



ABSTRACT BOOK

Canadian Sex Research Forum
2022 Annual Conference Program
October 13-15, 2022
Waterloo, ON

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

Symposium on Sexual Norms across Porn, Fantasy, and In-person Sexuality

Aki Gormezano, Kate Hunker, Bianca Wilhelm, Marietta Konermann, Sari van Anders
Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Sexual norms shape who is considered 'okay' to partner with, what sexual behaviors are considered acceptable to engage in, and the number of partners deemed acceptable. Sexual norms thus impact not only people's sex lives and relationships, but also who is privileged and minoritized on the basis of their gender/sexual identity/orientation.

Sexual norms tend to be conceptualized as related to in-person sexuality, or live interactions with others. Sexuality in other contexts, such as porn use and fantasy, are modeled as causal influences on in-person sexual norms that might shape sexual scripts. Across three presentations, we will share empirical data from a gender/sexually diverse sample that moves beyond this framework to explore these as potentially distinct, or branched, sexual contexts, focusing on two key questions:

1. To what extent do porn and fantasy have their own norms?
2. How much do norms branch and coincide across porn, fantasy, and in-person sexuality?

In our first two presentations, we focus on specific norms, and how people's perceptions of something as normative in one context, like porn, may or may not generalize to another, like in-person sexuality. The first centers norms for nonconsensual sex and pain/harm, and our second around norms for 'romantic' or nurturant sexual behaviors. In our third presentation, we show that, when people are asked about norms across porn, fantasy, and in-person sexuality, they perceive these contexts to be more branched than coincident.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Symposium Presentation / Présentation symposium

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**Symposium on Sexual Norms across Porn, Fantasy, and In-person Sexuality:
Visualizing the Strength and Overlap of Sexual Norms Across Porn, Fantasy, and In-person Sexuality**

Aki Gormezano, Sari van Anders
Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Porn use and fantasy are often modeled as causal influences on in-person sexual norms (e.g., what sexual behaviors are considered taboo). It is unclear, however, to what extent porn use and fantasy have their own norms, and how similar these are to norms for in-person sexuality. In the present study, we investigated perceptions of norm overlap and strength across porn, fantasy, and in-person sexuality.

We recruited 706 gender/sex/ually diverse online participants. They manipulated Venn diagram circles representing norms for porn, fantasy, and in-person sexuality (via methods from Gormezano et al., 2022). Participants indicated perceived norm similarity via circle overlap and perceived norm strength via circle size.

Results showed that norms for porn, fantasy, and in-person sexuality were significantly more branched than coincident. And, norm strength was considerably high for all contexts and especially (and significantly) so for in-person sexuality.

Our findings suggest that people recognize norms for porn use and fantasy as distinct from norms for in-person sexuality. This challenges models of sexuality that center in-person sexuality or treat porn use and fantasy only as ‘influences’ on in-person norms/scripts. Our findings may also explain why causal links between porn use and in-person sexuality are tenuous – when people engage with porn, they may develop schema for what is normative in porn specifically, rather than generalizing to other contexts.

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Symposium on Sexual Norms Across Porn, Fantasy, and In-Person Sexuality. Sexual Norms Around Pain/Harm and Nonconsensual Sex: Branchedness and Coincidence Across Porn, Fantasy, and In-Person Sexuality.

Bianca Wilhelm, Aki Gormezano, Kate Hunker, Marietta Konermann, Sari van Anders
Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Many people perceive sexual behaviors that are nonconsensual or intended to cause pain to be nonnormative (not okay to engage in). One question, however, is whether these behaviors are also perceived to be taboo when depicted in contexts such as porn and fantasy, where they cannot directly cause physical harm. People may still perceive them to be 'not okay' to engage with, perhaps because porn use and fantasy are perceived to shape in-person behavior. But, how similar are these norms? In the present study, we investigated people's perceptions of what's normative for pain and nonconsensual sex across in-person sexuality, porn, and fantasy.

Gender/sex/ually diverse participants ($N = 354$) completed an online norm-elicitation task where they listed up to 10 norms each for porn, fantasy, in-person sexuality (in randomized order). Then, they indicated whether each listed norm was branched or coincident, indicating whether each behaviour was normative or not in each context.

Of the 6139 norms participants generated, we categorized 1647 (26.8%) as related to non-consent (e.g., assault, coercion) or pain/harm (e.g., hitting, torture). In the majority of cases (57.7%), participants indicated that non-consent/pain/harm was 'not okay' across all three contexts. In a substantial minority of cases (16.6%), however, participants indicated that 'non-consent/pain/harm' was 'not okay' in-person, but 'okay' in porn and/or fantasy.

