simply unpredictable (external LoC).

Study Aim: This qualitative study analyses how Incels' discourses vary according to their LoC.

Methods: Directed content analysis was performed on 41 threads extracted from two online Incels forums. Threads related to internal or external LoC containing at least 15 comment replies were coded and analyzed in NVivo 12 until saturation was attained

Results: We found that discourses blaming others for one's incelldom outnumbered those blaming oneself at a ratio of almost 3:1. Discourses tainted by internal LoC often evolved around genetic inferiority and unattractive physique as perceived motives of incelldom. Discourses of external LoC evoked being rejected and labeled as unattractive by women with overly high standards and misunderstood by non-Incels. While suffering and suicidality were recurring themes regardless of LoC, helplessness was mostly associated with internal LoC.

Conclusion: These preliminary findings have implications for identifying characteristics of Incels prone to violence or self-harm.

Single and Partnered Individuals' Sexual Satisfaction as a Function of Sexual Desire and Activities: Results Using A Sexual Satisfaction Scale Demonstrating Measurement Invariance Across Partnership Status

Yoobin Park, [Geoff MacDonald](#)

University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.

Abstract

Although some evidence exists to suggest that single (i.e., unpartnered) individuals are less sexually satisfied on average than are partnered individuals, it is unclear whether the variables correlating with each group's sexual satisfaction are similar or different. This research sought to examine how desire for and actual engagement in solitary and partnered sexual activities are associated with both groups' sexual satisfaction. We first conducted a preliminary study (n=572) to test and refine existing measures of sexual satisfaction for applicability across relationship status. In two follow-up studies (N=1,238), measurement invariance (across relationship status and gender) of the 4-item sexual satisfaction scale was established. Further, results across the two studies showed that for singles, desire for sexual activities with partners was negatively related to sexual satisfaction whereas no significant link was found with solitary desire. For individuals in romantic relationships, having higher sexual desire involving a partner and lower solitary desire were both associated with sexual satisfaction. When analyzing participants' responses on the desired and actual frequency of engaging in specific sexual acts, we found that for both single and partnered individuals, frequent engagement in partnered acts was associated with greater sexual satisfaction. Wanting frequent engagement in partnered acts was also associated with lower sexual satisfaction for both groups, but only if the current frequency of engaging in these acts was low. These findings suggest that meeting desires for partnered sex plays an important role in maintaining a sexually satisfying life regardless of one's relationship status.

Representation matters: How racial identification and racial attitudes influence sexual response to racially congruent and incongruent sexual stimuli

Trinda Penniston, Maddie Katz, Katya Kredl, Meredith Chivers

Queen's University, Kingston, Canada.

Abstract

Background: Identification with sexual stimuli augments women's subjective sexual arousal (Bossio et al., 2014), and viewers' similarity to a film character may predict identification (Cohen, 2001). Identifying with sexual stimuli depicting actors of one's own race/ethnicity could be an important factor influencing sexual response (Reed Hughes & Anderson, 2007), but racist depictions in sexually explicit media may influence how Black women identify with and respond to representations of themselves in sexual contexts (Jerald et al., 2017). The current study examines how racial identification and racial attitudes impact Black and white women's sexual responses to race-congruent and incongruent sexual stimuli.

Methods: Participants will be approximately 140 Black and white women recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Participants will report subjective sexual responses and identification with sexual stimuli after viewing sexual videos depicting Black and white couples, and measures of racial attitudes. Data collection is ongoing and will be completed by July 1, 2021.

Results: Moderated mediation analyses will test the effect of racial congruence on identification, racial congruence on sexual response, if the effect of racial congruence on sexual response is mediated by identification, and if the effects of racial congruence on identification and sexual response are moderated by racial attitudes. Data analysis will be completed by August 1, 2021.

Conclusions: Sexuality research is crucial for understanding sexual health and well-being. Ignoring race/ethnicity in sexual response research creates incomplete representations of human experiences, overlooking the sexualities of racial/ethnic minorities. The current study will contribute to understanding racialized and non-racialized women's sexuality.

Moving Towards Values: Associations Between New Mothers' Sexual and Relationship Values and their Sexual Motivations in the Transition to Parenthood

Jackie Huberman, David Allsop, Natalie O. Rosen

Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

Abstract

Connecting with values and taking action towards them is associated with better emotional wellbeing. During the transition to parenthood (TTP), a time of declines to women's sexual and relationship wellbeing, we investigated whether valuing their role as a partner-and specifically as a sexual partner-was associated with motivations for engaging in sexual activity. In a longitudinal study, 822 women reported during pregnancy and 3, 6, 12 and 24-months postpartum how important it was to them to be the kind of romantic or sexual partner they would like to be. They also reported motivations for partnered sexual activity (i.e., approach goals such as intimacy; avoidance goals such as avoiding conflict). Using multilevel structural equation modelling, we found that more strongly valuing one's role as a romantic partner was associated with higher approach goals, but not avoidance goals. Interestingly, above and beyond these effects, more strongly valuing one's role as a sexual partner was associated with both higher approach- and avoidance-goals. All effects were observed between-subjects (i.e., averaged across time/variability between women) and within-subjects (i.e., women's own co-occurring changes over time). Evidently, valuing sex related to women's sexual motivations in the TTP-whether it be approach or avoidance goals-but valuing the relationship overall may be especially helpful for fostering approach goals. Given that approach goals are associated with better sexual outcomes than avoidance goals, strategies that assist new mothers in connecting with relationship values may help them maintain sexual wellbeing during this vulnerable time.

The #MeToo movement: What can we learn from eight different emotions?

¹Alexandra Liepmann, ¹Morgan Joseph, ²Martin Sykora, ²Suzanne Elayan, ³Oliver Grübner

¹University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada. ²University of Loughborough, Loughborough, United Kingdom. ³University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland.

Abstract

Background: The #MeToo movement highlighted the experiences of sexual violence survivors. Some research suggests that #MeToo prompted social change. The impact may be due to the emotional tone of the tweets. However, researchers have not examined specific emotions, or their associated content.

Objectives: We examined the first month of the MeToo movement on Twitter to explore the frequency of eight emotions and their associated content.

Methods: We used Twitter's public API to obtain tweets from October 17th to November 15th, 2017. Tweets were automatically coded by the EMOTIVE ontology system, a machine learning algorithm that conducts emotion analysis for eight emotions (Sykora et al., 2013). We ran descriptive statistics and used an inductive approach to first-cycle coding to describe and summarize tweet content within each emotion. We also coded tweets as self-disclosures or social reactions.

Results: The most common emotions expressed were sadness (18.7%), fear (17.5%), and happiness (16.7%). We found an average of 4 codes per emotion. Some codes were similar across emotion (e.g., disgust/fear/anger/shame from sexual violence); others were particular to a specific emotion (e.g., happiness about #MeToo existence). We also found varying prevalence of specific types of sexual violence (e.g., child sexual abuse) within the self-disclosures. We found that self-disclosures expressed more negative emotions, whereas social reactions tended to express positive emotions.

Conclusions: By consisting of both negatively charged self-disclosures and positively charged social reactions, #MeToo included a range of emotions and content. This information may clarify how the movement became so impactful.

Data Blitz Breakout Presentations

Sexual development from childhood to emerging adulthood

Moderated by: Doug VanderLaan, PhD

Symposium on Sexuality Research. Latinx children-innocent or sexualized? A look into how *The Moon Within* and *We the Animals* illustrate sexual desire among Latinx children

Brianna Carrasco

York University, Toronto, Canada

Abstract

The common discourse about children is that they are impressionable and vulnerable blank slates. Introducing them to sex, specifically queer sex, causes anxiety and discomfort among adults who consider sex inappropriate. However, a 2018 Finnish study emphasized that children start becoming knowledgeable about sex at a young age. Finland is a predominantly white nation, and because of my Afro-Latino background, I decided to research the knowledge of sex and sexuality that Latinx children have. I used the book *The Moon Within* by Aida Salazar and the movie *We the Animals* directed by Jeremiah Zagar to show representations of Latinx children with knowledge, and interest, in sex and sexuality. Due to the lack of this representation in children's books, children may feel excluded or unrepresented if they feel sexual desire or are experiencing anything other than heterosexuality. I end the paper by emphasizing the importance of the representation of queer and sexually knowledgeable Latinx children in children's books and media, because it rejects the dominant narrative that Latinx families do not discuss sexuality and sexual health as much as their white counterparts. I also end the paper by concluding that *The Moon Within* shows the ideal situation of a sexual health in a Latinx family, while *We the Animals* shows what can happen when Latinx families are not supportive of their children's sexual health and desires.

Sex/gender- and age-related differences in white matter microstructure in adolescents

¹Lindsey Thurston, ²Sofia Chavez, ²Malvina Skorska, ¹Nancy Lobaugh, ¹Kenneth Zucker, M.
³Mallar Chakravarty, ²Meng-Chuan Lai, ²Doug VanderLaan

¹University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. ²Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto, Canada. ³Douglas Mental Health University Institute, Montreal, Canada.

Abstract

White matter (WM) microstructure matures earlier in adolescent cisgender girls than cisgender boys. This difference may be partly explained by neurohormonal theory, which posits that sex/gender-related differences in neural structure are due to differences in prenatal and pubertal hormone exposure (i.e., organizational/activational effects). Gender incongruence, clinically known as gender dysphoria (GD), describes having a gender identity that is different from the sex assigned at birth. Neurohormonal theory predicts that adolescents with gender incongruence have a neural phenotype similar to their experienced gender. We assessed WM microstructure development in transgender and cisgender adolescents. Diffusion tensor and T2-weighted images were acquired for 12- to 17-year-olds assigned female at birth diagnosed with GD (i.e., transgender boys; n = 17), cisgender girls (n = 17), and cisgender boys (n = 16). One-way ANCOVAs, controlling for age, were performed using tract-based spatial statistics to assess sex/gender differences in fractional anisotropy (FA), axial diffusivity (AD), and radial diffusivity (RD) of the WM skeleton. AD was significantly greater in interhemispheric (e.g., corpus callosum) and some intrahemispheric tracts of cisgender boys compared with both the transgender boys and cisgender girls, possibly indicating greater axonal caliber. Only age was significantly and positively related to FA and negatively related to RD. This suggests an age-related, but not sex/gender-related, increase in diffusion directionality and myelination, respectively. These findings suggest a sex assigned at birth difference in axonal caliber that aligns with previous developmental studies, and contribute to the building knowledge of sex/gender development and gender incongruence.

Struggling for confidence despite gendered expectations: Adolescents' navigational challenges in dating relationships

¹Morgan Richard, ¹Kaitlyn Wilson, ²Yingxi Li, ²Amy Xu, ²Jessica Song, ²Catherine Ann Cameron

¹University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, Canada. ²University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

Abstract

Introduction

Adolescent girls and boys report similar levels of emotional engagement in dating relationships: boys more often report struggles with communicating openly, while girls report sacrifices made to maintain intimate involvement. Pressure to conform to gender roles can challenge the way adolescents navigate dating. Few studies have examined these navigational processes.

Methods

Three successive studies investigated separate focus-group discussions with Canadian rural and urban girls and boys in Grades 9-12 to explore how adolescents describe navigating dating. Grounded and Emergent Theory methodologies were used to analyze responses.

Results

Boys and girls struggled to feel confident about dating. Cultural expectations of boys being initiators and providers in relationships were protested. Behavioural differences in heterosexual relationships were attributed to inherent gendered traits. For example, boys communicate directly while girls communicate indirectly; and boys solve problems independently while girls are dependent. Girls struggled with unhealthy sacrifices of autonomy and their role as sexual gatekeepers. Boys endorsed stereotypes characterizing girls as manipulative and overly sensitive. Anticipation of negative reactions from girlfriends prompted boys to avoid communications. Adolescents of both genders recognized communication as essential for healthy relationships.

Discussion

These studies highlighted adolescents' perceived behaviour differences between boys and girls in dating relationships. Future adolescent interventions that endorse positive feminine and masculine traits, address negative expectations, and scaffold confidence in communication are necessary. Future studies should investigate both single- and mixed-gender adolescent discussion groups to address different communication styles and harmful gender stereotypes/expectations, develop participatory insight, and foster resilience to face such problems.

Exploration of emerging adult virgins' difficulties and needs for intervention

Audrey Leroux, Marie-Aude Boislard

Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Canada.

Abstract

While an increasing proportion of adults report never having had sex, studies of emerging adult virgins (EAVs) are rare. Although trajectories of virginity in adulthood are heterogeneous, the limited scientific literature suggests that some EAVs may face specific challenges. However, very little is known about the intervention needs and difficulties of this clientele. The aim of this study is to explore their needs and difficulties to guide the creation of interventions that are tailored to this population. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 29 heterosexual virgins aged between 20 to 29 years. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Three main themes were identified: (a) needs for fitting in society (e.g., to be acknowledged, to be treated equally, etc.), (b) interpersonal relationship needs (e.g., intimacy needs, etc.), and (c) emotions experienced relative to late virginity (e.g., sadness, shame, fears, etc.). Our results illustrate that while most of their needs and difficulties are shared by other clienteles (i.e., intimacy needs, sadness, jealousy, etc.), some remain specific to late virginity (i.e., social acknowledgement and acceptance, etc.). Also, our study sheds light on the distress associated with the lack of connection and romantic intimacy among EAVs, regardless of virginity intentionality and gender. Surprisingly, the difficulties experienced in EAVs' early twenties are less salient in late emerging adulthood. Finally, despite the difficulties, very few of our participants seek help, mainly because of a lack of visible resources or fear of judgment. Theoretical and clinical implications will be discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

Peer bullying in youth and late virginity in adulthood: The mediating role of rejection sensitivity

Matvei Morozov, Marie-Aude Boislard

Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Canada.

Abstract

Around 13% percent of cisheterosexual individuals in North America remain virgins when they reach adulthood. Late virginity is associated with difficulties in attracting romantic and sexual partners, and- especially when unintentional - with psychological maladjustment. Being bullied at school was associated with social withdrawal which, in turn, was associated with late virginity. Being bullied was also associated with higher rejection sensitivity. Our objective is to examine rejection sensitivity as the mediator between peer bullying in youth and late virginity in adulthood, moderated by gender. The current study examined a 253-participant subsample consisting of cisgender, heterosexual, virgin adult men and women out of over 1900 participants from VisaJe, a large cross-sectional online study on sexual inexperience in adulthood. We used the CBVS-R's Experience scale to measure the diversity of bullying experiences ($M = 3,34$; $SD = 2,37$); the RSQ-A to measure rejection sensitivity ($M = 11,69$; $SD = 4,92$); and calculated sexual desynchronization relative to age 18 at which virginity starts being considered late, as was done in previous studies. Preliminary linear regression models indicate that having been bullied positively predicts both late virginity ($B = 0,364$ [95%CI 0,091-0,637]; $\beta = 0,163$) and rejection sensitivity ($B = 0,671$ [95%CI 0,425-0,917]; $\beta = 0,323$). However, rejection sensitivity did not significantly predict late virginity. These results add new weight to the literature on negative effects of bullying, which remains prevalent in Canadian schools. Establishing stronger anti-bullying measures in educational settings could play a role in improving Canadian young adults' sexual well-being.

Sexual desire, interest, and attention

Moderated by: Sophie Bergeron, PhD

Establishing the utility of a novel online paradigm to assess attentional processing of sexual stimuli

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Abstract

Attention is a key mechanism underlying many aspects of sexuality from arousal to sexual interest. Researchers have relied on eye-tracking technology to examine patterns of visual attention to sexual stimuli and to elucidate the relationship between attention and sexual response. Despite its utility, eye-tracking technology is relatively inaccessible due to its cost and incompatibility for online use. An online alternative could offer important advantages including the ability to recruit larger and more diverse samples (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation) and collect data when laboratory research is curtailed. The overarching goal of the current study is to validate an online alternative to eye-tracking. First, we conducted several preliminary studies to evaluate a novel method for assessing visual attention through mouse exploration. MouseView.js is an open-source web-based application in which mouse cursor movements mimic eye movements. Our pilot data suggest that attention is biased towards processing sexual compared to nonsexual stimuli, and dwell time is predicted by individual differences in sexual desire ($r=.34$) and arousal ($r=.20$). We are currently establishing convergent validity by directly comparing MouseView.js with eye-tracking data using a within-subjects design. Participants will view pairs of sexual and nonsexual images using MouseView.js and traditional eye-tracking. We hypothesize that MouseView.js will yield valid and reliable data that is comparable to eye-tracking data. If supported, findings will have a broad impact on the field, offering an affordable and convenient alternative to in-lab experimental methodologies commonly used to understand sexual arousal, interest, function, and orientation, while increasing sample diversity and generalizability.

Understanding Asexuality and Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder: Examining Cognitive Processing of Sexual Cues

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Abstract

Background: Asexuality is a sexual orientation defined mostly as a lack of sexual attraction to others. Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD) is a sexual dysfunction characterized by sexual interest/arousal difficulties, with two subtypes: acquired and lifelong. While research indicates that asexuality and acquired SIAD are separate entities, findings reveal possible overlap between lifelong SIAD and asexuality. Research using eye-tracking and appraisal paradigms suggest that these methodologies might differentiate asexual individuals and those with SIAD. However, no study has compared their cognitive processing of sexual cues. Thus, we compared asexual individuals' and women with SIAD's (lifelong and acquired) visual attention to and appraisals of erotic cues.

Method: Forty-two asexual individuals (Mage = 26.67), and 25 heterosexual women with SIAD (9: lifelong; 16: acquired; Mage=27.52) completed three study components: 1) visual attention task, 2) sex-related single-category implicit association task, 3) self-report measure of attitudes towards sex - the sex semantic differential. One-way ANOVAs evaluated group differences on visual attention and appraisal endpoints.

Results: For visual attention, asexual persons looked less often and for shorter periods of time at sexual cues relative to both SIAD subtypes, who displayed a preference for sexual cues. For implicit appraisals, all groups exhibited negative to neutral automatic associations with sexual words with no group differences. For explicit appraisals, women with acquired SIAD reported more positive attitudes towards sex than asexual participants and women with lifelong SIAD.

Conclusions: This project sheds light on key differences between asexuality and low desire in terms of their cognitive processing patterns.

Regulate and Communicate: Associations between emotion regulation and sexual communication for men with Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder and their partners

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Abstract

Male hypoactive sexual desire disorder (HSDD), characterized by a persistent lack of sexual desire, is associated with relational and sexual consequences for affected individuals, which likely affect their partners. According to the interpersonal emotion regulation model of sexual dysfunction, how couples manage their emotional experiences in relation to the sexual problem may promote more effective and direct sexual communication and satisfying sexual relationships. In the first dyadic study of men with HSDD and their partners (N = 54 couples), we investigated associations between two emotion regulation strategies (i.e., cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression) and how couples coping with HSDD communicate about their sexual relationship. In an online study, participants completed measures assessing their use of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression about their sexual relationship as well as sexual communication and sexual assertiveness. When men with HSDD reported greater suppression to manage emotions about sex, they reported lower sexual assertiveness and both partners reported poorer sexual communication. When partners of men with HSDD suppressed their emotions, they were less sexually assertive. In contrast, when men with HSDD employed more reappraisal, they were more sexually assertive. Our results suggest that emotion regulation strategies are importantly linked to sexual communication in couples coping with HSDD. While suppression may hinder effective communication, employing reappraisal may allow men with HSDD to assert their sexual needs and communicate more directly and openly about their sexual relationship. These findings may inform interventions used by clinicians to help couples navigate impactful emotional experiences associated with HSDD.

Causal Attributions of Low Sexual Desire in Women Partnered with Men

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Abstract

Background: Research and public discourse on low sexual desire in women tends to situate low desire within women's bodies and minds. However, the assumption that low desire exists within individual women - as opposed to within relationships or culture - is misleading and may have negative consequences. This study investigates women's attributions for their low desire, and the possible consequences of these attributions.

Method: Participants (N = 38) completed an online survey containing a combination of Likert scale and open-text-box style questions. Participants indicated: 1) what they believed was the cause of their low desire, 2) three emotions they felt surrounding their experience of low desire, and 3) the degree to which they felt responsible for their low desire.

Results: Five causal attribution categories emerged through content coding: psychological, relational, biological, sociocultural, and sexual orientation/identity. Participant reports of feeling responsible for their low desire varied depending on which causal attribution categories participants endorsed. Similarly, the kinds of emotions participants reported differ by causal attribution category, with those in the sociocultural and sexual orientation/identity categories least likely to report negative terms and most likely to report feeling indifferent or positively about their low desire.

Conclusions: This study suggests that how women make sense of their low sexual desire matters for how they feel about it (and/or vice-versa). Emphasizing the importance of sociocultural factors in research and public discourse surrounding low desire may be important, as it may reduce negative emotions and feelings of responsibility related to low desire.

Feeling close and seeing a partner in a new light: How self-expansion is associated with sexual desire

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Abstract

Feelings of sexual desire often ignite a romantic relationship but for many people, desire for a partner fades over time, sometimes quite dramatically. Self-expansion with a partner—shared novel experiences that facilitate growth—has been found to help maintain and boost desire, but how this occurs is not well-understood. Across three studies—a 21-day daily experience study (N = 121 couples), a one-month weekly experience study (N = 184 couples isolating together during the COVID-19 pandemic), and a pre-registered recall task experimental study (N = 315 people in established relationships)—we tested whether closeness and a new construct we term otherness, seeing a partner in a new light, accounted for the association between self-expansion and desire. Through multilevel mediation analyses, self-expansion was associated with higher closeness and otherness, and in turn, higher sexual desire (Studies 1 and 2), although the indirect effect of otherness was only significant in Study 1. In Study 3, people who were asked to recall a recent self-expanding experience reported greater closeness and otherness, and in turn enhanced desire for a partner, compared to a control condition. Comparatively, self-expansion was associated with higher relationship satisfaction through higher closeness, but in two studies, self-expansion was associated with lower relationship satisfaction through higher otherness. These findings provide evidence for the importance of fostering closeness, as well as the unique role of otherness, in the maintenance of desire in relationships

The darker side of sexuality: Victimization and nonconsensual sex

Moderated by: Marie-Pier Vaillancourt-Morel, PhD

Women's perceptions of, and emotional responses to, sexual violence depicted in film or series

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Abstract

Sexual violence against women is alarmingly common. Many survivors experience post-traumatic stress following an assault, and reminders of the trauma can trigger flashbacks, dissociative symptoms, and intense fear. Given that women consume media that regularly depicts sexual violence, and that this could trigger distress, the current study examined women's perceptions of, and emotional responses to, scenes of sexual violence. It was predicted that women would view scenes of sexual violence negatively; this would be particularly true for women with a sexual violence history, those who reported PTSD symptoms, and those who tend to use negative coping strategies (e.g., avoidance) in response to stressors. Participants (n=229 women) completed an online survey. More than half (52%) of participants reported that they had experienced sexual violence. Participants generally reported negative perceptions of scenes of sexual violence, with a majority viewing them as too graphic, used for shock value/titillation, and unnecessary. They indicated that the scenes they found most distressing glorified sexual violence, objectified the victim, depicted abuse of power, and greater violence. Results of a MANOVA revealed that women with a history of sexual violence reported greater avoidance of media involving sexual violence and greater negative affect in response to scenes of sexual violence. Surprisingly, PTSD symptoms surprisingly did not predict avoidance or negative affect. Finally, those who reported a greater tendency to cope with stressors using problem avoidance reported more avoidance of and negative affect in response to scenes of sexual violence. Exploratory analyses, limitations, and future directions are discussed.

Nonconsensual sexual experience histories of incarcerated men: A mixed methods approach

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Abstract

Nonconsensual sexual experiences (NSEs) are believed to contribute to mental health issues among incarcerated individuals, yet these experiences are understudied in this population. This study takes a novel approach in examining past NSEs among male inmates by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative measures. The sample consisted of 189 men from three provincial maximum-security prisons. Participants responded to a qualitative open-ended question about their history of NSEs. Based on quantitative findings, a total of 23% of the men reported at least one incident of a NSE throughout life (e.g., child and adult). Based on quantitative findings 44.2% of the sample experienced some form of NSEs before the age of 18, and 41.7% of the sample endorsed an experience that fit the legal definition of various NSEs as adults. Findings highlight the high prevalence of NSEs among incarcerated men with quantitative responses demonstrating how the use of a formal questionnaire may, to some extent, correct for underreporting of NSEs. Qualitative responses illustrate the lived experience of incarcerated men and provide a deeper understanding of their NSEs. Responses also speak to the lack of resources and support available to these men. Findings underscore the need for proactive approaches in meeting mental health needs of incarcerated men in general and with regard to NSEs in particular. Results may inform the development of future correctional procedures (i.e., intake protocols that screen men for NSEs) and resources to support incarcerated men in navigating the psychological impact of nonconsensual sexual experiences.

Romantic attachment, sex motives and sexual difficulties in emerging adults: The role of polyvictimization

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Abstract

A growing body of research has revealed that many emerging adults (i.e., from 18 to 25), regardless of their gender, report sexual difficulties. Past studies have emphasized the need to examine sexual difficulties by accounting for sex motives (i.e., reasons for engaging in sex) or by using a trauma-focused or attachment-based framework (e.g., Birnbaum et al., 2014). Yet, no study has examined whether these variables might explain sexual functioning difficulties in emerging adults. This study examined the role of sex motives in the associations between attachment insecurities (anxiety, avoidance) and sexual difficulties in emerging adults, and assessed whether these links varied for participants with or without polyvictimization (i.e., having experienced 4 or more types of childhood victimization). A sample of 437 French-Canadian emerging adults completed validated questionnaires online. Path analyses revealed that participants with higher attachment anxiety were more likely to engage in sex to get their peers' approval or because they felt they had to, which in turn was related to difficulties with desire, arousal, pain, and orgasmic satisfaction. Participants with higher attachment avoidance reported similar sexual motives and difficulties but were also less likely to engage in sex for sexual gratification, which in turn was associated with more sexual difficulties. Yet, this indirect effect was only significant in participants who reported polyvictimization. Results suggest that addressing emerging adults' sex motives using an attachment- and trauma-focused framework might help prevent and reduce difficulties related to sexual functioning.

History of Sexual Abuse As A Predictor of Response to an Unguided Online Intervention For Female Sexual Dysfunction

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Abstract

Concerns about pornography use remain widespread and are often predicated on the assumption that the specific content that individuals consume (e.g., violent pornography) drive particular effects (e.g., violence against others). Unfortunately, assessment of the use of specific types of pornography in survey research remains hindered by the lack of empirically-derived typologies of psychologically meaningful content differences in pornography. In an effort to provide further information on which such typologies may be based, the present study aimed to conduct a content analysis of responses from an open-ended Internet survey of individuals' (N = 369) pornography viewing preferences. Analyses are ongoing but preliminary coding suggests consumers more frequently describe the number and preferred gender of performers (e.g., FFM threesomes, etc.) than the type of sexual behaviours they like to view (e.g., anal sex etc.), though this too is common. Reports of the use of violent and coercive material are present, but rare in comparison, suggesting that other content types may be of more relevant for understanding the typical viewing experience of many users.

The confluence model: does exposure to non-violent pornography activate rape-congruent attitudes and cognitions among at risk men?

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Abstract

Concerns about pornography's impact on sexual aggression remain prominent. According to the Confluence Model of sexual aggression, use of non-violent pornography creates, reinforces, and activates pre-existing rape-supportive attitudes, cognitions, and emotions among men who are otherwise high in predisposed risk of sexual aggression. An online experiment was designed to determine if exposure to non-violent pornography primed rape-supportive cognitions and attitudes using both open-ended and closed-ended assessments. To this end, hostile masculinity and impersonal sexuality were measured in a baseline survey of men, who, one week later were randomly assigned to view non-violent pornography or control stimuli and then asked to write an arousing sexual fantasy, and report their attitudes towards women and their likelihood of rape. The content of sexual fantasies is being coded for themes of violence, domination and submission, and sexual coercion. Study methods and hypotheses were pre-registered on the Open Science Framework and recruitment is ongoing. Preliminary results relying on a subsample of $n = 220$ have generally not indicated expected interactions between hostile masculinity, impersonal sexuality and pornography exposure. Moreover, with respect to two-endpoints, the data suggest the expression of rape-supportive cognitions and attitudes is actually significantly lower among at risk men who view pornography than at risk men who do not. While these interim tests do not corroborate Confluence Model theorizing, small effects that are consistent with this theory may yet emerge once recruitment of the full sample of 625 is complete.

Changes in sexual well-being over time

Moderated by: Emily Impett, PhD

One Line of Sexual Decline? A Growth Mixture Modeling Approach to Sexual Satisfaction in Midlife Marriage

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Abstract

Most research has shown that sexual satisfaction in long-term relationships tends to decline over time. Studies showing the average trajectory, however, are limited by only assessing one slope. With longitudinal data from the Flourishing Families Project (FFP; 327 couples), Marital Instability Dataset (MI; 1199 wives and 815 husbands), and the Iowa Youth and Families Project (IYFP; 379 couples), we utilized growth mixture modeling to assess what trajectories of sexual satisfaction exist in midlife marriages. In the three samples (one individual, two dyadic), we found clear evidence for heterogeneous sexual satisfaction trajectories, for both wives and husbands. Through the datasets, we found some trajectories did decline over time. We also found stably high, stably medium, stably low, and even some trajectories that showed an increase in sexual satisfaction over time. Overall, trajectories were similar for wives and husbands, though sometimes husbands or wives reported significantly higher sexual satisfaction than their partner. Both marital satisfaction and perceived marital stability trajectories (based on sexual satisfaction classes) generally had similar patterns to sexual satisfaction trajectories, with a few exceptions. Both marital satisfaction and perceived marital stability were less likely to significantly change over time, have discrepancies between wives and husbands, and have either low marital satisfaction or high perceived marital instability, even if sexual satisfaction was low. These data can help couples recognize the various possibilities for sexual satisfaction over time, perhaps helping them to avoid cultural myths of inevitably declining sexual satisfaction.

How Parenting Stress Affects Couple's Sexual Satisfaction: A Romantic Attachment Perspective

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Abstract

The objective of this longitudinal study was to examine the mediating effects of romantic attachment on the association between parental stress and sexual satisfaction in couples who are parents. Seventy-four heterosexual couples completed questionnaires on parental stress at two time points, four years apart. At the second-time point, couples also completed questionnaires on sexual satisfaction and romantic attachment. It was expected that higher levels of a mother or father's own cumulative parenting stress would be negatively associated with their own and their partner's levels of sexual satisfaction. Also, higher levels of a mother or father's own cumulative parenting stress was expected to be positively associated with their own attachment insecurity (anxiety and avoidance). Finally, higher levels of a mother or father's own attachment insecurity was expected to be negatively associated with their own and their partner's sexual satisfaction. Results from separate actor and partner mediation analyses revealed that romantic attachment did not mediate the association between parental stress and sexual satisfaction. Interestingly, cumulative parenting stress had direct negative effects on father's levels of sexual satisfaction, but not on mother's sexual satisfaction. Mothers' higher levels of cumulative parenting stress was positively associated with their own attachment anxiety. Both parents' attachment avoidance was negatively associated with their own and their partners sexual satisfaction. It is fundamental to better explore these links because parenting stress and sexual relationships are inevitable experiences for most couples with children and they cannot afford to neglect their sexual fulfillment while waiting for their children to grow up.

How attachment styles predict changes in sexual desire: A study of sexual dynamics in Covid

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Abstract

In times of stress, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, people desire closeness and proximity to their attachment figures; for adults, this is typically their romantic partner (Simpson & Rholes, 2012). However, when an individual is raised in a context where their needs were thwarted, or inconsistently met, they develop interpersonal patterns to distance themselves from internal emotional states (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). For anxious individuals, their tendency to seek reassurance, and to become angry when reassurance is not provided, becomes exacerbated. Avoidant individuals, who fear closeness and intimacy, may seek even greater interpersonal distance. Sex with a romantic partner fulfills not only sexual needs, but also attachment needs, and can be impacted when the attachment system is under threat (Feeney & Noller, 2004). We investigated how attachment insecurity negatively influences sexual desire within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Couples completed an online survey. Both partners (N=332) completed monthly measures of attachment and sexual desire for three months. Preliminary analyses using a cross-lagged longitudinal design suggest that high attachment anxiety increased desire for one's current partner at later time points ($\beta=.09, p=.015$), but decreased desire for solitary ($\beta=-.13, p<.001$) and extradyadic-partnered sex ($\beta=-.18, p<.001$). Attachment avoidance increased desire for solitary ($\beta=.15, p<.001$) and extradyadic-partnered sex ($\beta=.18, p<.001$), but not desire for current partner ($\beta=-.04, p=.293$). The results shed light on the specific ways that sexuality may be affected in times of uncertainty, and enhance our understanding of the link between attachment processes and sexual outcomes, an important area of empirical and clinical inquiry.

Does the "Why" Matter? Integration of Attachment Theory and Sexual Motives in Predicting Sexual Well-Being in Daily Life and Over Time in Long-term Couples

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Abstract

Attachment theory postulates that three behavioural systems are central to optimal couple functioning: attachment, caregiving, and sex. However, few studies have examined the concurrent contribution of these systems to understand sexual well-being. This prospective and daily-diary study examined the mediating role of attachment-related and caregiving sexual motives in the associations linking attachment insecurities and both emotions during daily sexual activity and sexual satisfaction 3 months later in 149 long-term mixed-gender/sex couples. Multilevel analyses revealed that individuals high on attachment avoidance endorsed less caregiving sexual motives, which was then associated with their own higher negative affect (lower positive emotions, higher negative emotions) during sex. Individuals high on attachment anxiety endorsed more attachment-related sexual motives, which was then associated with their own and their partner's higher negative affect during sex. However, anxious individuals also endorsed more caregiving sexual motives, which was associated with their own and their partner's higher positive affect during sex. Moreover, men who endorsed less attachment-related sex motives and more caregiving sex motives reported higher sexual satisfaction 3 months later. These results concur with research showing that, whereas attachment avoidance tends to be associated with more negative views of sexuality, attachment anxiety is associated with both sexual and relational ambivalence that results in both positive and negative outcomes for the relationship. Overall, findings support the associations between the attachment, caregiving, and sexual behavioural systems and suggest that engaging in sex as a way to care for one's partner might foster sexual well-being in long-term couples.

Sexual and Relationship Adjustment During COVID-19

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic and the mitigation measures put in place have resulted in universal disruption in the usual ways of life for individuals. The current study sought to investigate how aspects of sexual health and relationship satisfaction change during the pandemic. As part of a larger study, data were collected at two separate time points: Time 1, which included Time 1 measures and retrospective baseline measures of pre-COVID-19 sexual and relationship well-being, and Time 2. Of a total of 316 participants, the average age was 30.2 years old (range: 18 - 81, n= 316), and the majority of participants were in a relationship (n= 233, 73.7%) and located in Canada at the time of participation (n= 203, 64.2%). From pre-COVID-19 (retrospective baseline) to Time 1, participants reported slight declines in sexual pleasure, frequency of orgasms with a partner, and frequency of solitary orgasms, as well as slight increases in sexual distress from pre-COVID-19, with no differences in relationship satisfaction. For individuals with vulvas, there was a slight improvement in sexual functioning from Time 1 to Time 2, whereas no differences in sexual functioning were observed for individuals with penises. Though levels of sexual well-being slightly declined for individuals with vulvas, relationship functioning did not also significantly decline. Given that minimal disruptions were noted in pre-COVID-19 to COVID-19 sexuality, these results highlight the potential resiliency of individuals' sexuality when facing sudden changes in their daily lives.

Sexuality in Dating and Romantic Relationships

Moderated by: Serena Corsini-Munt, PhD

Is my attachment style showing? Perceptions of a date's attachment style and romantic and sexual interest during a speed dating event

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Abstract

Attachment anxiety and avoidance—the extent to which a person desires closeness or values independence in relationships—are robust predictors of romantic relationship quality and sexual satisfaction. Past research has found that people can accurately detect an acquaintance's attachment style after a brief interaction, and detect attachment style from photographs. However, less is known about attachment perceptions in dating contexts. Can people accurately perceive a potential dating partner's attachment during an initial encounter and does this influence their romantic and sexual interest? In a pre-registered analysis [https://osf.io/vgtps/?view_only=179d212453ba45d689416ef63c806f01] of 189 speed-daters, we found that people accurately perceived their date's attachment anxiety, but not their attachment avoidance. After accounting for dates' self-reported attachment style, perceptions of a date's attachment anxiety were associated with less sexual and romantic interest in the date. However, accurate perceptions of a date's attachment anxiety were only associated with less interest when the date was high (versus low) in attachment anxiety. Sociosexuality—the extent to which a person is open to and interested in short-term relationships—can influence dating preferences and here, people who were more comfortable with short-term relationships had less romantic and sexual interest when accurately perceiving their date's attachment anxiety. In sum, in a speed-dating context, people accurately perceived a date's attachment anxiety and these perceptions are associated with romantic and sexual interest, especially for daters more interested in casual relationships. The findings have implications for understanding how perceptions of a potential partner's traits can influence dating decisions.

Crushing on you: Attraction toward someone other than your romantic partner

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Abstract

It is not uncommon for adults in relationships to have a crush on someone other than their romantic partner. Although having a crush is not linked with worse quality in one's primary relationship (Belu & O'Sullivan, 2019), for some, extradyadic attraction likely constitutes a slippery slope to relationship instability. This study was designed to better understand crushes as extradyadic attractions and under what conditions degree of attraction affects relationship quality of the primary relationship. Young adults (N=386; 56% female-identified; 22-35) in a romantic relationship and reporting a current crush were recruited using online crowdsourcing. Participants completed measures assessing attraction intensity, relationship quality as measured by the Investment Model (Rusbult et al., 1998), and then tracked relationship variables for four months. Most participants did not feel that their crush was problematic for their relationship and maintained minimal contact with their crush. If provided the opportunity, most would not leave their primary relationship for their crush. SEM revealed that attraction intensity predicted lower satisfaction with the primary relationship, higher perceived quality of alternatives, and lower investment, and these variables predicted commitment. In turn, commitment at baseline predicted breakup four months later. Model fit was good: Robust CFI=.99;SRMR=.04;RMSEA=.03. Attraction to someone other than one's romantic partner is a common experience and often benign. Degree of attraction toward another is associated with poorer quality of the primary relationship as well as breakup four months later. This research has important implications for relationship maintenance, and dissolution, and provides new insights into how attraction may affect relationship stability.