This suggests that, contrary to common concerns, even when people view harmful/non-consensual behaviors as normative in fantasy or porn, they can still view them as not okay in-person.

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Symposium on Sexual Norms Across Porn, Fantasy, and In-Person Sexuality. Norms for “Romantic” Sexual Behaviours: Branchedness and Coincidence Across Porn, Fantasy, and In-Person Sexuality

Kate Hunker, Aki Gormezano, Marietta Konermann, Sari van Anders
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Abstract / Abstrait

‘Romantic’ behaviours (e.g., cuddling, handholding) are part of many people’s in-person sexual scripts. Beyond in-person sexuality, however, less is known about whether these are considered normative (i.e., okay) in sexual contexts like porn or fantasy. In the present study, we investigated perceptions of romantic sexual behaviour norms across porn, fantasy, and in-person sexuality.

Gender/sex/ually diverse online participants ($N = 354$) completed a norm elicitation task where they listed up to 10 sexual behaviour norms for porn, fantasy, in-person sexuality (in randomized order). Then, they indicated whether each norm they listed was branched or coincident across contexts, indicating whether each behaviour was normative or not in each context.

Of the 6139 norms participants generated, we categorized 310 as ‘romantic’ (e.g., “handholding,” “cuddling/hugging”). Participants indicated that most of these romantic behaviors were ‘okay’ across contexts. However, participants were significantly more likely to list romantic behaviors as ‘not okay’ or ‘not applicable’ for porn ($n = 31$) than for in-person sexuality ($n = 10$) or for fantasy ($n = 10$), $ps = .002$. And, overall, ‘romantic’ behaviour norms were listed significantly less often for porn ($n = 62$) than for in-person sexuality ($n = 163$), $p < .001$, or at a trend for fantasy ($n = 85$), $p = .058$.

Overall, these findings suggest that people consider ‘romantic’ behaviors to be less normative for porn than for fantasy or in-person sexuality.

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The Relationship Between Pain Characteristics and Sexual Well-Being in People Living with Chronic Pain

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Research shows that chronic pain adversely affects sexual function. However, researchers have neglected other aspects of sexual well-being (SWB) as well as the impact of multiple pain characteristics on sexual well-being.

Aims: Our goals were to characterize the SWB of individuals with CP and to examine the associations between different pain characteristics and various aspects of SWB.

Methods: 318 participants (M age = 31.87, SD = 6.11) with CP who were in a relationship were recruited online. Participants completed measures of pain characteristics (i.e., pain intensity, pain disability, affective distress, partner support, perceived control, and pain acceptance) and SWB (i.e., genital sexual activity, sexual satisfaction, self-esteem, desire, problems, and distress).

Results: Participants reported frequent sexual activity and moderate-to-high sexual satisfaction, self-esteem, and desire. Approximately 40% had sexual problems but only 66% were distressed by them. A canonical correlation analysis yielded two significant functions. First, greater pain intensity, disability, and affective distress, combined with lower support, pain control, and acceptance were associated with poorer SWB (i.e., less frequent sex, lower sexual satisfaction, self-esteem, desire, poorer function, and greater distress). Second, greater pain intensity, disability, and affective distress, along with greater support were associated with greater sexual satisfaction and self-esteem, and sexual pain.

Conclusions: The results suggest people with CP experience more positive SWB than previous research has noted. Although a more negative pain experience is associated with poorer SWB, having a supportive partner appears to buffer the impact of pain and facilitates a positive sexual life.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Data Blitz Presentation / Présentation « blitz de données »

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Relationship Catastrophizing: Validating a Novel Measure and Investigating Associations with Sexual Well-being Across Two Samples