Testing the generalizability of the link between sexual satisfaction and life satisfaction across the intersecting factors of gender, sexual orientation and relationship status

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Abstract

Growing research suggests that sexual satisfaction contributes to people's psychological well-being (e.g., Schmiedeberg et al., 2017). However, this work relies on heterosexual or partnered individuals, leaving the generalizability of this association unknown. We aimed to examine how sexual orientation (i.e., mixed-sex attracted $N = 42,466$, same-sex attracted $N = 1,089$, vs. plurisexual $N = 1,792$), relationship status (i.e., single $N = 11,592$ vs. partnered $N = 34,199$), and gender (i.e., man $N = 17,811$ vs. woman $N = 30,021$) together may affect the link between an individual's sexual satisfaction and psychological well-being. Using a representative dataset of New Zealanders ($N = 47,951$), we found a small positive association between higher sexual satisfaction and two indices of well-being: lower depressive symptoms ($r = .06$; $\beta = -.19$) and higher life satisfaction (men: $r = .08$; $\beta = .37$, women: $r = .07$; $\beta = .27$). Counter to our pre-registered predictions (https://osf.io/scm6t/?view_only=91c1c92e777f43c9affdeaaba [https://osf.io/scm6t/?view_only=91c1c92e777f43c9affdeaaba4dd0ecd]4dd0ecd [https://osf.io/scm6t/?view_only=91c1c92e777f43c9affdeaaba4dd0ecd]), these associations remained largely consistent across the interacting forces of sexual orientation, relationship status, and gender. For partnered individuals of all sexual orientations, relationship satisfaction partially mediated the effects of sexual satisfaction on well-being. Our results were robust to confounds such as income, health, social support, age and relationship length. Our large sample allowed us to assess the intersectionality of different individual factors, thereby contributing to greater inclusivity and representation in sexuality research (see Blair & Diamond, 2018). Overall, our results suggest that greater sexual satisfaction associates with two indices of psychological well-being, with minimal demographic differences.

How autonomous is your sexual communal motivation? Implications for desire and satisfaction in romantic relationships

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Abstract

Communal theories of sexual motivation suggest that romantic partners experience greater satisfaction and desire when they are responsive to each other's sexual needs (i.e., high sexual communal strength); however, doing so at the expense of attending to one's own sexual needs (i.e., high unmitigated sexual communion) has been associated with mixed outcomes. To distinguish sexual communal strength from unmitigated sexual communion, we examined whether autonomous (i.e., feeling authentic) and controlled (i.e., feeling pressured) sexual motives mediate the effects of sexual communal strength and unmitigated sexual communion on relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, and desire. In two cross-sectional studies of individuals (N=248) and couples (N=206), we found that people higher in sexual communal strength reported more autonomous and less controlled reasons for engaging in sex, and in turn they and their partners reported higher satisfaction and desire, whereas people higher in unmitigated sexual communion reported less autonomous and more controlled sexual motives, and in turn poorer outcomes. In a planned experimental study, we will extend these findings by testing whether manipulating people to feel more sexually communal versus unmitigated leads to differences in sexual motives, satisfaction, and desire. Being responsive to your partner's sexual needs for autonomous reasons is linked with positive outcomes whereas attending to your partner's sexual needs while neglecting your own for controlled reasons is associated with negative outcomes. This research is the first to empirically integrate theories on sexual communal motivation and self-determination to inform how couples are motivated to maintain desire and satisfaction.

Dyadic associations of pain catastrophizing and the psychological, physical, and sexual well-being of persons with endometriosis and their partners

Elisa Stragapede, Jonathan Huber, Serena Corsini-Munt

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Abstract

Endometriosis, a condition affecting 10% of women worldwide and contributing to chronic pain, heavily impacts psychological, relational and sexual well-being and contributes to pain for those affected and their partners. Pain catastrophizing (a cognitive process of magnifying, ruminating, and feeling hopeless about pain) significantly predicts pain for persons with endometriosis. The Communal Coping Model of pain catastrophizing indicates that pain catastrophizing affects interpersonal markers of well-being beyond the pain yet this has not been previously studied for couples with endometriosis. We examined associations of pain catastrophizing and psychological, relational and sexual well-being for both members of the couple, as well as pain reported during sex by the person with endometriosis. Persons with endometriosis (N=52) and their partners completed online measures of catastrophizing, sexual satisfaction, depression, and couple satisfaction, and persons with endometriosis reported on pain during sexual activity. When persons with endometriosis catastrophized more, they reported more pain during sexual activity and they and their partners were less sexually satisfied. When partners catastrophized more about the endometrial pain, they themselves were more depressed. The cognitive process of pain catastrophizing is importantly associated beyond the pain for couples coping with endometriosis. When both members of the couple catastrophize the endometrial pain, it may signal that they do not have a strong understanding of what can help how to respond adaptively (e.g., support, encouragement). By helping couples with endometriosis develop adaptive strategies to cope with pain, we may help them promote more sexual and psychological well-being in amidst a distressing pain condition.

Sexual Health

Moderated by: Katrina Bouchard, PhD

Mind the Gap: A Preliminary Meta-analysis of Gender Differences in Orgasm Frequency

Noemie Bouchard, Mhajor Gill, Yuemei Wu, John Sakaluk

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Abstract

Background: Global perspectives on sexual health emphasize that everyone has the right to pleasurable sexual experiences (WHO, 2006). However, research suggests that men and women may not experience orgasms with the same frequency—a phenomenon termed the orgasm gap (Wade et al., 2005). Past research has found that men experience orgasm more frequently than women (e.g., Garcia et al., 2017; Piemonté et al., 2019). Researchers have offered several theories in an attempt to explain and predict the size of the orgasm gap, in a growing and varied literature (Mahar et al., 2020).

Aims: Our aim was to conduct a meta-analysis on the orgasm gap literature, in order to estimate the size, direction, and heterogeneity of the gap, and to test theories about the individual, relational, cultural, and methodological factors that moderate it

Methods: We searched scholarly databases for articles related to the orgasm gap. We then coded articles meeting our inclusion criteria (18 effects from 12 studies), and subjected effect sizes to random-effects meta-analysis and meta-regression modeling.

Results: The orgasm gap was large—and heterogenous—with a bias favouring men. Most theories for the orgasm gap were unsupported, however, sexual orientation and question type were both found to shape the size of the orgasm gap.

Conclusions: Our synthesis suggests that who we ask and how we ask about orgasm frequency is crucial to our understanding of the orgasm gap, as well as the pursuit of gender equality in sexual pleasure and sexual health

Sexual Preoccupation as a Stress Response During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Since early 2020, we have been inundated with reminders of our mortality, with constant news reports on death rates related to COVID-19. Terror management theory (TMT; Goldenberg et al., 1986) proposes that when one's own mortality is made salient, we modify our attitudes and behaviors to cope with emerging death anxiety; responses to that anxiety vary among individuals. Some report increased sexual interest and desire when primed with the prospect of their own death (Goldenberg et al., 2000), and indeed, pornography-delivery websites have reported increased traffic since the implementation of COVID-19 quarantine measures, with over 15 million searches related to COVID-19 (Pornhub Insights, 2020). This study investigated sexual preoccupation (i.e., the tendency to excessively think about sex) and pornography consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing the TMT framework. Participants (N = ~1300) completed a demographic, pornography consumption, and COVID-19 questionnaire, as well as measures of sexuality preoccupation and level of perceived stress. Preliminary analyses indicate support for the hypotheses that stronger adherence to COVID-19 protocols result in greater sexual preoccupation and higher pornography consumption rates among those with greatest perceived stress. These findings have implications for understanding how some individuals respond to the unprecedented stress of COVID-19 lockdowns, and in particular, sexual preoccupation as a stress response mechanism to death anxiety.

#PGADFacts: Results from a 12-month knowledge translation campaign on Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder/Genitopelvic Dysesthesia (PGAD/GPD)

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Abstract

Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder/Genitopelvic Dysesthesia (PGAD/GPD) is a highly distressing, yet poorly understood condition characterized by persistent, unwanted genitopelvic sensations of arousal in the absence of psychological desire. Despite its significant negative impact on wellbeing, it is largely unknown by healthcare providers or the general public. This study consisted of the development and evaluation of an empirically informed, low-cost, 12-month social media-based knowledge translation campaign on PGAD/GPD delivered via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the SexLab website. Methods included social media analytics and analyses of results from an anonymous mixed-methods online survey of individuals who both had ($n = 56$) and had not ($n = 241$) seen the campaign. The campaign had over 111,000 Impressions, 4600 Engagements, and 1390 Likes across platforms. Significantly more individuals who had seen the campaign (80.4%) versus those who had not (37.8%) correctly identified what the abbreviation 'PGAD' means ($p < .001$). Respondents reported significantly higher confidence about having a conversation about PGAD/GPD after seeing the campaign ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 2.05$) compared to before ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 2.05$), $p < .001$. However, few participants reported sharing the campaign on/off social media (25% and 27%, respectively), with embarrassment/discomfort being the most common reasons for not sharing. Results indicate the campaign was feasible, acceptable, and effective in terms of reach; however, additional strategies (e.g., paid ads, influencer partnerships) may facilitate broader reach. Greater awareness of PGAD/GPD is needed to increase recognition of the condition, access to care, and reduce associated stigma.

Condom Use Resistance Tactics and Psychosocial Predictors of Their Use Among a Sample

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¹Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. ²Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada.

Abstract

Background: Condom use resistance tactics (CURTs) are negotiation strategies used to avoid condom use with a sexual partner. Several psychosocial factors that predict CURT use have been identified, but these associations have not been examined among gay, bisexual, and queer men (GBQM). As such, we examined the most common CURTs used by GBQM and the psychosocial factors associated with their use.

Methods: Canadian GBQM (N=210) completed an online questionnaire that included questions about demographics, biomedical HIV prevention use, typical sexual roll (top vs. bottom) as well as measures of perceived sexual relationship power, self-perceived masculinity/femininity, and CURTs used in the past six months. Adjusting for sexual identity (gay vs. bisexual), age, education, and income, we used logistic regressions to examine the association between CURTs and factors associated with their use.

Results: The majority (82.8%) of participants reported using CURTs in the past six months. The most commonly endorsed CURT was seduction strategies (N=84; 48.3%; e.g., getting a partner aroused and then initiating condomless sex). This tactic was less likely to be used by GBQM who perceived themselves as 1) more feminine (OR=0.94, p=.005) or 2) having more power in their sexual relationships (OR=0.40, p=.002). In contrast, assertive tactics were more likely to be used by GBQM using biomedical HIV prevention (OR=2.83, p=.012).

Conclusions: Seduction strategies were the most common type of CURT, especially among GBQM who perceived themselves as having less power in sexual relationships. Targeted condom interventions for GBQM that address specific types of resistance strategies are needed.

A Snapshot of Sexual Health Education Experiences in Canada

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Abstract

Comprehensive sexual health education enhances Canadians' health and well-being (e.g. Charest et al. 2016, SIECCAN, 2019), yet there are marked inconsistencies with respect to curricula and delivery processes across the country (e.g., Action Canada, 2020; Robinson et al., 2019). Our study examined whether youth of different gender and sexual identities reported different sexual health topics learned. Youth ages 16-25 ($M = 18.06$) in Canada completed an online survey about their sexual health education. The sample ($n = 1507$) comprised LGB+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and other sexual orientations; $n = 857$) and heterosexual participants ($n = 641$). Participants identified as cisgender women ($n = 985$), men ($n = 315$) and TGNCNB+ (transgender, gender-nonconforming, nonbinary, other, $n = 189$). Most participants (93.56%) had received some sexual health education, though 4.78% had never. School was the most common location (95%). The most common topics learned were sexually transmitted infections (92%) and physical anatomy/puberty (89.5%). The least common were pleasure (19%) and sexual diversity/orientation (33%). LGB+ and TGNCNB+ participants reported lower percentages for various topics learned compared to heterosexual and cisgender participants. Cisgender women and TGNCNB+ participants were less likely to learn about pleasure (16% and 15% respectively) than cisgender men (34%), $\chi^2(2) = 57.8$, $p < .01$. Results highlight information gaps in sexual health education learning experiences. Youth with different sexual and gender identities report differences in topics learned. These findings have implications for addressing how gender, heteronormativity, and cisgender biases influence the education provided to young persons in Canada.

Poster Presentations

1- The Impact of COVID-Related Disgust on Attitudes toward Marginalized Groups

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Abstract

Background: Core disgust, or pathogen disgust, refers to a biologically based rejection response to stimuli perceived as potentially threatening. The current COVID-19 pandemic has been linked to heightened pathogen disgust sensitivity (e.g., Stevenson et al., 2020). Literature on disgust and prejudice indicates individuals show increased prejudice toward outgroups when disgusted (e.g., Dasgupta et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2017). The present study sought to investigate the impact of COVID-related disgust on attitudes toward various social outgroups. We hypothesized that increased COVID-related disgust would prompt heightened prejudice toward theoretically COVID-unrelated outgroups.

Methods/Results: Participants (N = ~400) were primed with one of two statements - one explicitly described COVID-19 transmission factors (disgust condition), while the other simply defined the disease (neutral condition) - before completing measures of their current level of COVID-19 related disgust, personal disgust sensitivity, and prejudice toward a randomly assigned outgroup (either STI-Positive, LGBTQ+, or fat people). Preliminary analyses suggest support for our hypothesis: Participants with higher levels of COVID-related disgust endorsed greater prejudice toward outgroups.

Conclusions/Implications: COVID-related disgust appears to have implications for prejudice toward outgroups, even when those outgroups are theoretically unrelated to COVID transmission. The present findings suggest that interventions to reduce prejudice amidst the COVID-19 pandemic should extend beyond currently noted targets of prejudice (e.g., Asian people), and implications of COVID-related prejudice for STI-positive and LGBTQ+ individuals should be explored.

2- Assigned-Female-At-Birth Trans Masculine and Non-binary Individuals Differ in Body Satisfaction and Their Desire for Gender Confirming Treatments

Catherine Schaeff

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Abstract

Based on an anonymous online survey, the experience of assigned-female-at-birth non-binary and transmasculine individuals who have had at least one gender confirming treatment (GCT) are similar in several ways. Most individuals tend to identify as trans, experience better overall body satisfaction than peers who have not physically transitioned and provide a similar ranking of GCT. Non-physically transitioned transmasculine individuals resemble their physically transitioned peers in strength of intention for GCT and number wanted. There were three subgroups within the non-physically transitioned non-binary cohort: about forty percent didn't want GCT, a similar proportion wanted GCT but not sex hormones, and the remainder mirrored the experience of physically transitioned peers in wanting GCT including sex hormones. Among participants who chose binary-based sexual orientation labels, transmasculine individuals mostly used male-based identity labels whereas non-binary participants, including several who identified as trans, used female-based ones. Preliminary data suggest that individuals who use female-based identifiers tend to not want to use testosterone. The study confirms similarities and also key differences in experience of transmasculine and non-binary individuals. Tracking individuals' binary/non-binary gender identity and other aspects, such as identifying as trans, will enhance our ability to understand and support individuals' desire for and experience with gender confirming treatments.

3- Gaining Momentum/Giving up Connections: Embodied Experiences of Becoming Sex Education Specialists

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Abstract

Academic literature supports the need to augment understandings of Canadian sexual health educators' experiences of comprehensive sexual health education [SHE]. Such information can provide insights into longstanding, uneven enactments of SHE that reflect a range of content, learning outcomes, and adherence to pedagogical best practices. To help address this gap, I draw from a larger sensory ethnography I conducted from 2018 to 2019 that documented six novice sexual educators' embodied experiences of learning to teach SHE via a community-based course located in Vancouver, Canada. Ethnographic methods included a range of arts-based and qualitative methods (e.g., body maps and erasure poetry) and were analytically integrated via composition pieces to generate the research findings. Here, I present a subset of the findings, which detail the educators' experiences of learning to navigate the various forms of sexual knowledge, power networks, and intertextual processes that comprise SHE. The findings highlight the educators' embodied sense(s) of their bodies simultaneously giving and gaining, like sandpaper. In particular, educators gained clarity about strategic positioning, feelings of systemic support, and the sense of momentum, and gave up a desire for connections with learners and fellow educators. I also highlight frictions experienced by some of the educators that stemmed from being 'schooled' in contemporary pedagogical practices of SHE. The findings reveal that through embodying SHE via teaching, the educators gained a deep and often surprising understanding of the nuances of how they were regulating and being regulated, even as they held a shared goal to reduce sexual regulation overall.

4- Asexuality vs. Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder: Examining Group Differences in Initial Attention to Sexual Stimuli

Julia Bradshaw, Natalie Brown, Alan Kingstone, Lori Brotto

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Abstract

Asexual individuals and persons with a sexual desire disorder share a lack of interest in sexual activity. While the sex-related distress reported by women with Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD) usually differentiates these groups, they can be difficult to distinguish in clinical practice. Attention, a fundamental component of the sexual response cycle, includes initial (involuntary) and subsequent (voluntary) processes. Prior eye-tracking studies have shown differing initial attention patterns to erotic stimuli between individuals of different sexual orientations. No study has compared asexual individuals' and women with SIAD's initial attention to sexual stimuli. This study tested differences in the initial attention patterns of asexual individuals and heterosexual women with SIAD, using eye-tracking. 29 asexual individuals and 25 women with SIAD were presented with erotic and neutral stimuli, and initial eye movements to both image types and areas of sexual contact were recorded. Mixed-model ANOVAs and t-tests were used to compare groups on initial fixation duration, time to first fixation, and number of initial fixations. On four of six indices of initial attention, women with SIAD displayed a stronger initial attention preference for erotic over neutral stimuli compared to asexual participants. Our findings add to a growing literature on the distinction between asexuality and sexual desire disorder and provide insight for clinicians diagnosing SIAD. Previous data showing that women with sexual dysfunction show reduced initial attention to erotic imagery compared to asymptomatic women should be considered when formulating treatment for SIAD, highlighting the potential for psychological interventions that directly target attention.

5- Relationship Satisfaction and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in instructions by governments and international health organizations for individuals to shelter in place and practice self-isolation. Adherence to these protocols has resulted in increased time spent with others in the household - including romantic partners - adversely impacting numerous aspects of psychological and physical well-being in some cases. For example, observed indicators suggest that increased time spent at home due to COVID-19 has led to a decrease in relationship satisfaction (RS) and an increase in reports of interpersonal violence (IPV); Vancouver's Battered Women's Support Services - a domestic violence crisis phone line - reported a 300% increase in calls since mid-March of 2020. With these indicators in mind, we investigated the impact of COVID-19, sheltering-in-place, and self-isolation on self-reported relationship satisfaction and IPV during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants (N= ~1200) completed a demographic questionnaire, parental responsibility measure, and COVID-19 questionnaire, as well as measures of sexuality, RS, gender-role beliefs, and experiences of IPV. Preliminary analyses lend support to the observed indicators, with stricter, prolonged COVID-19 restrictions resulting in decreased RS and increased IPV incidences. By following the COVID-19 protocols, an already vulnerable group of people - victims of domestic violence - are at an increased risk of experiencing further IPV (the "shadow pandemic"; EVAC, 2020). These findings have implications for law enforcement, domestic violence shelters, and mental health-related services. Further, our project suggests that individuals with minority identities are at an increased risk for IPV during the pandemic, suggesting the need for appropriate services for marginalized populations.

6- Sexting 101: Affective Responses to Unsolicited Nudes based on Gender and Cyberflashing History

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Abstract

Background: Little work has investigated cyberflashing and examined the affective responses to receiving such an image or how these responses relate to gender, sexual orientation, or cyberflashing history.

Method: We recruited a sample of 816 young adults. The majority of the participants were female (73%) heterosexual (81%) and their ages ranged from 16 - 60 ($M = 20.08$, $SD = 4.29$). Participants were asked to report how they would expect the person receiving their unsolicited nude would feel and how they typically feel when they receive such an image by selecting as many of 16 options grouped into four categories (flirty, positive, neutral, negative) as applicable.

Results: 42% of the sample reported having cyberflashed someone. Cyberflashers expected more flirty, ($p < .001$), and positive responses ($p < .001$). At the same time, their responses were more flirty ($p < .001$) and positive ($p < .001$) than non-cyberflashers. Non-cyberflashers reported more negative responses to receiving unsolicited nudes ($p = .002$). Women expected more flirty ($p < .001$) while men expected more negative responses ($p < .001$). Conversely, men were more likely to report giving flirty responses to cyberflashing ($p < .001$) while women reported giving more negative responses ($p < .001$).

Conclusions: Cyberflashers may react more favorably to unsolicited nudes and expect this to be the typical response of others.

Impact: Based on the results we recommend consent education related to online sexual interactions.

7- Sex, Body Image, and Precarious Manhood: The Influence of Fatherhood Status

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Abstract

This study explores how fatherhood influences men's attitudes about masculinity and sexuality. Post-natal changes regarding sexuality and body image are well-documented among mothers (e.g., Fox & Nelterman, 2015), but the impact of parenthood on men's self-perceptions is relatively unexplored. The stress, exhaustion, and loss of independence associated with parenthood (e.g., Genesoni & Tallandini, 2009) may lead to reduced sexual interest or sexual esteem. Since sexuality and physicality are cornerstones of traditional masculine norms (Shirani, 2013), changes in these domains may contribute to concerns about masculinity maintenance and loss of masculine status. Comparatively, fatherhood provides clear evidence of a man's sexual capability and virility - highly valued masculine traits (Calasanti & King, 2005) - therefore, fatherhood could theoretically make perceptions of masculinity more stable.

Approximately 600 men participated in an online survey; data collection is currently ongoing. Participants responded to measures of sexual esteem, precarious manhood beliefs, parenthood status, and demographic information. Our analysis will compare fathers and non-fathers in levels of sexual esteem and precarious manhood beliefs. We anticipate significant group-level differences based on fatherhood status; preliminary analysis suggests support for this hypothesis. In addition, fathers were asked about their self-perceived masculinity before and after parenthood, and whether parenthood altered their or their partners interest in sex. This exploratory study contributes to a paucity in the research literature and has implications for understanding how men's beliefs about themselves and their sexuality are influenced by their role as a parent.

8- What do Pornography Users “Actually” Watch? A Content Analysis of Consumers’ Viewing Preference

Kiara Fernandez, Taylor Kohut

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Abstract

Concerns about pornography use remain widespread and are often predicated on the assumption that the specific content that individuals consume (e.g., violent pornography) drive particular effects (e.g., violence against others). Unfortunately, assessment of the use of specific types of pornography in survey research remains hindered by the lack of empirically-derived typologies of psychologically meaningful content differences in pornography. In an effort to provide further information on which such typologies may be based, the present study aimed to conduct a content analysis of responses from an open-ended Internet survey of individuals’ (N = 369) pornography viewing preferences. Analyses are ongoing but preliminary coding suggests consumers more frequently describe the number and preferred gender of performers (e.g., FFM threesomes, etc.) than the type of sexual behaviours they like to view (e.g., anal sex etc.), though this too is common. Reports of the use of violent and coercive material are present, but rare in comparison, suggesting that other content types may be of more relevant for understanding the typical viewing experience of many users.

9- "Am I Normal?": An Analysis of Adult Sex Education Through Interviews with Sex Educators

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Abstract

Research and discussion about sex education almost exclusively focused on sex education of children and teens; however, there is an increasing amount of sex education aimed at adults. Despite its growing popularity, few studies have explored adult sex education from a pedagogical perspective. With educators ranging from Instagram sex ed influencers to dominatrix-led kink workshops to church-based sex education courses, adult sex education has solidified its place in modern society. The current study sought to investigate adult sex education from the perspective of the educators in order to better understand the work that they do, as well as the clients they serve. Seventeen sex educators from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom participated in this study. Five themes were identified as part of this sample. This included normalcy, communication, shame, past sex education, sex education beyond heteronormativity, and empowerment. The results of this study help to outline the information sought from adult sex education, as well as inform gaps in mainstream sex education.

10- "Everyone should get the chance to love": Sexual Health Research-Based Theatre with Self-Advocates

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Abstract

"Everyone should get the chance to love, that's an issue for people with and without disabilities" (Self-Advocate Co-Creator). But too often, individuals with intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) are left out of discussions on romantic relationships and sexuality. Indeed, many individuals with IDD want to become sexually expressive, fulfilled persons who are sexually active, yet they are often denied the sexual health education to support their sexual agency. Given this, we undertook a research-based theatre project in New Westminster, British Columbia to better respond the needs of individuals with IDD, who refer to themselves as self-advocates - those who speak and act with agency - regarding their sexual agency. The project, entitled Romance, Relationships, and Rights, sought to disrupt sexual ableism and present the lived experiences of self-advocates on stage. Through focus group discussions with self-advocates, theatre artists, and steering committee members, the themes of empowerment, audience impact, and sexual rights arose as particularly salient in addressing inequity in sexual health education and resources for self-advocates. There was uncertainty in how self-advocates, families, and caregivers would respond to the topic of sexuality, but the benefits of discussing sexual health were greater than the risks. Utilizing theatre to centre self-advocate voices offers a framework for accessible, inclusive sexual health education that extends beyond a classroom lecture and into embodied learning that disrupts the silence surrounding self-advocates' sexual expression.

11- University Sexual Violence Policies: Perceptions of Students and University Counsellors

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Abstract

While a few studies have explored students' perceptions of their university's sexual violence policy generally, current research lacks a thorough examination of the individual components of university sexual violence policies to understand where they are specifically lacking. Additionally, there have been no studies on the perspective of university counsellors. To address these shortcomings, the present study was guided by two goals: 1) to assess university students' awareness of sexual violence policy, services, and reporting options and their confidence in their university's ability to execute aspects of sexual violence policy and 2) to explore university counsellors' perceptions of their university's sexual violence policy and personal experiences working with survivors. Author constructed online questionnaires were administered to university students (n= 141) and counsellors (n= 6). Overall, students reported minimal awareness of their university's sexual violence policy, services, and reporting options. Students reported higher levels of confidence in their university to execute their sexual violence policy than expected. Contrary to hypotheses, there were no gender differences in awareness or confidence. However, women who reported experiencing sexual violence while they were a university student reported significantly less confidence in their university than women who had not. Due to the small sample size of university counsellors, a formal analysis of gender differences in confidence could not be conducted; however, responses to open-ended questions were analyzed for common themes. Implications and future directions will be discussed.

12- Sexual Function and Sexual Insecurities in Women with an Eating Disorder

Yana Svatko, Cara Dunkley, Lori Brotto

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Abstract

Background: A growing body of literature points to the occurrence of considerable sexual concerns among women with an eating disorder. Comorbidity between sexual difficulties and eating disorder symptoms may result from underlying psychological traits associated with eating disorders (e.g., interpersonal problems, low self-esteem).

Aims: The present research aims to extend the knowledge on sexual difficulties in women with an eating disorder and investigate whether psychological traits of eating disorders accounts for part of the association between disordered eating and sexual concerns. The Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP) - an empirically-derived dimensional approach to understanding psychopathology was used as a basis for examining this relationship.

Methods: Women diagnosed with an eating disorder ($n=120$; $M_{age}=26$) and undergraduate students ($n=193$; $M_{age}=20$) completed online questionnaires of sexual function, sexual insecurities, eating disorder symptoms, and psychological traits of an eating disorder.

Results: Women with an eating disorder reported more sexual concerns than undergraduate women. Disordered eating, body dissatisfaction, and psychological traits were associated with more sexual difficulties among women with an eating disorder. Both psychological traits and negative affect mediated these associations.

Conclusions: Sexual difficulties are rarely addressed in women with an eating disorder unless a history of sexual abuse is present. These findings suggest that sexual concerns should be considered within eating disorder care. The results of this research also provide evidence for shared, underlying psychological traits between sexual difficulties and disordered eating, which may serve as risk factors for the development and/or maintenance of both sexual difficulties and eating disorders.

13- What “counts” as first sex for women who have sex with women (WSW)? A follow-up quantitative study on behavioural markers of first sex among WSW

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Abstract

First sex is often defined by first penile-vaginal intercourse (PVI) among heterosexuals or first anal intercourse among men who have sex with men, thus rendering invisible women who have sex with women’s (WSW) sexualities. In a previous qualitative study, we found that direct genital stimulation overwhelmingly (but not systematically) marked first sex among WSW. While sexual behavior inventories have been developed to measure sexual repertoires, none have examined WSW markers of first sex. This study aims to complement our qualitative findings by categorizing 94 WSW-specific partnered sexual behaviours as either: non-sexual, non-markers of first sex; sexual, but non-markers of first sex; or sexual, markers of first sex. Eighty-four WSW aged 16–25 ($M = 21.69$, $SD = 2.44$; 79% cisgender) completed an online survey on first sex. Results from a non-linear principal component analysis (3 components, 58.06% explained variance) show that direct anal or genital stimulations (given or received) are largely considered as markers of first sex. Behaviours such as heavy petting and indirect genital contacts are generally considered sexual but non-markers of first sex. Behaviours not involving genital contact (e.g., striptease, massage) are considered non-sexual. Few behaviours (e.g., watching a partner masturbate, sexting) do not reach consensus among WSW. Combined with prior qualitative results, this study shows that meanings given to behaviours categorized as markers of first sex (e.g., manual-genital stimulation) may depend on context. This study documents a “grey zone” for categorizing sexual behaviours beyond “sex” or “not sex.” Importantly, no behavioural equivalent to PVI emerges.

14- HPV Vaccination Among Young Adults: A National Survey of University Students in Canada

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Abstract

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine protects against the most common types of HPV that cause cancer and genital warts. Without the HPV vaccine, it is estimated that up to 75% of sexually active people will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime (Government of Canada, 2017). Understanding young adults' reasons for receiving/not receiving the HPV vaccine is key to improving educational efforts and vaccination rates. We surveyed 1500 university students across Canada to examine self-reported rates of HPV vaccination, reasons for receiving/not receiving the HPV vaccine, and the likelihood of getting the HPV vaccine in the next year. The survey instrument was designed by the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN) and administered by the Leger polling company. A significantly higher percentage of cisgender women (77.1%) had been vaccinated compared to cisgender men (35.3%) and transgender and non-binary participants (67.7%). Across all genders, the most frequently endorsed reason for vaccination was the availability of the HPV vaccine at participants' schools. The most common reasons for not getting the vaccine included: being in a steady relationship, not being sexually active, using condoms regularly, and a belief that the HPV vaccine was not necessary. Amongst unvaccinated participants, transgender and non-binary students were significantly more likely to report that they would get the HPV vaccine within the following year, compared to cisgender women and men. To increase vaccination rates, education targeting misconceptions about HPV and the benefits of HPV vaccination, particularly among cisgender men, are necessary.

15- Sexual Desire: Missing in Postpartum Sexuality Education and Healthcare

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Abstract

Background: Healthcare providers are involved in helping people who have just given birth understand their postpartum experiences but, when it comes to sexuality, these discussions are often limited to the resumption of penetrative sex. Similar to adolescent sex education, where there is a 'missing discourse' around sexual desire (Fine, 1988), we were interested in whether there is a gap in education about postpartum sexual desire. We investigated the extent to which people who had recently given birth had discussions about sexual desire and sexuality with their healthcare providers during the postpartum period and whether they felt that sexual desire was sufficiently addressed.

Method: Participants (N= 21; data collection on going) answered questions about their postpartum experiences, including which topics (including those related to sexual desire) they discussed with their healthcare provider(s) and their level of satisfaction with the information they received.

Results: Initial findings showed that healthcare providers mostly focused on the resumption of penetrative sex. Sexual desire was rarely discussed, and solitary sexuality (e.g., masturbation, using sex toys) was not discussed at all. Participants' responses indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the information they received, which may reflect low expectations rather than lack of dissatisfaction.

Conclusions: Our findings suggest that Fine's missing discourse of desire described in 1988 is still present and extends to adult postpartum sex education. This study has implications for obstetrics, public health, and sexuality research, and may contribute to our understandings and conceptualizations of postpartum sexuality and improved discourse about sexual desire.

16- Ambivalent Sexism Theory and Sexual Orientation: A Test of Measurement Invariance

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Abstract

Ambivalent Sexism Theory (AST; Glick & Fiske, 1996) has revolutionized understanding of sexism and generated a new way of examining sexist attitudes using the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). One key goal in sexism research is to compare sexist attitudes across different groups. But before doing so researchers must be confident that the construct(s) they are comparing is the same across groups. Given assumptions of heterosexuality (e.g. "every man should have a woman he adores", and the central role of heterosexual interdependence and intimacy in AST (e.g. "men are incomplete without women"), we expected sexist attitudes would not be comparable across heterosexual vs. gay/lesbian populations. We conducted multi-group confirmatory factor testing of the ASI across 4 groups: heterosexual women, heterosexual men, lesbian women, and gay men (total N = 1614). Results indicate that the ASI is not a suitable measurement tool to compare sexist attitudes across heterosexual and queer populations. Although, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism emerge as separate, yet related, forms of sexism across groups (i.e. configural invariance) the item loadings (i.e. loading variance) and intercepts (i.e. intercept variance) are not equivalent across groups. We discuss theoretical, practical, and applied implications, including practical suggestions for the use of the ASI and implications for understanding sexual minorities' sexism. We also focus on insights gleaned with an eye towards creating a queer sexism scale.

18- I'm into it! Positive Interpretations of Bodily Sensations and Sexual Functioning

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Abstract

Background: Experiencing anxiety is associated with numerous psychological (e.g., racing thoughts) and physical (e.g., heart palpitations) symptoms. In sexual contexts, these anxious sensations may be interpreted positively (e.g., "My heart is beating so I must be turned on") and may facilitate sexual functioning, or negatively (e.g., "My heart is beating so I must be scared") and inhibit sexual functioning. Our goal was to assess how interpretation of bodily sensations influences sexual functioning in men and women.

Method: A total of 912 participants completed questionnaires, including the Positive Interpretations of Bodily Sensations (PIBSS), the Anxiety Sensitivity Inventory-3 (ASI-3), and the Male/Female Sexual Function Inventory (MSFI/FSFI). AMOS modeling assessed whether the PIBSS, ASI-3, and an interaction term predicted sexual functioning outcomes.

Results: Men had higher PIBSS scores ($M_{Men} = 1.77$, $SD_{Men} = .68$; $M_{Women} = 1.45$, $SD_{Women} = .65$; $F(1, 905) = 52.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$) and lower anxiety sensitivity ($M_{Men} = 21.91$, $SD_{Men} = 13.46$; $M_{Women} = 26.05$, $SD_{Women} = 15.91$; $F(1, 905) = 17.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$) than women. For men and women, higher PIBSS scores were associated with greater sexual desire ($r_{Men} = .15$, $p = .002$; $r_{Women} = .11$, $p = .02$) but not with other domains of sexual functioning. Neither ASI-3 scores nor the ASI-3×PIBSS interaction predicted sexual functioning.

Conclusion: When bodily sensations are interpreted positively, they may facilitate sexual desire for men and women. These findings expand our understanding of how desire may be cultivated in sexual contexts.

19- Sexual Sadism Disorder v.s. Coercive Paraphilias: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Introduction: Valid and reliable diagnostic criteria are essential in forensic psychiatry due to the severe implications of potential misdiagnoses. However, sexual sadism disorder (SS) and coercive paraphilias (CP+) are poorly operationalized and the validity of their diagnostic tools remains uncertain.

Aim: This scoping review aims to summarize the definitions and clinical tools used to diagnose SS and CP+ within the past 10 years.

Methods: Arksey and O'Malley's methodological framework was followed. A literature search of Medline, PsychInfo, Web of Science, and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature electronic data bases was conducted. Publications in English describing the construct and/or operational definition of SS or CP+ were included. Full-text studies were reviewed by two authors and data was charted and synthesized qualitatively.

Results: The initial search provided 1271 records, after which 120 full-text papers were considered for eligibility and 48 studies were ultimately included. The most common sources of definitions for SS and CP+ were the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (n=53) and the International Classification of Disease (n=12). There was more variation of terms used for CP+ than SS. Both CP+ and SS are critiqued for having low validity, reliability, and consistency, as well as being conflated with sexual crime. SS is better described due to having diagnostic criteria and validated diagnostic tools.

Conclusion: Despite their significant implications, the definitions of SS and CP+ are inconsistent and lack reliability. Future research is necessary to develop stronger diagnostic criteria and tools.

20- Daily Dyadic Coping in the Transition to Parenthood: Associations with Sexual and Relationship Satisfaction

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Abstract

The transition to parenthood is a period of numerous stressors for new parents. Consequently, as many as 58% of new parents report declines in their sexual satisfaction compared to pre-pregnancy, and a similar percentage report declines in their overall relationship satisfaction^{1,2}. While prior research suggests that dyadic coping—a couple's capacity to effectively and mutually deal with stress³—is positively linked with relationship satisfaction, little is known about how it relates to sexual and relationship satisfaction in new parents' daily lives. We examined how common (i.e., joint problem-solving) and negative (i.e., unmotivated, mocking, superficial support) dyadic coping in new parents was associated with their own and their partner's sexual and relationship satisfaction. Ninety-nine new parent couples completed a baseline survey and 21-days of daily diaries online, reporting on dyadic coping⁴, sexual satisfaction⁵, and relationship satisfaction⁶ between 3-4 months postpartum. All birth-giving partners identified as women. Data were analyzed according to the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model with multilevel modelling. For women and partners, on days that they reported lower negative and higher common dyadic coping, both they and their partners reported higher relationship satisfaction. On days when women reported lower negative dyadic coping, and both they and their partners reported greater common dyadic coping, women reported greater sexual satisfaction. Finally, on days that partners reported higher common dyadic coping, they reported greater sexual satisfaction. Interventions may facilitate daily common—and reduce negative—dyadic coping, to promote sexual and relationship satisfaction early in the postpartum when most couples are resuming sexual activity.