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Abstract / Abstrait

While relationship conflict is common and can have implications for sexual well-being, how couples regulate their emotions in such contexts has received limited attention. One strategy involves catastrophizing (i.e., magnification, rumination, and helplessness) about relationship problems. Given that catastrophizing in other domains (e.g., pain) is linked to increased attention to negative cues (e.g., pain sensations), relationship catastrophizing may have negative implications for sexual well-being. The current studies are the first to validate a novel measure of relationship catastrophizing and test associations with sexual well-being. In two studies, individuals in long-distance relationships (Study 1; N = 140 individuals) and couples expecting their first child (Study 2; N = 267 couples) completed measures of relationship catastrophizing and sexual satisfaction, partner-focused desire, and distress. Study 1 supported the reliability and validity of the relationship catastrophizing measure and demonstrated preliminary associations with lower sexual satisfaction and greater distress. In Study 2, when pregnant participants reported greater relationship catastrophizing, they reported lower desire, and both partners had lower sexual satisfaction and higher distress. When non-pregnant partners reported greater catastrophizing, they reported lower sexual satisfaction and higher distress, but their pregnant partners reported higher desire. Broadly, relationship catastrophizing is linked to lower sexual well-being for both members of the couple. Unexpectedly, catastrophizing by the non-pregnant partner predicted higher desire in the expecting partner. Catastrophizing during pregnancy may signal commitment or elicit partner reassurance, thus sparking feelings of desire. Relationship catastrophizing could be a novel target for interventions promoting the sexual well-being of couples navigating relationship challenges.

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Changes in Sexual and Relationship Behaviours Among University Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted individuals differently across relationships types; where individuals in relationships may have had more opportunities to be sexual, single persons may have found it more difficult to find and engage with partners. The purpose of the current study was to investigate pandemic-related changes in communication (via technology and face-to-face) and sexual behaviours across relationship types (single, casual, committed) and gender.

Methods: Cross-sectional data collected from December 2020 - January 2021 from 1504 Canadian university students aged 18 to 24 (44% men, 56% women) was used for the current study. Designed by the Sex Information & Education Council of Canada and administered by the Leger polling company, participants responded to items about their sexual health, behaviours, and relationships.

Results: Participants generally reported more frequent technology use (sexual and non-sexual), more frequent discussions about boundaries and needs (sexual and emotional), and engaging in new sexual activities (no gender differences). Participants in a committed relationship reported greater increases across all behaviours than those who were single. Individuals in casual relationships were more likely to indicate an increase in discussions of sexual and non-sexual needs and more frequent use of technology for sexual reasons than those who were single. People in committed relationships reported talking with a partner more often about their emotional needs than were individuals in casual relationships.

Conclusion: The pandemic appears to have magnified differences between single and partnered young people, providing greater opportunities for sexual and nonsexual connection for those in relationships.

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Perceived Financial Burden is Indirectly Linked to Sexual Well-Being via Quality of Life among Couples Seeking Medically Assisted Reproduction

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Couples seeking medically assisted reproduction (MAR) face both financial and sexual challenges. According to Couples and Finance Theory, the financial burden of MAR may be indirectly related to poorer sexual well-being via lower MAR-related quality of life.

Aims: We tested whether an individual's perceived financial burden of MAR (a subjective financial process) and a couple's household income level (an objective financial process) were associated with poorer quality of life during MAR for individuals and their partners, and in turn, poorer sexual well-being for both members of the couple (i.e., lower sexual satisfaction, desire, and frequency, and higher distress).

Methods: Participants included 120 mixed- and same-gender couples from Canada and the United States who had undergone MAR in the past six months and completed validated self-report measures. We constructed an actor-partner interdependence mediation model to evaluate our objectives.

Results: An individual's greater perceived financial burden of MAR was significantly associated with their own lower quality of life during MAR, and, in turn, their own lower sexual satisfaction, desire, and higher sexual distress, and lower sexual frequency for the couple, as well as their partner's lower sexual satisfaction. There were no significant indirect effects between income and sexual well-being.

Conclusions: This study provides novel evidence that finances and sex are linked among couples undergoing MAR through disruptions to their quality of life. Clinicians might help couples address how the perceived financial strains of MAR may be affecting their quality of life, with benefits to their sexual well-being.

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Examination and Replication of a Brief Online Intervention for Sexual Well-being

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Abstract / Abstrait

Sexual well-being is vital to the quality and longevity of romantic relationships, yet sexual well-being often declines over time. Most research has focused on identifying factors associated with declines in sexual well-being, ignoring factors that might bolster sexual well-being. Mindfulness is an effective treatment for sexual dysfunction, yet it remains unclear if mindfulness would benefit people without sexual dysfunction. In two studies we tested whether a brief online psychoeducational intervention about the benefits of mindfulness for sexuality could bolster sexual well-being. Participants in study 1 (N = 179) and study 2 (N = 248) completed measures to assess their sexual well-being and sexual mindfulness at three time points over a two-week period. In both studies participants were randomly assigned to either a control “no information” condition or an experimental “psychoeducation intervention” condition where they viewed a 3-minute video on the benefits of mindful sex. In study 2 we increased the intensity of the intervention, such that participants viewed the video twice (at baseline and one week later). Across both studies those in the experimental intervention reported significantly higher sexual satisfaction, sexual desire, and sexual mindfulness. Mediation analyses revealed sexual mindfulness as a mechanism underlying changes in sexual well-being over the two-week period. We first established and then replicated that a brief psychoeducational video about the benefits of mindful sex is effective in bolstering sexual well-being through sexual mindfulness. This intervention may serve as a resource to promote sexual well-being among individuals without sexual problems, with the potential for easy dissemination.

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Reported Coverage of Gender-Based Violence Prevention Concepts in Sexual Health Education in Secondary School: A National Survey of University Students in Canada

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Abstract / Abstrait

School-based sexual health education can help youth challenge harmful gender norms, expand their understanding of gender, and reduce gender-based violence (GBV; Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2020). However, critical concepts such as consent are often implemented inconsistently (Robinson et al., 2019), and the extent to which additional GBV prevention topics (e.g., power dynamics, bystander intervention skills) are incorporated into sexual health education is unclear. We surveyed 1511 undergraduate students across Canada to examine perceived coverage of 16 GBV prevention topics in their secondary school sexual health education and determine whether reported coverage was different based on region, gender, and sexual orientation. We also examined whether GBV topics had similar or different levels of reported coverage compared to other sexual health education topics (e.g., STI/pregnancy prevention). The survey instrument was designed by the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN) and administered by the Leger polling company. On average, students rated all GBV topics as covered poorly. However, coverage was significantly higher in Ontario compared to Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. Cisgender women reported significantly less coverage compared to cisgender men and trans and nonbinary participants. Trans and nonbinary students reported significantly lower coverage compared to cisgender men. Compared to heterosexual participants, LGBTQ+ students reported significantly lower coverage of GBV topics. Across all genders, reported coverage was significantly lower for GBV topics compared to STI and pregnancy prevention topics. Results highlight the need for greater incorporation of GBV prevention topics into school-based sexual health education in Canada.

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Is Knowing Half The Battle?: Knowledge About Genital Herpes and Factors Affecting Adjustment

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Abstract / Abstrait

Genital herpes (HSV) affects approximately 557 million people between the ages of 15–49 (WHO, 2016). Despite its high prevalence, knowledge about the condition is lacking and many individuals suffer significant psychological distress upon diagnosis. As such, it is necessary to evaluate knowledge about herpes and examine factors that may contribute to adjustment. Participants ($N=633$; HSV+ $N=401$, HSV- $N=232$) completed online measures of genital herpes knowledge, erotophobia- erotophilia and psychological adjustment. In addition, participants were asked to rate their current herpes knowledge as well as their knowledge prior to diagnosis (if applicable). Knowledge was high amongst those already diagnosed ($M=91.41$, $SD=7.34$), but considerably lower in HSV- participants ($M=62.21$, $SD=19.63$). With major gaps in knowledge regarding ongoing management and common misconceptions about herpes. For individuals who have genital herpes, those who rated their current knowledge more favourably had greater psychological adjustment ($p=.001$). Similarly, participants who rated themselves as being knowledgeable about herpes prior to diagnosis were significantly better adjusted ($p=.008$). However, self-rated knowledge was only found to have a significant effect on adjustment for those low in erotophobia ($W \leq 17.42$). Greater efforts are needed to educate people about genital herpes prior to diagnosis. More positive psychological outcomes can be expected following a diagnosis if people feel well-informed about genital herpes. Positive sexual attitudes play a critical role and must be considered in psycho-educational efforts to improve adjustment to genital herpes.

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Within-person Associations Between Sexual Satisfaction and Relationship Satisfaction over Time

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Abstract / Abstrait

Despite considerable research demonstrating a positive link between couples' sexual and relationship satisfaction, longitudinal evidence on the directionality of this association is highly mixed. One critical reason may be that past studies have not disaggregated the between- and within-person sources of long-term variability in sexual and relationship satisfaction. Theoretically, the association is often conceptualized as a within-person dynamic: If a person becomes more sexually satisfied than usual, their overall relationship satisfaction would likewise become more positive than is typical, or vice versa. Thus, the present research aimed to shed light on the within-person associations between sexual and relationship satisfaction over time, using nationally representative, 4-year longitudinal data from newlywed couples in the U.S. (N = 2,140). Data were analyzed using a bivariate Latent Curve Model with Structured Residuals, which allows partitioning of within-person changes and between-person differences in sexual and relationship satisfaction. Controlling for couples' sexual frequency at each time point, the results indicated that (a) within-person changes in either husbands' or wives' sexual satisfaction consistently predicted future changes in husbands' relationship satisfaction across all waves, and (b) earlier changes in relationship satisfaction did not predict future changes in sexual satisfaction for either spouse. The results also showed robust concurrent associations between sexual and relationship satisfaction for both spouses. This research presents the first longitudinal within-person evidence that informs theories and practice on the role of sexuality in relationships. Our findings support the theoretical perspectives that sexual satisfaction may be more important for men's perception of the relationship.