21- A Bit of a Mythunderstanding: Endorsement of Sexuality Myths and Sexual Outcomes

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Abstract

Despite the importance of sexuality for people's health, well-being, and relationships, most people receive limited information, or even misinformation, about sexuality. This lack of accessible, accurate information and the perpetuation of misinformation may cause individuals to develop false beliefs and ideas about sexuality, which may be linked with sexual problems. In order to translate knowledge to those who need it most, identifying who is most likely to endorse sexuality myths is needed. The purpose of this study was to: 1) examine factors associated with who is most likely to endorse sexuality myths; 2) explore the links between myth endorsement and sexual outcomes; and 3) use these data to inform a knowledge translation initiative—misconSEXions. Undergraduate students (n= 413) completed an online survey assessing sociodemographic information, endorsement of sexuality myths, and sexual outcomes. Results revealed that engaging in partnered sexual activity at a later age and holding more conservative political views significantly predicted greater myth endorsement, whereas age, religiosity, living in an urban versus rural community, receiving formal sex education, and taking a human sexuality course in university were not significantly related to myth endorsement. As well, greater myth endorsement was significantly negatively correlated with both sexual and relationship satisfaction. These results demonstrate the importance of sexual knowledge for sexual well-being. In March 2021, we began using the sociodemographic and myth data to disseminate empirical information about sexuality through social media (@misconSEXions). We intend to present data on engagement and uptake of misconSEXions as part of the presentation.

22- Exploring the Relationship between Self-Esteem and Abuse in Romantic and Sexual Relationships via Youth Self-Reported Experiences Across Time

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Abstract

Youth deserve to choose relationships where they can feel safe and respected. Recent findings report adolescent dating violence rates of 11.8% for physical aggression and 27.8% for psychological aggression (Exner-Cortens et al., 2021). Understanding the psychological impacts of these abuses can help inform effective areas for interventions and support. Our study explored risk factors as well as resilience and protective factors. We collected survey data from Canadians aged 16-25 ($n = 1,507$). Participants completed Survey 1, and were invited to respond to Survey 2 six months later. Participants self-reported experiences of abuse (which may include emotional, physical, sexual abuse) in a romantic or sexual relationship. At the time of Survey 1, 35% reported lifetime abuse exposure, 14% within the last 12 months, and 4% within the last 3 months. Additionally, roughly 19% of participants reported sexual violence and 7% reported physical violence in the past 12 months. Our findings showed that lifetime abuse exposure was a significant predictor of self-esteem, $F(3,1481) = 4.58, p = .003$. Individuals who reported abuse on Survey 1 but not at Survey 2 did not have significantly higher self-esteem than those who reported abuse at both time points, $t(127) = 17.00, p = .12$. However, results demonstrated a significant improvement in self-esteem over time for the individuals whose abuse ended between Survey 1 and Survey 2, $t(99) = 7.82, p < .001$. Findings have implications for how and when to support Canadian youth and addressing the impacts of experience abuse in a relationship.

23- Parental fatigue in the transition to parenthood: A mediating factor in the link between infant sleep and parental sexual desire and frequency?

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Abstract

Background: Many parents experience increased variability in sexual desire and frequency during the transition to parenthood, with poor infant sleep and parental fatigue thought to play a role. While there is preliminary cross-sectional evidence for individual associations among these factors, whether parental fatigue accounts for the link between poor infant sleep and lower sexual desire and frequency within and between-couples is unknown.

Aims: To examine whether parental fatigue mediated the association between infant sleep and sexual desire and frequency, both within and between-couples across the postpartum period.

Methods: In a dyadic longitudinal study, 203 first-time mothers and partners completed assessments of infant sleep quality, fatigue, sexual desire, and sexual frequency at 3-, 6-, 9-, and 12-months postpartum. We conducted multilevel mediation models.

Results: At the between-couple level, poorer infant sleep was associated with partner's greater fatigue, and in turn couples' lower sexual frequency. There were no significant indirect effects of infant sleep on couples' sexual frequency via mothers' fatigue. For sexual desire, at the within-person level, poorer infant sleep was associated with mothers' greater fatigue, and in turn, mothers' lower sexual desire. At the between- and within-couple level, poorer infant sleep was associated with partners' greater fatigue, and in turn, partners' lower sexual desire.

Implications: For new parents, parental fatigue is one mechanism by which infant sleep is associated with their sexual desire and frequency. Findings contribute to how we conceptualize sexual changes in the transition to parenthood, suggesting that prioritizing sleep is beneficial for sexual well-being during this time.

24- Shame Mediates Relations Between Borderline Personality Disorder Symptom Severity and Domains of Sexuality in Woman Undergraduates

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Abstract

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is characterized by instability in affect, interpersonal relationships, and impulsivity (APA, 2013); individuals with BPD have elevated shame-proneness (Scheel et al., 2013), including higher baseline levels of (Scheel et al., 2013), and greater reactivity to, shame (Gratz et al., 2010). Shame, an aversive self-conscious emotional state wherein one experiences the self as both flawed and unacceptable (VanDerhei et al., 2014), has putative links to both self-destructive and self-protective domains of sexuality; namely, sexual self-esteem (Heinrichs et al., 2009) and sexual risk-taking (Overstreet, 2012). The current research investigated (1) relations between BPD symptom severity and sexuality, and (2) whether shame could mediate (explain) relations between BPD symptom severity and sexual self-esteem, and BPD symptom severity and sexual risk-taking. Participants included 167 women introductory psychology students (Mage = 20.42, SDage= 4.82) who completed measures of BPD symptom severity (BSL-23), shame-proneness (TOSCA-3S), sexual self-esteem (SSEI-SF), and safe sex behaviour (SSBQ). Correlational analyses indicated that BSL-23 scores were significantly positively correlated with TOSCA-3S ($p < .05$) and significantly negatively correlated with SSEI-SF ($p < .01$) and SSBQ ($p < .05$). Shame mediated relations between both sexual self-esteem (6.79% variance) and sexual risk-taking (2.82% variance), and BPD symptom severity. Potential implications include understanding how shame may trigger and maintain sexual risk-taking behaviour and/or low sexual self-esteem, and whether shame-targeted interventions could mitigate the ramifications of shame on these domains of sexuality in individuals with higher BPD symptom severity.

25- La représentation des adultes vierges dans les macros-mèmes.

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Abstract

Les jeunes adultes vierges (JAV), puisqu'ils dérogent de l'horloge sociale, sont souvent stigmatisés (Fuller et al., 2019). Malgré l'importance des médias dans la vie des jeunes adultes, peu d'études ont porté sur les représentations médiatiques des JAV, et aucune n'a examiné les nombreux mèmes sur les adultes vierges qui circulent dans les plateformes d'échange de contenu. Les mèmes (i.e. ensemble d'éléments culturels diffusés et imités sur Internet; Shifman, 2014) et les macros-mèmes (i.e. images auxquelles on a ajouté du texte; Davidson, 2012) sont omniprésents dans l'environnement numérique en tant qu'outils discursifs. Plusieurs études révèlent l'influence des mèmes dans la construction identitaire, notamment puisqu'ils tendent à représenter des stéréotypes et des groupes marginalisés (Milner, 2012). La présente étude vise à décrire les représentations des adultes vierges véhiculées dans les macros-mèmes publiés sur 9GAG, un site web international fréquenté pour son contenu mémétique. L'analyse de contenu menée sur un corpus de 48 mèmes montre l'émergence de trois catégories subdivisées en 10 profils de JAV : la virginité comme 1) marque d'appartenance (l'intégré, le vierge notoire), 2) expérience subjective (le vierge volontaire, l'accompli, le naïf, le subversif), 3) un fardeau (le stigmatisé, le résigné, l'anxieux, l'éprouvé du double standard). Les différents profils soutiennent tant des discours de stigmatisation que d'auto-détermination dans l'expérience de la virginité à l'âge adulte. Cette étude offre une première exploration des représentations mémétiques qui circulent dans l'environnement numérique des JAV.

26- Sexual Consent Attitudes and Behaviour: Associations with Sexual Health Education, Sexual Consent Education, and Sexual Attitudes

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Abstract

Background: Many young adults do not have positive attitudes toward establishing consent and do not consistently give and receive direct consent in their sexual relationships. Thus, it is important to identify factors associated with positive sexual consent attitudes and behaviour.

Research Questions and Hypotheses: H1. Being female, having less sexual experience, less conservative attitudes toward sexuality, perceiving one's peers as having more positive attitudes toward sexual consent, more extensive sexual consent education at home and at school, and more exposure to sexual consent information in the media and at university will be associated with more positive sexual consent attitudes and behavior. H2. Sexual consent attitudes will add to the prediction of sexual consent behavior over and above the contributions of the other predictors.

Method: Participants were 196 undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 25 who completed an online survey assessing sexual health education, sexual consent attitudes, and behaviour.

Results: More positive perceptions of social norms, more liberal sexual attitudes, and more sexual consent education from parents (but not at school or overall sexual health education) were uniquely associated with weaker negative attitudes and more consistent sexual consent behavior. More positive perceptions of social norms were also uniquely associated with stronger positive attitudes and less use of an indirect approach to establishing consent. These relations were not moderated by gender.

Conclusions: The results point to the importance of sexual consent education by parents specifically, sexual attitudes, and perceptions of social norms with respect to sexual consent attitudes and behavior.

27- Treatment utility of the approach-avoidance motivation model for sexual interest/arousal disorder in women and non-binary individuals

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Abstract

Sexual difficulties affect up to 50% of cisgender women, with low sexual desire being the most common sexual concern, and 8% of these women meet the diagnostic criteria for Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD). Research on sexual concerns among transgender women and non-binary individuals is unfortunately scarce, and thus the prevalence of SIAD in these gender diverse groups is not known. The treatment utility of the Approach-Avoidance Motivation Model for SIAD was examined in a sample of cis- and transgender women, and non-binary individuals, who either met criteria for SIAD or reported no sexual concerns. A sample of 168 participants ($M_{age}=31.2$, $SD=9.1$) completed baseline measures of sexual motivation, sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction followed by an online assessment from home that involved a writing exercise previously found to increase the salience of approach or avoidance sexual motivation, or a control writing task, then viewed a nature film and erotic film while self-reporting levels of attention. Three days later they completed sexual outcome measures again. A repeated measures 2x3 MANCOVA assessing the impact of SIAD status and writing task condition, while controlling for baseline depression symptoms, found that participants significantly decreased in their approach and avoidance motivation, as well as dyadic sexual desire across writing conditions from baseline to 3 days following the online assessment. Collectively, there was no support for the treatment utility of the approach-avoidance motivation manipulation for SIAD. Future studies might explore more long-term interventions targeting approach-avoidance motivation as a means to address sexual difficulties.

28- Sexual system, activate! Are sexual system hyperactivation and deactivation related to sexual well-being in mixed- and same-gender couples?

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Abstract

Background: Attachment system insecurities (i.e., anxious hyperactivation, avoidant deactivation) are consistently linked with poorer sexual well-being. The related, but independent sexual system is similarly comprised of hyperactivation (intense, but anxious expressions of sexual desire) and deactivation (inhibitions of sexual desire and thoughts) (Birnbaum et al., 2014). Although patterns of intense engagement or withdrawal from sex are theorized to disrupt sexual well-being for individuals and couples, sexual system function has undergone limited empirical investigation.

Aim: To examine the links between sexual hyperactivation and deactivation and sexual well-being among community couples.

Methods: A sample of 229 mixed- and same-gender couples in long-term relationships ($M = 5.84$ years, $SD = 5.10$ years) completed online surveys about sexual system function and sexual well-being (i.e., sexual desire, frequency, satisfaction, distress) at three time points over 12 months. Cross-sectional analyses of baseline data were conducted using an actor-partner interdependence model (Kenny et al., 2006).

Results: When individuals reported greater sexual hyperactivation, they reported greater dyadic sexual desire, but lower sexual satisfaction, and both they and their partners reported greater sexual distress. Individuals' reports of greater sexual deactivation were linked to their own lower dyadic sexual desire and greater sexual distress as well as to their own and their partners' lower sexual satisfaction and the couples' lower sexual frequency. Longitudinal data will be analyzed to further characterize these relationships.

Conclusions: Results support theoretical models of the sexual behavioural system. Sexual hyperactivation and deactivation are both associated with individuals', and to some extent their partners', poorer sexual well-being.

29- How can we make this work? Couples' implicit beliefs about sex are associated with their dyadic coping during medically assisted reproduction

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Abstract

Introduction: Couples who access medically assisted reproduction report unique sexual challenges that have consequences for their sexual well-being. These new obstacles may be most effectively navigated by couples who believe that these challenges can be worked through (i.e., sexual growth beliefs) relative to those who believe that sexual problems indicate incompatibility (i.e., sexual destiny beliefs). Specifically, growth believers are thought to make better use of adaptive relationship maintenance strategies, such as positive dyadic coping (e.g., managing stressors by problem solving). In contrast, destiny believers have been shown to engage in less effective coping behaviours (e.g., avoidance). We examined whether an individuals' implicit sexual growth and destiny beliefs were related to their own and their partners' dyadic coping when seeking medically assisted reproduction.

Methods: Couples accessing medically assisted reproduction (N =262) completed an online survey with validated measures assessing sexual growth and destiny beliefs, as well as various facets of dyadic coping. Data were analyzed using multilevel models guided by the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model. Dyads were treated as indistinguishable.

Results: We found that holding stronger sexual destiny beliefs was associated with one's own greater use of negative dyadic coping (e.g., distancing). Conversely, endorsing stronger sexual growth beliefs was associated with one's own greater common (e.g., problem solving) and delegated (e.g., taking over partners' tasks) dyadic coping.

Conclusions: When managing the many novel stressors that occur during medically assisted reproduction, endorsement of stronger sexual growth beliefs, versus stronger sexual destiny beliefs, is associated with more adaptive coping behaviours.

30- Gender & virtual work: Exploring the role of gender in experiences of digital eyestrain and acute migraine pain

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Abstract

With the emergence of COVID-19, the shift to virtual work communication creates the potential for new, and increasingly harmful strenuous experiences of acute migraine pain. In particular, cisgender women and transgender men/women employees who are obligated to work virtually may be at a higher risk of exposure to harmful digital strain that results in experience of acute migraines. Previous scholarship has long established that cisgender women are socialized to manage both their non-verbal communication and physical appearance. In addition, trans individuals may feel hyper aware of their virtual presentation, which may contribute to heightened feelings of gender dysphoria. The proposed study seeks to understand the impact of digital eyestrain on acute migraine pain in the context of virtual work, and to explore how employee pain differs as a function of gender. We anticipate that the results will illuminate an additional gendered phenomenon brought forth by COVID-19's work-from-home order, specifically relating to continuous digital eyestrain. These results may support the development of institutional and interpersonal recommendations that foster more supportive approaches for how employees spend their time electronics for work. The proposed research may aid in the future development of mutually accessible services in virtual work. The scope of this work is to understand how organizations can foster healthier work environments for cisgender women and trans employees. We aim to contribute to the growing body of research on eye strain in virtual work and its relationship to acute migraine pain by considering gender/sex as a contributing factor.

31- The birds, the bees, and the baby: Perinatal sexual education and new parent couples' sexual well-being.

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Abstract

Introduction: Changes to couples' sexual well-being—frequency, desire, satisfaction—are common following the birth of a baby, yet less than 20% of couples receive any information from health care professionals about these changes. Lack of information may contribute to poorer sexual well-being because of unrealistic expectations or negative views surrounding sex. Our goal was to examine the links between the amount of sexual health information new parents receive and their sexual well-being.

Methods: New parent couples (N= 78) completed a single survey assessing sexual health information received in pregnancy and the postpartum and sexual well-being between 0 and 12 months postpartum. Analyses were guided by the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model.

Results: The majority of women who gave birth and their partners received little to no information about changes to sexuality when they were pregnant (63% and 39%, respectively) or after the baby was born (84% and 67%). Receiving more information in pregnancy was linked with one's own higher postpartum sexual desire for the women who gave birth and one's own higher sexual satisfaction for partners. Receiving more information in the postpartum, was linked with one's own higher sexual frequency, satisfaction, and desire for women who gave birth. For partners, more information was linked with their own higher postpartum sexual frequency.

Conclusions: New parents do not receive a lot of information about sexuality in the perinatal period, despite access to information being positively related to sexual well-being. Findings highlight an important gap in perinatal care, which could be addressed through psychoeducation about perinatal sexuality.

32- Do I look okay? Body image self-consciousness and sexual function problems in pregnant couples

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Abstract

Many couples experience sexual function problems in pregnancy. Negative body image is associated with sexual function problems outside of pregnancy. Since bodies change in pregnancy, self-consciousness about these changes, especially during sexual activity, may contribute to sexual function problems. General body dissatisfaction has been linked with poorer sexual function in pregnant couples; however, very few studies have examined associations between body image concerns during sex and sexual function, or sampled couples, despite the interpersonal nature of sexual relationships. The aim of this study was to examine how an individual's body image self-consciousness during sex linked with their own and their partner's sexual function in pregnancy. We hypothesized that greater body image self-consciousness would be associated with one's own and one's partner's poorer sexual function. First-time parent couples (N = 141) completed validated measures of sexual function and body image self-consciousness during sex at 20-weeks gestation. Analyses were informed by the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model using multi-level modeling. One's own higher body image self-consciousness during sex was linked with poorer sexual function and lower sexual satisfaction for pregnant individuals and poorer sexual function for partners. The findings support that individuals who are more self-conscious about their changing bodies may have heightened anxiety and or feel less comfortable during sexual activity, contributing to their own poorer sexual function and lower satisfaction. Strategies to reduce self-consciousness and diversify sexual scripts and sexual activities in pregnancy might help to buffer against expected declines in sexual function.

33- To Each Their Own: Comparing Satisfaction and Sexual Motives with a Primary and Ashley Madison Partner

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Abstract

Background: Many individuals report sexual partners outside from their primary relationship, despite possible risks to their relationships and wellbeing. This study used self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) to investigate individuals' reported motivations for sex and levels of relationship and sexual satisfaction with both a primary partner (PP) and a non-consensual non-monogamous (NCNM)/Ashley Madison partner (AMP).

Methods: AshleyMadison.com clients in Canada and the United States completed an online survey in 2019. Participants (113 women, 182 men) reported their motivations for sex and levels of sexual and relationship satisfaction with both a PP and an AMP. Mean scores and percent endorsements identified the top ten most and least frequent reasons for sex with each partner. RMANOVAs were used to determine if sexual motives and sexual and relationship satisfaction were significantly different when participants reported on their AM versus their PP.

Results: Self-determined motivations for sex were common with AMPs and PPs. However intrinsic (e.g., pleasure) and introjected (e.g., anxiety) motives were endorsed more with the AMP, while extrinsic motivations (e.g., pressure) were more endorsed with the PP. Sexual and relational satisfaction were higher with the AMP.

Conclusion: Overall, participants reported having sex for self-determined reasons regardless of partner type. However relational and sexual satisfaction with the AMP was higher. Ashley Madison clients may be seeking additional partners to compensate for lower levels of satisfaction. Research is needed to provide understanding about need fulfilment with NCNM and PPs.

34- "Men who have been deeply hurt and are unable to cope with the pain": A thematic analysis of Internet users' impressions of Incels' forums

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Abstract

The vast majority (90%) of visitors to online communities (e.g., forums) are lurkers: they read and observe without participating in the discussions (van Mierlo, 2014). Among these online communities, Incels' forums have recently received a lot of attention because of their perceived association with misogyny and violence, particularly femicides (Beauchamps, 2019), attracting non-incels' curiosity. Therefore, expressed opinions in Incels' forums may not always be shared by both insiders and outsiders. This study explored the impressions of people who reported having visited Incels' forums at least once. It is a part of a larger study on sexual inexperience in adulthood, conducted among 1923 participants who completed an online questionnaire. Of these, 330 participants (45% women; aged 18–66 y.o. (M=26, S.D.=6.42); 10% identifying as incels) reported having visited Incels' forums and described what their impressions of these forums were. Ongoing thematic analysis (Paillé & Muchielli, 2016) reveals that although 17% endorse the impressions of Incels as bitter, other impressions of their discourses (e.g., fear, ambivalence, judgment) emerged. While some participants expressed empathy towards Incels and that they "understand where their views come from", others criticized the forums as an "echo chamber" in which pre-existing biases are continuously reinforced (Karlsen et al., 2017). Our analysis reveals a more nuanced impression of Incels than what is depicted in the media. This study provides a better understanding of how Incels' forums are perceived by both insiders and outsiders, which could reduce the generalized impression that all Incels are dangerous.

35- The Role of Parenting Styles in the Sexual Well-Being of Emerging Adults

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Abstract

Background: Previous research on parental influences on sexuality has found that parenting styles (e.g., authoritative, authoritarian) influence contraceptive use and risky sexual behaviour. However, no studies have examined the effect of parenting styles on the sexual well-being (SWB) of emerging adults more broadly. Because parent-child communication and sexual health education influence adolescents' sexuality, it is likely that they also influence the relationship between parenting styles and SWB.

Aim: To examine how parenting styles influence SWB in emerging adulthood, as well as the effect of parent-child communication and sexual health education on this relationship.

Method: 179 Canadian emerging adults 18 to 25 years of age ($M = 21.80$, $SD = 2.10$) completed an online survey administered via social media. They answered a sociodemographic questionnaire and measures of parenting styles, parent child communication, sexual health education, and SWB.

Results: Authoritarian parenting had a significant negative effect on parent-child communication and some aspects of SWB; most notably, instrumental sexual attitudes, compared to authoritative parenting. After controlling for quality of sexual health education, comfort level of parent-child communication mediated this relationship.

Conclusions: This study highlights the importance of parental influence in the development of SWB. Parenting styles can effect more than contraceptive use and risky sexual behaviour, and thus parenting styles associated with more positive developmental outcomes may result in more positive SWB.

36- Exploring the Sexual Experiences of Women with Pelvic Organ Prolapse

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Abstract

Pelvic organ prolapse (POP) is a multidimensional reproductive health issue that can negatively impact sexual and mental health outcomes for those affected. Using a mixed-methods design, we explored the impact POP has on sexual experiences and outcomes in a group of women seeking various treatments for POP. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 women about their sexual experiences following POP diagnosis. Measures of genital self-image, sexual distress, sexual satisfaction, and sexual function were administered. Using thematic content analysis, themes of sexual desire and arousal, POP-specific contextual factors such as genital self-image, dyspareunia, and avoidance of sexual activities were extracted. The qualitative findings from this study suggest a significant impact of POP on women's sexuality, including but not limited to self-image, sexual desire, subjective arousal, engagement in sexual activity, and sexual satisfaction. Additionally, POP diagnosis was found to have a profound negative psychological impact, with women experiencing embarrassment, grief, and frustration. Despite reporting relatively intact experiences of physiological arousal, women reported reduced willingness to initiate sexual activity, less capacity for subjective arousal, and that this limited the kinds of sexual activities they were willing to engage in. Quantitative results indicate normal sexual function, moderate genital self-image, and sexual satisfaction; however, qualitative findings indicated a severe negative impact of POP on these areas of women's sexuality. Taken together, implications from these findings present a greater need for qualitative research to inform women's experiences of POP, as well as greater validation of quantitative measures in a sample of POP women.

37- Does Technology-Mediated Sexual Self-Disclosure Predict Sexual Costs, Rewards, and Sexual and Relationship Satisfaction?

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Abstract

Sexual self-disclosure (SSD) is a form of communication in sexual and romantic relationships. Researchers have found that SSD predicts sexual costs, rewards, and sexual and relationship satisfaction. However, researchers have not distinguished between SSD that occurs in-person and in online contexts. Yet, online communication is prevalent in modern society. We aimed to (1) compare the frequency (how often) and breadth (how many topics) of SSD in online and in-person contexts, and (2) examine the extent to which SSD in each context predicted sexual costs, rewards, and sexual and relationship satisfaction. We will also (3) test the model in our cis/transgender male and cis/transgender female groups. Undergraduate students (N=450) completed an online survey that included the Sexual Self-Disclosure Scale for each context, the Global Measure of Sexual/Relationship Satisfaction, and the Exchanges Questionnaire. Participants reported more frequent and greater breadth of SSD in-person than online (M=72.67, SD=32.3; M=17.43, SD=9.17). The results of two structural equation models suggested that more frequent and greater breadth of SSD in-person significantly predicted greater sexual ($\beta=.58$; $\beta=.53$, respectively) and relationship satisfaction ($\beta=.56$; $\beta=.57$, respectively), and three of four sexual costs and rewards ($\beta= -.14$, $\beta= .33$, $\beta= .38$; $\beta= -.13$, $\beta=.25$, $\beta=.30$, respectively). Online SSD did not predict these outcomes. People may engage in SSD online as a supplement to in-person SSD, however, our results show this context does not foster the same sexual rewards and satisfaction.

38- Applying the Social Determinants of Health to Sexual Health

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Abstract

The social determinants of health (SDOH) is a model that has helped explain why people have difficulty engaging in health behaviours, as these are conditions that shape health and determine who stays healthy and who becomes ill (Raphael, 2009). The SDOH have been applied to health, but, to a lesser extent, to sexual health specifically. The SDOH are relevant to sexual health, as they impact people's abilities to be sexually healthy or engage in sexual health-protective behaviours. When the SDOH are not considered, focus and blame tends to be on individuals for not engaging in health promoting activities (e.g. safer sex), when systemic factors play an important role. Using Healthy People's (2020) framework of five categories of SDOH, this presentation will demonstrate the application of the SDOH theory to sexual health using research examples. Elements of the World Health Organization's definition of sexual health (positive and respectful approach to sexuality, pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, and disease and dysfunction) will be used as foundation for exploring the connections between the SDOH and sexual health. Additionally, the intersections between SDOH related to sexuality will be discussed. Lastly, this presentation will emphasize the implications and next steps for considering the SDOH in sexuality research.

39- Sexual attraction to others across the lifespan: A systematic review

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Abstract

A few studies have revealed that sexual attraction is fluid and can develop and change across different life stages. Unfortunately, researchers often study sexual attraction as a component of other sexuality-related constructs, such as sexual orientation, often intermixing constructs. We conducted a systematic review to understand what the current literature reports about the stability/fluidity of sexual attraction specifically across the lifespan. First, we identified seven electronic databases, developed unique search strategies for each database, and imported our results into Covidence. We screened through the titles and abstracts of 7,364 articles and included 157 articles for screening in the full-text review phase. Two reviewers independently screened the full texts of the 157 articles and discussed disagreements before making final decisions. A total of 13 articles were kept for data extraction and coding. We found that women were more fluid than men in their sexual attractions but could not establish if this is the case across the lifespan. We also found that individuals with non-exclusive sexualities were more fluid in their sexual attractions than those with exclusive sexualities but could not establish whether this continues throughout life. Data about whether sexual attraction stabilizes at each life stage after young adulthood were inconclusive. Our findings provide a reference and synthesis of current research about sexual attraction that will be accessible for researchers to build upon. Our findings also have implications for sexual health, social acceptance, and personal understanding of changes in sexual attraction.

40- Sexual Desire in Their Own Words: A Qualitative Investigation of How Women with Provoked Vestibulodynia and Their Partners Define Sexual Desire

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Abstract

Provoked vestibulodynia (PVD), a prevalent genito-pelvic pain condition, contributes to lower sexual functioning for women and their partners. Despite pain and lower sexual desire, up to 80% of women with PVD report remaining sexually active. Therefore, these couples may conceptualize sexual desire to accommodate for the pain and its impact. Using a thematic approach, this study aimed to determine how women with PVD and their partners defined sexual desire. Women diagnosed with PVD (N=50) between the ages of 18-45 and their partners (N=44) of at least 6-months provided written responses to an open-ended question about their personal definition of sexual desire. Guided by thematic analysis, two independent coders developed the subjective coding scheme. A third independent coder resolved coding conflicts. Eleven themes emerged, including Emotional and Spiritual Closeness, Physical and Sexual Intimacy, Body and Senses, with a subtheme of Adaptation to Pain. Intercoder reliability reached 100% agreement for emerging themes and greater than 90% for 63 of the 67 codes. Results are consistent with Basson's Circular Model of the Sexual Response Cycle, in which incentive motivation for intimacy and closeness can promote sexual desire. In this study, women with PVD and their partners defined sexual desire as more than physical, to include emotions, fantasy, spirituality, and pleasure. Despite overall lower sexual desire, the quality of sexual desire for women with PVD is rich, varied and deeply valued by them and their partners. Findings may help clinicians and researchers understand core themes of sexual desire specific to couples coping with PVD.

41- Development of a Measure for Classification, Differentiation, and Diagnosis of Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder and Hypersexuality

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Abstract

Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder/Genitopelvic Dysesthesia (PGAD/GPD) is characterized by persistent genital sexual arousal sensations without associated feelings of mental sexual arousal and desire (Jackowich et al., 2018). Meanwhile, hypersexuality features excessive, impulsive, and dysfunctional sexual behaviours and levels of desire (Kafka, 2010). PGAD/GPD is frequently mistaken for hypersexuality in clinical contexts (Jackowich et al., 2016), and for individuals with PGAD/GPD, misdiagnosis may contribute to uncomfortable healthcare interactions (Jackowich et al., 2020). The present program of research aims to reduce this misdiagnosis. Study 1 utilized archival data collected in a larger study on PGAD (Jackowich et al., 2018). Exploratory factor analysis suggested two-factor structures for the HBI-19 scale for a sample of women with PGA symptoms and a control group, with the HBI-19 displaying different levels of measurement non-invariance in relation to the original three-factor structure (Reid, Garos, & Carpenter, 2011). Correlations among HBI-19 items and ratings of PGA symptom severity and distress suggested women with PGAD/GPD tended to identify with items pertaining to interference of sexual behaviour in their lives. In Study 2, results of Study 1 guided creation of an item pool, administered online to samples of individuals with PGAD/GPD and hypersexuality. EFA and CFA were utilized to evaluate the new scale's factor structure, along with Latent Profile Analysis to examine underlying clusters among participant profiles. A six-factor structure was observed (cognitive interest/arousal dissatisfaction, genital arousal experience, activity engagement, activity consequences, desire/arousal congruence, desire/arousal avoidance), with LPA revealing three clusters.

42- Facial structure influences perceptions of sexual orientation: An experimental study using computer-generated facial models

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Abstract

People make snap judgments about others based on facial information, including judgments about sexual orientation. Some studies found facial structure differs in relation to sexual orientation. One study using facial models manipulated to look gay/lesbian or straight based on these aspects of face structure (but no control conditions) found accuracy of sexual orientation perception was greater than chance (74%). We created White facial models (120 male, 120 female) using FaceGen. Facial metrics were manipulated based on (1) sexual orientation-related differences; (2) sex-related differences; or (3) neither sexual orientation- nor sex-related differences. Participants (n = 155) rated female faces (101 female raters, 47 male) and male faces (103 female raters, 51 male), presented randomly and individually, from 1 (little to no likelihood of gay/lesbian orientation) to 7 (high likelihood of gay/lesbian orientation). In repeated measures ANOVAs, a significant interaction between direction of manipulation (e.g., gay/lesbian vs. heterosexual) and the three conditions was found for male and female faces. Faces manipulated to look gay/lesbian were rated as being more likely to be gay/lesbian; however, ratings of sexual orientation were also influenced by sex-related face structure manipulations and manipulations not related to sexual orientation or sex. Thus, when people make snap judgments of sexual orientation, they use information related to facial structure associated with sexual orientation, but also information related to facial masculinity/femininity and general manipulations of the face. Stereotypes, facial structure, and other facial information are important when making snap judgments of sexual orientation.

43- Motivated to be intimate: Associations between sexual motivation and sexual intimacy for men with hypoactive sexual desire disorder and their partners

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¹University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada. ²Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

Abstract

Sexual intimacy refers to feeling as though one's partner shares their thoughts and emotions while also feeling understood, validated and cared for within sexual experiences. Men with Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD), characterized by chronically low sexual desire, endorse wanting sexual intimacy and validation within their sexual experiences (Murray et al., 2016). In relationships, autonomous motivation (e.g., I'm in this relationship because the other person is important to me) is positively correlated with feeling understood (Knee et al., 2005). Applied to sexual experiences, autonomous sexual motivation involves engaging in sex because it is pleasurable whereas controlled sexual motivation involves engaging in sex to meet a partner's expectations. In this first dyadic study of men with HSDD and their partners, we examined the associations between autonomous and controlled sexual motivation and sexual intimacy. Men with HSDD and their partners (N=52 couples) completed online measures of autonomous sexual motivation, controlled sexual motivation and sexual intimacy. When partners of men with HSDD were more autonomously motivated for sex, they reported higher sexual intimacy. However, when partners of men with HSDD reported having sex for controlled reasons, men with HSDD reported higher sexual intimacy. While partners' autonomous sexual motivation is beneficial for their own sexual intimacy, partners' controlled sexual motivation may signal to men with HSDD that they are cared for and understood within their sexual experiences. These findings have implications for researchers and clinicians to consider the relative benefits of partners' autonomous and controlled motivation for couples coping with HSDD.

44- HOPE, COPE ou ROPE : Une analyse des différents discours évoqués par les Incels

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Abstract

Contexte : Les « Incels » représentent un groupe d'hommes qui perçoivent les femmes comme la cause de leur célibat involontaire créant une détresse marquée. Notre connaissance des Incels provient de médias grand public dénonçant la violence perpétrée par certains et la misogynie exprimée sur leurs forums de discussion; peu d'études ont examiné cette détresse. Une première analyse a révélé la présence de trois discours sur les forums Incels, soit optimiste (Hope), centré sur les stratégies d'adaptation (Cope) et pessimiste-fataliste-suicidaire (Rope). Objectif : Cette étude vise à identifier ce qui distingue ceux qui tiennent l'un ou l'autre de ces discours. Méthodologie : Une analyse thématique (Paillé et Muchielli, 2016) sera menée sur des fils de discussion liés aux rubriques Hope, Cope et Rope provenant du forum Incels.is, importés sur Nvivo pour la codification, et extraits jusqu'à saturation thématique. Résultats : Nos analyses préliminaires révèlent que les commentateurs au discours Rope expriment une faible estime de soi (i.e. sentiments d'incompétence, de manque de talent et d'incapacité à s'améliorer). Or, les utilisateurs au discours Cope mobilisent des moyens temporaires d'échapper à leur réalité (i.e. drogue, nourriture, jeux vidéo, etc.). Bien que la distinction entre Hope et Cope soit moins bien délimitée, les Incels au discours Hope semblent reconnaître l'existence d'autres moyens que le couple et la sexualité pour s'épanouir et la possibilité de mettre fin au célibat involontaire. Conclusion : Cette étude permettra, entre autres, de mieux comprendre les facteurs de risque (e.g., corumination) et de protection (e.g., soutien) chez les Incels.

45- The Big Five Personality Traits, Age, and Gender as Predictors of the Frequency of Technology-Mediated and In-Person Sexual Self-Disclosure Among Adults

Stéphanie Drouin, Marilyn Ashley, Krystelle Shaughnessy.

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Abstract

Sexual self-disclosure (SSD) refers to people's willingness to share their sexual preferences with their sexual partner(s). SSD can occur in technology-mediated and in-person contexts. Despite the omnipresence of technology-mediated communication, researchers have not investigated SSD that occurs in this context. Previously, researchers have found mixed results for age and gender as predictors of the frequency of sexting, participation in online sexual activities, and in-person SSD. Additionally, research suggests that high extraversion and low agreeableness predict frequency of sexting. The extent to which personality traits predict the frequency of technology-mediated and in-person SSD beyond the influence of age and gender is unknown. We examined the extent to which people's Big Five personality traits, age, and gender predicted how often they engaged in technology-mediated and in-person SSD. Participants (N = 453; 113 cisgender/transgender men, 340 cisgender/transgender women) aged 18 to 43 completed an online survey that included a demographic questionnaire, the Sexual Self-Disclosure Scale for each context, and the Mini-International Personality Item Pool. The results of two linear regressions showed that women ($\beta = .10$), who were higher in extraversion ($\beta = .17$), engaged in more frequent in-person SSD ($F(7, 445) = 5.05, p < .001, R^2 = .07$). The regression for technology-mediated SSD was not significant. Our findings replicate and extend past research on SSD by suggesting that people higher in extraversion only report more frequent in-person SSD but not more technology-mediated SSD. These findings contribute to empirical knowledge on individual differences in technology-mediated sexual phenomenon.

46- Using the 3-factor Sexual Desire Inventory to understand sexual desire in a sexually diverse sample with and without Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD)

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Abstract

Our understanding of sexual desire is often limited to the experiences of heterosexual cisgender individuals. Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ may experience sexual desire and relationship configurations differently than their heterosexual counterparts. It's important to understand the spectrum of how sexual desire is expressed across LGBTQ+ individuals. The purpose was to compare differences in the 3-factor structure of the Sexual Desire Inventory in LGBTQ+ and heterosexual cisgender individuals with and without Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD). The three domains are dyadic sexual desire towards partner, dyadic sexual desire for attractive other, and solitary sexual desire. A sample of 98 LGBTQ+ individuals and 65 heterosexual cisgender individuals (Mage=31.2, SD=9.1) were a part of a larger ongoing study where they completed a baseline questionnaire assessing demographics and sexual desire. We carried out 2x2 ANOVAs to evaluate mean differences on the 3 SDI-2 domains among four subsamples: LGBTQ+ without SIAD, LGBTQ+ with SIAD, cisgender heterosexual without SIAD, and cisgender heterosexual with SIAD. There was a main effect of SIAD status, but not of group, on dyadic desire for a partner and for an attractive other. There was a main effect of SIAD status and group for solitary sexual desire, such that those without SIAD, and LGBTQ+ individuals, reported significantly higher solitary desire, this could be explained by higher sexual positivity in this population. We found no main effect of group on dyadic desire, future studies might explore the impact of relationship structures on these separate domains of dyadic desire in sexually diverse groups.