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Unmet and Exceeded Sexual Expectations Across the Transition to Parenthood

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Couples navigate many changes to their sexual relationships when they become parents. Yet little is known about how their expectations related to sex during this period (i.e., will their sex life change for better or worse) shape sexual and relationship well-being.

Method: In a longitudinal design, we collected data from 200 new-parent couples in mid-pregnancy and 3, 6, 9, and 12-months postpartum. Expectations for postpartum sexual concerns were assessed in pregnancy and compared to postpartum sexual experiences at 3-months postpartum. We assessed sexual satisfaction, sexual distress, relationship satisfaction, and relationship conflict at all time-points. We analyzed these data using dyadic latent growth curve models, and all hypotheses and data analytic plans were preregistered.

Results: Mothers' unmet expectations (i.e., worse than expected) were associated with their own lower sexual and relationship satisfaction at 3-months postpartum. Partners' unmet expectations were associated with their own lower sexual satisfaction, higher sexual distress and relationship conflict, and mothers' lower sexual satisfaction. Mothers' exceeded expectations (i.e., not as bad as they expected) were linked to their own and their partners' higher sexual satisfaction and lower sexual distress and relationship conflict at 3-months postpartum. Partners' exceeded expectations were only associated with mothers' lower sexual distress at 3-months postpartum. Expectations did not predict change in outcomes over time.

Conclusions: Findings provide novel evidence that sexual expectations are associated with new parents' sexual and relationship adjustment during a vulnerable period for sexuality and well-being. Targeting sexual expectations via prevention or intervention efforts might promote well-being among new parents.

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Frequency of Sexual Difficulties and Protective Factors of Sexual Wellbeing in Heterosexual and Sexually Minoritized Adolescents.

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Abstract / Abstrait

Adolescence is a crucial period for sexual development and the cornerstone of sexual wellbeing (SWB) in adulthood. While most adolescents are content with their SWB (i.e., sexual satisfaction, function, distress), a significant proportion of them experience sexual difficulties--especially sexual minority youth. Identifying factors that can contribute to adolescents' SWB is essential for developing targeted interventions.

Among 821 sexually active adolescents in grades 10 (baseline) and 11 (12-month follow-up) (T1: Mage=15.48 years, SDage= 0.58, T2: Mage= 16.42 years, SDage = 0.55), this longitudinal study examined (a) the frequency of sexual difficulties, (b) the protective roles of resilience, emotion regulation and perceived partner responsiveness on SWB and (c) sexual orientation-based distinctions (two groups: n = 722 heterosexual, n = 99 sexual minority youth). Participants completed in-class, self-report surveys at baseline and 12-month follow-up.

Descriptive statistics showed the most frequent sexual problem was difficulty reaching orgasm in all adolescents, although more frequent among sexual minority youth. Multi-group path analysis indicated that higher baseline levels of perceived partner responsiveness and emotion regulation were associated with greater sexual satisfaction 12 months later. Higher baseline levels of resilience were associated with higher sexual function and lower sexual distress 12 months later. No significant sexual orientation-based differences were found.

Findings support the role of both intra- and interpersonal factors in fostering SWB in adolescents over time. Even though sexual minority youth are more at risk of having lower SWB, the same protective factors can be targeted to promote wellness among these youth.

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Connecting Through COVID: Reasons for Having More or Less Sex in the Pandemic Among Midlife, Married Adults

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: For married people during the pandemic, increased time together, stress, and other factors impacted sexual behaviours. The purpose of the current study was to document married individuals' most common reasons for having more (or less) sex during the pandemic, and to assess differences by gender.

Methods: 1027 married Americans (509 women, 515 men) participated online via a Qualtrics Panel in August and September 2021. For the present analyses, 567 (cis (543) and trans (24)) participants who indicated they were having more or less sex during the pandemic rated 26 different reasons for this change.