47- Recalled childhood separation anxiety in relation to sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in Thailand

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Abstract

Separation anxiety results from separation from attachment figures (e.g., parents) and occurs more frequently in girls than boys. Additionally, androphilic and/or feminine males report elevated separation anxiety—a pattern of psychosexual development that appears to be consistent across cultures. Similar research on gynephilic and/or masculine females is limited. The present study examined recalled childhood separation anxiety in a Thai sample. Groups examined were heterosexual men, heterosexual women, bisexual women, androphilic males (gay men, sao praphet song), and gynephilic females (lesbian women, toms, dees). The Separation Anxiety Scale-Revised measured anxiety related to separation from parents and siblings before age 12 years. This scale includes a Worry subscale (i.e., items related to worrying about kin's well-being) and a Separation subscale (i.e., general indicators of anxiety during separation). Controlling for age, heterosexual men had less parent and sibling worry than heterosexual women. Within males, gay men and sao praphet song scored higher on parent and sibling worry than heterosexual men; sao praphet song scored higher on parent separation than heterosexual and gay men. Gay men scored higher than heterosexual women on parent worry. Within females, dees reported higher parent worry than toms. Bisexual women reported lower parent separation than lesbian women, dees, and heterosexual women. All female groups reported greater parent worry and dees reported greater sibling worry than heterosexual men. These findings provide further cross-cultural support for separation anxiety being a correlate for psychosexual development. Cross-culturally, separation anxiety is elevated among those displaying androphilia and/or feminine gender expression.

48- How measures can influence participant self-report: Breaking down the prevalence of technology-mediated sexual interactions (TMSI)

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Abstract

Technology-mediated sexual interactions (TMSI) refer to interactions with another person(s) via communication-technology, including exchanging, sending, or receiving self-created sexual content. Although sexting is a popular research topic, few have examined “older” or novel technologies that vary in content (e.g., phone sex, haptic sex). Researchers need to know about all TMSI to provide knowledge on technology in people’s sexual lives. We had two research objectives: (1) explore the prevalence of six global and 29 specific TMSIs (i.e., exchanging, receiving, or sending; photos, typed-messages, videos, audio, avatar, or haptic; sexual semi-nude or nude content); (2) examine how specific TMSIs align with global TMSIs. Participants (N = 644; 507 women, 135 men, 3 unknown) completed an online survey on TMSI experiences. They reported their engagement in cybersex, sexting, phone sex, avatar sex, virtual-reality sex, and haptic sex (all with definitions) and the 29 specific TMSIs. Most participants reported having sexted (71.6%), followed by cybersex (52.6%), and phone sex (32.1%). Few reported haptic sex (8.2%), avatar sex (5.1%), and virtual sex (1.95%). Specific TMSI results suggested that participants exchange TMSI more than they only receive or send. Participants who sexted reported engaging in 0-29 specific TMSI (M = 11.52, SD = 5.41); those who experienced virtual sex reported 0-29 specific TMSI (M = 12.75, SD = 9.98). We will conduct a chi-square frequency analysis to provide additional results. Our results suggest that people engage in many specific types of TMSI, and they contribute to growing knowledge about technology use for sexual interactions.

49- "I wish there was a guide": COVID-19-related changes to sexual and romantic scripts during the first 10 months of the pandemic

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Abstract

Background: Sexual and romantic scripts (scripts) shape the course and expectations of intimate relationships (IRs). The COVID19 pandemic radically changed social interactions, including IRs.

Objective: Research exploring the impact of changes to scripts through lived experience is needed. The current study examines COVID19-related changes to IR scripts by analyzing online communications.

Method: This study used comments posted on 172 Reddit relationship-based forums, collected from March to December 2020. We applied inductive content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to comments and posts about the impact of COVID19 on IRs.

Results: Reddit users described that changing scripts affected their IRs. Content analysis showed that the influence of COVID19 on scripts varied by relationship type. For individuals who were single or dating, the dominant theme concerned changes to the process of meeting and connecting with a new potential partner (e.g., unavoidable dependence on technology). Those in new IRs discussed the uncertainty of relationship progression and fear of their partner losing interest. People in non-cohabiting but geographically close relationships felt forced into long-distance relationships (LDR) without knowing how to adapt. Cohabiting relationships discussed needing to creatively balance time spent together and apart because of increased proximity. People in LDRs discussed feeling prepared, but interruptions to their IR's separation-reunion cycle caused distress. There were also changes to the process of or causes for relationship dissolution.

Conclusions: This study helps expand understanding of the impact of COVID19 on scripts and IRs. The findings reinforce the pandemic's notable impacts on IRs with implications for researchers, clinicians, and individuals.

50- The relationship between sexual anxiety and sexual mindfulness: the impact of sexual communication and bodily exploration

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Abstract

Sexual anxiety (SA) is defined as the experience of anxiety, discomfort, and avoidance of sexual situations, and is associated with sexual and relational distress. This study examines the link between SA and components of dyadic intimacy, namely sexual communication, bodily exploration, and sexual mindfulness. We hypothesized that higher SA will be associated with poorer sexual communication, less comfort with sexual exploration, and lessened ability to remain mindful during sex. A community sample of 514 adults completed an online questionnaire on sexual well-being. Data were analyzed through Pearson correlation coefficient test. Pearson correlation results suggest a negative association between SA and sexual mindfulness ($p = .000$), and a negative association between sexual mindfulness and the other two components of dyadic intimacy, sexual communication and bodily exploration ($p = .000$). The results also indicate a positive association between SA and sexual communication and bodily exploration, suggesting that higher levels of SA in participants are associated with more difficulty on dyadic intimacy components ($p = .000$). In conclusion, the results suggest that SA leads to more discomfort in communicating sexual preferences and exploring sexuality. These results suggest that these difficulties lead to a lower capacity to achieve sexual mindfulness.

51- Does Attention Mediate the Relationship Between Stress and Sexual Desire?

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Abstract

Stress affects many aspects of our health, including sexual health. Stress is often cited as a cause of low sexual desire; however, there has been limited research on the topic. We know that attention to sexual cues is a key factor in sexual desire and arousal and stress can interfere with our ability to attend to sexual cues. The goal of the present study was to assess the link between stress and desire, and the role of attention in this relationship. Using a dot-probe task to assess attention to erotic, threatening, and neutral stimuli, we predicted that higher levels of stress would be associated with lower sexual desire, and this relationship would be mediated by response times to erotic vs. threat stimuli. Participants were 195 people (48% women, 49% men, 3% nonbinary) recruited via Prolific, an academic crowdsourcing platform to complete this online study. Sexual desire was evaluated using newly developed vignettes to measure in-the-moment desire, as well as the Sexual Desire Inventory. Stress was measured using the self-report measures of perceived stress and daily stress. Results showed that there was a positive relationship between perceived stress and sexual desire. On the dot probe task, participants showed the fastest response times to erotic stimuli, but there was no relationship between this measure of attention and the stress or desire measures. Overall, this study validated a new measure of sexual desire (vignettes) and found a positive relationship between stress and sexual desire, but it was not mediated by attentional bias.

52- Influence of attempting to conceive with and without medical assistance on psychological outcomes of individuals experiencing infertility

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Abstract

Background: Research examining the psychological impacts of infertility have focused primarily on women pursuing fertility treatments, which represent a small percentage of all women with infertility. The current online study compared the psychological profile of infertile women attempting to conceive with versus without medical assistance.

Methods: Participants included 464 women (19-43 yrs) with infertility and actively trying to conceive, recruited via an online infertility forum. Participants completed the Patient Health Questionnaire-9, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7, and the Fertility Quality of Life (FertiQoL). ANCOVA compared women attempting to conceive with versus without medical assistance while including family income, age, and education as covariates.

Results: Women attempting to conceive with medical assistance (n=303) obtained significantly lower quality of life scores on the Mind-Body subscale of the FertiQoL ($F(1,215) = 7.728, p=.006$) compared to women not pursuing medical treatment (n=161). Examination of individual items of this subscale revealed that women receiving fertility treatments were more likely to endorse difficulties concentrating, interference with work and obligations, and feeling pain or physical discomfort because of their infertility ($ps < .017$). However, both groups reported similar levels of anxiety and depression, as well as similar levels of emotional, relational, and social impacts of infertility ($ps > .05$). Of note, both groups scored similarly on the FertiQoL item about the sexual impacts of infertility ($p > .05$).

Conclusion: Although women pursuing fertility treatments reported a greater impact of infertility on certain aspects of psychological wellbeing, distress was largely similar among infertile women pursuing and not pursuing medical assistance to conceive.

53-Change in Sexual Concerns of New Parents Three to Twelve Months Postpartum: A Family Systems Approach

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Abstract

Little is known about how parents' postpartum sexual concerns change over time, nor risk or protective factors for these changes. One potential protective factor is sexual communication which may help couples positively adapt to postpartum sexual concerns. A total of 199 new mothers and their partners completed measures of sexual communication (at 18--20 weeks pregnancy) and sexual concerns (at three, six, nine, and 12 months postpartum). We modeled growth trajectories of eight sexual concerns and then predicted trajectories from collaborative and negative sexual communication. These concerns were informed by family systems theory and included self/partner-concerns (i.e., body image, birth mother physical recovery, mood swings), couple-concerns (i.e., mismatches in sexual desire, change in intercourse frequency), and couple-child-concerns (i.e., child-rearing duties, breastfeeding). Structural equation modelling results indicated that mothers and partners experienced significant decline in all sexual concerns except for concerns related to mood swings and partners' concern with having more sexual desire than the mother, which remained stable. Greater decline in several of mothers' concerns related to greater decline in several partner concerns and other mother concerns. Finally, lower mother or partner negative sexual communication in pregnancy or higher partner collaborative communication in pregnancy were associated with greater decline in concern for mothers' postpartum physical recovery and change in intercourse frequency. Findings suggest that clinicians should ask new parents about a variety of sexual concerns as all concerns may not follow the same pattern and that healthy communication may serve as a protective factor against postpartum sexual concerns.

54- Associations entre parentalité, ajustement dyadique et satisfaction sexuelle chez des patientes et des patients qui consultent en thérapie sexuelle

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Abstract

Contexte: Bien que quelques études suggèrent qu'être parent tend à diminuer la qualité de la relation conjugale, peu de recherches ont porté sur les relations des parents à l'exception des études portant sur la transition à la parentalité.

Objectif: L'objectif de cette recherche est d'examiner l'ajustement dyadique et la satisfaction sexuelle chez des adultes ayant des enfants et qui consultent en thérapie sexuelle.

Méthode: Les données ont été recueillies auprès de 529 patients qui consultent des stagiaires en sexologie au Québec. Les participants ont complété des questionnaires auto-rapportés lors de l'évaluation, mesurant l'ajustement dyadique, la satisfaction sexuelle et le nombre d'enfant. Des analyses univariées et acheminatoires ont été réalisées.

Résultats: En contrôlant l'âge et le revenu, les personnes en couple ayant des enfants rapportent une satisfaction sexuelle plus élevée, mais un ajustement dyadique plus bas que les personnes sans enfant. Un faible ajustement dyadique est associé à une satisfaction sexuelle moins élevée. Les résultats démontrent que l'insatisfaction avec l'expression de l'affection au sein de la relation est une composante de l'ajustement particulièrement associée à la parentalité et à la satisfaction sexuelle. Des analyses en fonction du genre seront présentées.

Conclusions et implications: Les résultats suggèrent que les patients qui consultent en thérapie et qui sont parents tendent à rapporter une meilleure satisfaction sexuelle, mais un ajustement dyadique moins élevé au moment de débiter la thérapie. Les résultats permettront d'orienter les interventions cliniques en situant davantage les besoins de cette population.

55- CovidTogether: Experiences of Growth and Conflict in Romantic Relationships During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is a time of stress for many couples who are working, parenting and living together. Couples who report more pandemic-related stressors also report poorer relationship quality and more frequent conflict. Yet challenging times can also present opportunities for growth. Self-expansion theory posits that shared novel experiences with a partner help maintain satisfaction and desire. CovidTogether [<https://www.covidtogether.me/>] is a longitudinal study of 220 couples (N = 440) living together during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the outset, both partners reported on relationship and sexual changes from before the pandemic. We found that 10% perceived their relationship as less satisfying, 36% felt it was the same, and 54% felt it was more satisfying. Also, 29% reported experiencing more conflict compared to pre-pandemic and 75% reported spending more quality time together. Although 25% said their sex life was worse, most said it was the same (42%) and 33% reported their sex life improved. Similarly, 30% reported an increase in desire towards their partner and 28% reported having more sex, whereas similar numbers (22%; 31%) reported lower desire and less frequent sex. Each week for three weeks, partners also described their experiences of conflict and growth. We coded their responses using thematic analysis and found 19 themes related to activities that promote growth and 17 themes related to topics of conflict that were both in line with and extend themes from past research. Future work can extend these findings by investigating the factors that contribute to conflict and growth during times of stress.

56- Sexual Desire After a Relational Transgression: The Role of Unforgiveness

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Abstract

Following a relational transgression (e.g. infidelity, lack of communication) in the context of couple relationships, some individuals tend to hold resentment toward their partner. Unforgiveness in couple relationships has recently been conceptualised under three dimensions: Cognitive-Evaluative, Emotional-Ruminative and Offender Reconstrual. Very few studies have investigated the associations between unforgiveness and indicators of relationship functioning, especially sexual functioning. However, negative affects have been found to be linked to different sexual problems, including low sexual desire, in both men and women. This study aimed to examine the associations between the three unforgiveness dimensions and two sexual desire indicators (i.e. frequency and intensity) in individuals who experienced a relational transgression (offended) and their partner (offender). In total, 39 offended participants, mostly women (n = 29), were included in the study. Controlling for gender and forgiveness level (i.e. how much they consider having forgiven their partner), path analyses showed that the unforgiveness dimensions were generally not related to sexual desire indicators of both the offended and offender participants. However, offended individuals who reported a higher level of forgiveness related to the transgression reported higher sexual desire frequency and intensity, and their partner also reported higher sexual desire frequency. These results suggest that the degree to which one has forgiven a relational transgression may be more important in explaining both partners' sexual desire than the specific types of unforgiveness endorsed.

57- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Mediate the Association Between Cumulative Childhood Trauma and Post-traumatic Stress Symptoms Across Heterosexual, Cisgender and Gender and Sexually Diverse Adolescents

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Abstract

The association between interpersonal childhood trauma and post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) is well documented, and emotion regulation has been identified as an explanatory factor in that relationship. However, most studies focused on adults or older adolescents in clinical/juvenile detention settings, neglecting to focus on youth from the community. Importantly, gender and sexually diverse (GSD) adolescents have been overlooked, despite their higher risk for both exposure to traumatic events and psychological difficulties, compared to their heterosexual, cisgender (HC) peers. The present cross-sectional study aimed to examine the mediating role of emotion regulation difficulties in the association between cumulative childhood trauma and PTSS across HC and GSD adolescents. A sample of 2,904 ninth grade students (Mage = 14.53 years, SD= 0.61) completed a self-report survey assessing childhood trauma, difficulties in emotion regulation, PTSS, and GSD status. Multigroup path analyses were conducted to examine associations of the proposed mediation model in all groups, and comparisons were made using chi-square difference tests. Results showed that greater difficulties in emotion regulation mediated the association between greater cumulative childhood trauma and greater PTSS, regardless of HC or GSD status, although the direct association between cumulative childhood trauma and PTSS was significantly stronger among GSD adolescents. Indeed, the effect size of this direct association was moderate for GSD adolescents, but small for HC adolescents. These findings suggest that other factors, such as minority stress or micro-aggressions, may explain the link between trauma and PTSS in GSD youth, who would benefit from tailored, trauma-focused interventions.

58- #DebunkingDesire: Sexual Science, Social Media, and Strategy in the Pursuit of Knowledge Dissemination

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Abstract

Despite the fact that up to a third of women experience low sexual desire, most women never seek professional help for their difficulties and will instead turn to online resources. We sought to address this need for digitally accessible, evidence-supported information on low sexual desire by creating a social media Knowledge Translation (KT) campaign called #DebunkingDesire. The campaign utilized a KT framework by Barwick, was co-led by a patient partner with lived experience, and the team was rounded out by trainees, social media strategists, and communications experts. The singular goal of the campaign was to reach as many members of the public as possible to debunk sexual desire related myths. Over the 10 months of the campaign, we garnered over 300,000 social media impressions, appeared on 11 different podcasts that were listened to/downloaded 154,700 times, hosted and participated in 8 online events, and had website views by individuals in 110 different countries. A notable finding from our campaign was the significant impact of podcasts for disseminating campaign messages to our targeted audience. Our partnership with several key influencers whose audiences overlapped with our target audience increased our measured impressions from 49,106 to 72,784 on Instagram from just a few posts on their own pages. The goal of this presentation will be to share lessons learned with other research teams keen to utilize KT as a means of disseminating sexual science.

59- Validation of the Enjoyment of Sexualization Scales in a Midlife Sample

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Abstract

Enjoyment of Sexualization (ES) describes one's perception of sexualized attention. While ES has been studied in younger samples of women, limited research has addressed how ES functions among men, or at midlife, when concerns about body image, sexual functioning, and relationship satisfaction may be particularly salient. The purpose of this study was to validate the male and female ES scales among a midlife sample. Using secondary data collected from a Canadian Qualtrics panel, 517 married participants completed either the male or female ES scale. Structural Equation Modeling was used to conduct a CFA on each of the ES scales (Liss et al., 2011; Visser et al., 2014). Measurement equivalence/invariance across age groups and among parenting/not parenting participants was tested. CFA found that the model fit well for both scales, with each model reaching appropriate thresholds across recommended fit indices (Chen, 2007; Kline, 2015.) Configural invariance was established independently for the male and female scales among parents/non-parents, whereas invariance of factor loadings across age groups was found for both scales, and invariance of observed intercepts was also found for the male version of the scale. Midlife is a dynamic time for many couples, and stressors such as poor body image and sexual problems may impact sexual and relationship satisfaction. ES may explain relationships between these constructs. Accordingly, it is imperative that the research being conducted uses valid measures. The successful validation of the ES measures for midlife samples provides support for using these scales in future research.

60- Survival Sex: Consent in a state of deprivation? A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Background: Survival sex is the exchange of sex for material goods required for survival (i.e., shelter, food, drugs) under conditions of deprivation. Deprivation may push people into circumstances where they must trade sex for survival and thus illustrates an extreme power imbalance. Survival sex is frequently linked to poor outcomes but few have examined its implications beyond it being a means to physical survival.

Aims: We conducted a scoping review to identify literature that has examined survival sex to critically examine the impact of deprivation on consent and the utility of survival sex for people who engage in it beyond physical survival.

Methods: Using “survival sex” and related terms (e.g., exchange sex), we extracted articles from PsycInfo, Medline, Genderwatch, Sociological Abstracts and Social Services, and Web of Science.

Findings: Most articles included survival sex as a predictor for health-related risk outcomes or as an outcome characterized as a risk behaviour. Few articles discussed consent implications and some suggested additional social utility (e.g., companionship, sense of safety).

Conclusions: Examining survival sex as a risk factor or poor outcome in of itself may neglect its complexity as a survival strategy. People engage in survival sex under complex circumstances. By considering the social utility (i.e., diverse reasons for engaging in) inherent to survival sex and complexities related to consent to sex in a context of deprivation, researchers and clinicians working with at-risk populations may be better positioned to understand the support needs of people who engage in survival sex.

61- Adult sexual assault perpetrated against lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual women: Considering gendered assumptions and perpetrator characteristics

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Abstract

There is an overarching lack of research on adult sexual assault perpetrated against sexual minority women. Further, little research has focused on perpetrator characteristics of sexual assailants of lesbian or bisexual women. The gendered language and conceptualization of sexual assault contributes to the lack of awareness and conversation surrounding female perpetrated adult sexual assault. The assumption that women do not commit sexual assault is so prevalent that several studies addressing adult sexual assault fail to ask who perpetrated the assault, assuming a male perpetrator. When male perpetrated sexual assault is the only assault deemed serious or worthy of conversation or attention, vulnerable groups of women may be excluded. The objective of the current study is to address this gap in the literature by approaching three assumptions: 1. women can only be sexually assaulted by heterosexual men; 2. women do not commit sexual assault; and 3. violence and force are characteristic of men, but not women. After responding to an online demographic questionnaire, participants (N= 268) completed a measure of male perpetrated sexual assault (SES-SFV) and, as no scale measuring female perpetrated sexual assault exist to our knowledge, we used a revised version of the SES-SFV to measure female perpetrated sexual assault. Finally, participants indicated the sexual orientation of their assailant(s). Our results provide a detailed commentary on adult sexual assault perpetrated against sexual minority women, including perpetrator sexuality, rates of female perpetrated sexual assault experienced by lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual women, and methods of coercion by female assailants.

62- Portraits of male survivors of childhood sexual abuse seeking services in community settings.

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Abstract

Sexual abuse is an endemic phenomenon associated with lasting deleterious effects. Even if around 8 to 19% of men reported childhood sexual abuse, their reality is poorly documented as most studies focused uniquely on women. Men's childhood sexual abuse is marked by several taboos and anchored in hegemonic masculinity norms that may affect their clinical presentation. To investigate this issue, a collaborative project funded by the Québec Ministry of Justice and SSHRC, the CNVAM-National Collective for Victimization in Men, was initiated with eight mental health community organizations specialized in male sexual victimization. This project aimed to document the social and psycho-relational characteristics of male survivors who are seeking services in community settings. We analyzed a sample of 83 individual self-identifying as men who completed self-reported questionnaires prior to receiving services, assessing their socio-demographic characteristics, and psycho-relational variables including romantic attachment, self-capacities, mental health distress and relationship satisfaction. Results indicated that the majority (92%) of male survivors reported attachment insecurities. More than half of men reported scores above clinical thresholds showing difficulties in their emotional regulation (63.7%), their identity cohesion (71.5 %), and conjugal distress (56.5%). Findings are discussed in relation to their implications for interventions and men's relational and psychological wellbeing.

63- Exploring Male Multiple Orgasm in a Large Online Sample: Refining our Understanding

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Abstract

Background: The scientific literature on multiple orgasm in males is small. There is little consensus on a definition and significant controversy about whether multiple orgasm is a unitary experience. **Aims** were to 1) describe the experience of male multiple orgasm; 2) investigate whether there are different profiles of multiple orgasm in men.

Methods: Data from a diverse online convenience sample of 122 men reporting multiple orgasm were collected. Data reduction analyses were conducted using Principal Components Analysis on 13 variables of interest derived from the existing literature. A k-means cluster analysis followed, from which a four-cluster solution was retained.

Results: The majority of participants endorsed the following definition to characterize their usual experience of multiple orgasm: "two/three or more orgasms separated by a specific time interval, during which further stimulation was required to achieve another orgasm". Most participants reported maintaining their erections throughout and ejaculating with every orgasm. Age was not a significant correlate of the multiple orgasm experience which occurred more frequently in a dyadic context. Four different profiles of multi-orgasmic men were described.

Strengths/Limitations: This study constitutes a rare attempt to collect systematic self-report data concerning the experience of male multiple orgasm in a relatively large sample. Limitations include the lack of validated measures, memory bias associated with self-reported data and retrospective designs, the lack of a control group and of physiological measurement.

Conclusions: Our study suggests that multiple orgasm in men is not a unitary phenomenon and sets the stage for future self-report and laboratory study.

64- COVID-19 and Sexual Behaviours

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Abstract

This study investigated sexual behaviours among a national sample of American married adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering predictors of engaging in less, about the same, or more sexual behaviours. 1049 participants, aged 30 to 50 (mean age 38.6), completed the online questionnaire assessing frequency of talking about sex with their spouse, giving and receiving oral sex, engaging in vaginal intercourse, and masturbating alone. We also asked about variables that may have impacted their sexual behaviours, including changes to income, stress, worry about contracting COVID-19, parenting, housework, and relationship strain. While 50% of participants reported no change in their sexual behaviours during the pandemic, about one-quarter reported engaging in sexual behaviours more frequently during COVID-19. Men were more likely to report engaging in behaviours more often during COVID-19; women were more likely to report that their behaviours had not changed during the pandemic. When comparing those who reported engaging in less sex with those who reported no change in sexual frequency, relationship strain was associated with engaging in less sexual behaviour. In the multivariate analyses, being a man, higher income, stress, and, for some, relationship strain was associated with engaging in more sexual behaviour during the pandemic. Findings indicate many married individuals, particularly men, are engaging in sexual behaviours more often during the COVID-19 pandemic than prior to the pandemic. These findings can be used to identify factors that may support or enhance couples' sexual lives and relationships during future pandemics or periods of increased stress and uncertainty.

65- Sexual functioning, relationship satisfaction, and well-being in couples after prostate cancer: A dyadic approach using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM)

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Abstract

Background: Sexual dysfunction affects 60-70% of prostate cancer (PC) survivors and is associated with poorer quality of life and psychological outcomes. Partners of PC survivors report worse sexual functioning and higher levels of distress compared to their same aged peers. Some research indicates correlations between PC survivor and partner's sexual function and psychological function. However, there lacks a comprehensive examination of these relationships using dyadic data analysis.

Objectives: To examine sexual, relationship, and psychological correlates in a sample of PC survivor and partner dyads using the Actor Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) as a framework, which has only been applied to non-sexual relationship dynamics in this population.

Methods: We applied the APIM to baseline measures of PC survivors and their partner's sexual, relationship, and psychological functioning before they participated in a psychological intervention (data not presented). We measured actor and partner effects of Nonimitative their psychological wellbeing (H2).

Results: Partner's sexual functioning predicted worse social quality of life for themselves, but, predicted their own better social quality of life when moderated with increased relationship satisfaction. Similarly, survivor's own sexual functioning predicted worse quality of life outcomes for themselves, but when moderated by relationship satisfaction, predicted better quality of life. Partner's sexual function predicted survivor's worse quality of life.

Implications: These findings add to the theoretical understanding of a partner's role in contributing to a survivor's sexual functioning and psychosocial health.

66- Associations between perceived partner responsiveness and sexual well-being among adolescents in dating relationships

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Abstract

Studies on adolescent sexuality are generally characterized by a focus on at-risk sexual behavior, neglecting protective factors and positive outcomes, particularly with regard to dating relationships. Feeling understood and validated by one's partner (perceived partner responsiveness; PPR) is thought to promote sexual well-being. Indeed, PPR has been associated with greater sexual desire and satisfaction, and less sexual distress among adults with and without sexual dysfunction. Given the importance of adolescent dating relationships and sexual experiences for shaping later sexual and relationship wellbeing, the aims of this study were to examine the association between PPR and sexual well-being in adolescents in a dating relationship. A sample of 434 adolescents (182 boys, 249 girls and 3 non-binary individuals, Mage=15.46) were recruited from Quebec high schools as part of a longitudinal study on their sexual well-being. They completed self-report questionnaires in class on electronic tablets. PPR had a significant small positive association with sexual function ($b=.19$, CI 97.5% [-0.296;-0.087], $p<.001$), moderate significant positive association with sexual satisfaction ($b=.36$, CI 97.5% [0.256; 0.476], $p<.001$), as well as a moderate significant negative association with sexual distress ($b=-.24$, CI 97.5% [-0.355;-0.126], $p<.001$). No gender differences (boys vs girls) were found. Results suggest that feeling intimate with one's partner could promote sexual well-being, allowing adolescents to feel more satisfied and competent during the exploration of their sexuality. This study highlights the intersubjective and dyadic aspects of sexuality and the importance of addressing protective factors in adolescent relationships to promote their current and later sexual well-being

67- The Relationship Between Attachment Styles and Sociosexuality

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Abstract

Background and Aims: There is a large body of research demonstrating that attachment styles can have implications for adult romantic relationships. However, there is a lack of information regarding how attachment styles may relate to an individual's sociosexuality, age, and/or gender. We hypothesized both men and women with either of the insecure attachment types would be more likely to have an unrestricted sociosexual orientation as a result of their fear of rejection.

Method: A total of 328 (146 women) university students who were either single or in casual dating relationships completed an online questionnaire that included measures of attachment and sociosexual orientation. Controlling for gender, we conducted a linear regression to examine the association of sociosexuality with anxious and avoidant attachment styles.

Results: Higher sociosexuality scores were associated with being a man (Beta= .254, $p < .001$), being older (Beta = .143, $p = .011$), having higher anxious attachment scores (Beta = .177, $p = .005$) and with having lower avoidant attachment scores (Beta = -.167, $p = .013$).

Conclusion: While less restricted sociosexual orientations were associated with anxious attachment as predicted, this association was not found with avoidant attachment. Further, a gender difference was found in that less restricted sociosexuality was associated with being a man, and with an increase in age. These findings suggest further research should be done on the potential mediating effect anxious attachment has on sociosexual orientation, particularly if casual sex is used as a maladaptive coping mechanism for a fear of rejection.

68- Romanticizing the Stolen Kiss: Men's and Women's Reports of Nonconsensual Kisses and Perceptions of Impact on the Targets of Those Kisses

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Abstract

Introduction: Stolen kisses are often portrayed in romantic novels and movies as reflecting uncontrollable passion and desperate need to connect intimately with another. There is little research on stolen kisses-taking a kiss from someone who one has never kissed before when they were not expecting it (nonconsensual)-or the meaning of these kisses. The current study, derived from a larger dataset on kissing (N=691), focuses on the experiences, attitudes, and perceived outcomes among participants who have ever stolen a kiss.

Method: The sample was recruited via crowdsourcing. Subsample: 121 U.S. respondents (Mage=32.27) completed survey items addressing kissing attitudes and experiences. Data were analyzed using content analysis.

Results: Three stolen kisses scenarios emerged: mutual romantic feelings leading to a positive outcome, kissing a friend or acquaintance with a negative outcome, and kissing a stranger with a positive outcome. When a person stole a kiss from someone with whom they shared romantic interest, the result was almost always positive (i.e., advanced intimacy). Positive outcomes were typical when a person stole a kiss from a stranger, a scenario that typically took place at a party or bar, with alcohol involved. However, when respondents described stealing a kiss from a friend or someone they knew, who did not share their romantic interest, this ended in awkwardness or a terminated friendship.

Discussion: This last scenario with no mutual interest constitutes the clearest version of unwanted and nonconsensual exchange. This study adds to the kissing literature as well as literature on consent and sexual autonomy.

69- Gender Balancing Acts: illuminating anti-femininity as an under-explored experience of women's gender regulation

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Abstract

Women have a complex relationship to gender. They face stigmatization for displays of masculinity, alongside subsequent pressure to act feminine, while simultaneously encouraged to act more masculine in some domains. This balancing act of feeling pressured to act either more/less masculine or more feminine has been looked at extensively, but minimal research exists that examines how women feel pressured to be less feminine (i.e., anti-femininity). This gap in the research is not due to a lack of evidence, as prior research has documented seemingly isolated instances of anti-femininity, particularly in contexts such as the workplace (Hoskin, 2019), feminist spaces, and LGBTQIA+ communities. The proposed research aims to fill this gap by using a mixed-method approach to examine women's experiences of anti-femininity, particularly their experiences of being pressured to act less feminine. Participants will be asked open-ended questions related to: 1. where they have experienced the pressure to be less feminine (e.g., home, work, etc.); 2. by whom they have experienced the pressure (e.g., parents, friends, employers, etc.); 3. their perceived rationale (e.g., to appear qualified, to avoid sexual harassment, etc.) and 4. how their experiences differ as a function of rural versus urban settings. The open-ended responses will be analyzed using a modified approach to Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6 steps to conducting thematic analysis. This research is exploratory and aims to begin systematically identifying the contexts in which women experience anti-femininity, as well as illuminate an additional under-explored facet of gender policing experienced by women.

70- Beyond vanilla: Gender-diverse individuals' experiences with kink, eroticized gender play, and non-consensual sexual interests

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Abstract

Background: Individuals who engage in kink are underrepresented in the sexuality literature, with even less research examining the experiences of gender-diverse individuals. This study aims to provide a descriptive analysis of the experiences of gender-diverse individuals with sexual interests in kink, eroticized gender play, and non-consensual sexual interests.

Methods: Individuals were recruited online for a survey about sexual interests/behaviors. Of these, we will analyze responses from a sample of gender-diverse individuals (n = 57) including participants who identified as genderfluid, genderqueer, and non-binary, among others. Participants were presented with a list of sexual interests, first rating how arousing each interest was, then rating whether they had experience with the interest. For each rated interest, participants were asked to respond regarding the nature of their first experience (i.e., sexual/non-sexual), whether they experienced distress/concern and changes in the interest. Participants were also asked to respond to open-ended questions regarding how their first awareness of the interest/its development.

Results: Descriptive analyses will be conducted reporting on arousal and behavior corresponding with each sexual interest, how it was first experienced (sexual/non-sexual), whether individuals have experienced distress/concern regarding the interest, and whether individuals experienced changes in the interest. We will also be examining participant responses about the sequence in which their interest developed (e.g., fantasy, masturbation, joining a kink community).

Conclusions: This work will contribute to the representation of gender-diverse participants in the literature and their experiences with kink, eroticized gender play, and non-consensual sexual interests.

71- Gender-specific genital and subjective sexual arousal to prepotent sexual stimuli in androphilic men and gynephilic women

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Abstract

Marked differences have been found in men's and women's sexual response patterns, contingent upon their sexual orientation; androphilic (attracted to men) and gynephilic (attracted to women) men demonstrate greatest genital and self-reported arousal to their preferred stimulus type (a "gender-specific" response), whereas androphilic women do not, and findings for gynephilic women have been mixed. While there have been many investigations into gynephilic men's and androphilic women's (i.e., heterosexual men/women) sexual response, there has been investigation into the specificity of sexual response of androphilic men and gynephilic women. Given the complex nature of sexual stimuli that are used in sexual response research, it is often unclear to what extent contextual cues (e.g., cues other than the sexual actor's primary and secondary sex characteristics, such as physical attractiveness, sexual activity, etc.) influence participants' sexual response patterns. As such, the current study examined genital, discrete self-reported, and continuous self-reported responses of androphilic men (n= 25) and gynephilic women (n= 10) to prepotent sexual features (stimuli thought to elicit automatic sexual arousal: erect penises and exposed vulvas), non-prepotent sexual features (flaccid penises and pubic triangles) and neutral stimuli (clothed men and women). Both samples exhibited a gender-specific pattern of genital, self-reported, and continuous self-reported sexual arousal. Similarly, all measures of sexual arousal were generally found to be greatest to "prepotent" sexual cues. Implications for understanding the gender-specificity of sexual response will be discussed.

72- Sexual satisfaction and motivations to forgive in adults who experienced an attachment injury in their romantic relationship

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Abstract

Breaches in partner support during a critical moment of need can lead to an attachment injury in a couple relationship. Attachment injuries can be understood as a perceived violation of trust or abandonment that occurs in a critical moment of need for the support and caring of a romantic partner, such as during an abortion. Left unforgiven, attachment injuries can considerably impact areas of relationship functioning, such as sexual satisfaction, yet little is known about the association between the motivational responses of forgiveness of an attachment injury and sexual satisfaction. The objective of this study was to use the Global Measure of Sexual Satisfaction and the Transgression-related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory to examine the link between forgiveness of attachment injuries and sexual satisfaction. One hundred and thirty-nine participants completed questionnaires online through Qualtrics. Preliminary results suggest that sexual satisfaction is positively correlated with benevolence motivations ($r = 0.38, p < .001$), and negatively correlated with avoidance motivations ($r = -.43, p < .001$) and revenge motivations ($r = -.29, p = .001$). Results are in line with prominent models of attachment injury resolution in couple therapy. Specifically, increasing the positive aspects of forgiveness (e.g., goodwill towards partner, letting go of anger and pain) may be associated with higher sexual satisfaction among couples, an important indicator of relationship functioning. Findings will inform an ongoing study aimed at further examining these associations through additional variables (e.g., attachment) to develop a comprehensive psychosocial model of forgiveness, sexual satisfaction, and attachment injuries.

73- Online sexual experiences and relationship functioning in long distance relationships

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Abstract

Over the past decade, research has sought to understand sexting behavior among adolescents and young adults. Much of this work is atheoretical and harm-focused, and little research has investigated these behaviors in the context of committed adult romantic relationships. The current study seeks to understand sexting behaviors of adult long distance couples. The context of long distance relationships (LDRs) may be especially relevant for understanding the potential relational benefits of sexting because romantic partners usually have restricted opportunities to experience physical intimacy in this type of relationship. Adopting the intimacy process model as a guiding theoretical framework, we expected to find higher levels of perceived interpersonal closeness, sexual communication, and relationship and sexual satisfaction among long distance couples who practice sexting than those who do not. Results of the study, however, indicated no association between the frequency of sexting and interpersonal closeness among long distance couples. Consistent with our hypothesis, higher levels of sexual communication, relationship and sexual satisfaction were found to be correlated with more frequent sexting practices among these couples. The discussion concerns important theoretical distinctions between sexual communication and the frequency of sexting. Future research should carefully consider how sexual communication is expressed both within and outside of sexting encounters when investigating the role of sexting within LDRs.

75- Validation of a Virtual Environment as a Potential Tool for Exposure in the Treatment of Sexual Aversion

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Assessment and treatment of sexual difficulties using virtual reality (VR) remains a relatively unexplored area of research. This study focuses on sexual aversion (SA) - namely the experience of fear, disgust, and avoidance when exposed to sexual contexts or cues - and aims to validate a virtual environment's ability to progressively trigger the typical emotional responses of SA.

Method: Thirty-nine participants (23 low-SA and 16 high-SA individuals) were immersed in a virtual room and then successively exposed to six scenarios in which a synthetic character showed erotic behaviors of increasing sexual intensity. Throughout immersion, subjective measures of anxiety and disgust (Subjective Units of Discomfort Scale; SUDS), skin conductance level (SCL), heart rate (ECG), cardiac output (CO), and eye movements were recorded. The changes in SUDS and physiological variables were examined through repeated-measures variance analyses.

Results: SUDS scores significantly increased as the levels of exposure escalated (large effect size) among the high-SA group, and they reported significantly more anxiety and disgust than the low-SA group (medium effect size). Significant large time effects were found for CO and eye fixation time (on face, chest, and genitals), but no significant group interactions were found for physiological variables. No participants reported serious emotional distress during the immersion.

Conclusion: Given the safety of the virtual environment and its potential to trigger progressive emotional responses, its efficacy could be further tested as part of a virtual reality exposure-based treatment for SA.