Results: 58.1% of men and 27.4% of women indicated they were having more sex; 32.5% of men and 53.0% of women reported no change; and 9.4% of men and 19.6% of women indicated they were having less sex than before the pandemic. The most common reasons for having less sex were: too tired; too stressed; and "my spouse is less interested in sexual activity." Women were more likely to report they were having less sex than before the pandemic because they were too tired and less interested in sexual activity. The most common reasons for having more sex were: feeling more connected to spouse, appreciating spouse more than before the pandemic, and improved quality of sex life over the pandemic.

Conclusion: Increased sexual frequency during the pandemic was largely attributed to positive sexual and relational pandemic-specific reasons. Findings suggest that the pandemic may have created unique opportunities for spousal intimacy and appreciation.

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Sexuality and the Political Spectrum: Do Conservatives and Liberals have Similar Sexual Behaviour?

Tina Fetner

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Abstract / Abstrait

Studies of political polarization suggest that Canadians are becoming more political divided, with conservatives and liberals forming social groups that are more distant from each other than ever before. Although sociologists agree that social forces in general have an influence on individuals sexual behaviour, political ideology has not received as much attention as demographic factors such as gender, age and education. This analysis examines uses logistic regression analysis of original survey data of self-reported sexual behaviour to consider the associations between political leanings and sexual behaviour among Canadian adults. I find that self-identified liberal Canadians are more likely than conservatives to report that they used sex toys and engaged in oral sex in their most recent encounter. I consider the implications of political identity being associated with certain sexual behaviours among the Canadian population.

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Data Blitz Presentation / Présentation « blitz de données »

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Listeners' Reactions to Sexual and Gender Diverse Musicians in Black Metal, Hip-Hop, Country And Neofolk

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Abstract / Abstrait

This article examines the reactions of listeners of four musical genres (black metal, hip-hop, country, neofolk) toward musicians from the sexual and gender diversity (SGD) community evolving in these musical genres. 583 comments concerning the sexual or gender orientation of 33 artists were collected on the internet (on sites like Facebook, reddit, YouTube etc.). Through a thematic analysis, the comments were then divided and analyzed depending of their positivity or negativity toward the SGD and depending of the thematic raised by the comments. The result revealed that musicians of the SGD community face mixed reactions with both extremely negative and positive comments. Black metal has the highest ratio of negative comments while country has the most positive. The analysis suggests that positive comments mainly praise the fact that SDG artists in these music genres are finally represented and underline how these artists challenge the norms and values of these music genres. Negative comments are often characterized by insults, homophobia, or the use of terms specific to a sexual or gender orientation in a pejorative manner. Lastly, differences are observed among the four music genres concerning the content of the comments.

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Is Spontaneous Sex Ideal? Beliefs and Perceptions of Spontaneous and Planned Sex and Satisfaction in Romantic Relationships.

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Abstract / Abstrait

Sexual satisfaction plays a critical role in relationship quality, and one common belief in Western culture is that sex is more satisfying when it happens spontaneously, but this idea has rarely been studied. Across two studies—a cross sectional (N=303 partnered individuals) and a 21-day daily experience (N=121 couples) study—we investigated beliefs and perceptions regarding sexual spontaneity and associations with relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction and desire. In Study 1, we found support for two distinct beliefs: a preference for spontaneous sex and a preference for planned sex. In line with common perceptions, people preferred spontaneous sex to planned sex (across both studies), however this belief was only associated with higher satisfaction and desire in Study 1. In Study 1, when people perceived their most recent sexual experience as planned, they felt less sexually satisfied than when it was spontaneous, but this was not the case for those who held greater beliefs that planned sex is satisfying (i.e., they were buffered). In Study 2, we found evidence that a general preference for planned sex was associated with lower sexual desire and both partners' lower sexual satisfaction. On days when people perceived sex to either be more spontaneous or planned ahead of time than typical, they reported higher desire. There was no association between perceiving sex as spontaneous and daily satisfaction, even for those with a preference for spontaneous sex. The findings have implications for future research on shifting people's beliefs about sexual spontaneity.

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An Examination of the Comorbidity of Paraphilic Disorders and Compulsive Sexual Behaviour Disorder in Women: Findings from a 45-Country Study

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: New definitions of paraphilic disorder (PD) and compulsive sexual behaviour disorder (CSBD) are being included in the ICD-11. While PDs are exclusion criteria in the diagnosis of CSBD, prior research suggests an overlap in the two groups. As women are often neglected in sex research, and in problematic sexual behaviours research specifically, this study investigated the co-occurrence and associations between PDs and CSBD in those who identify as women, in a large, diverse, multinational sample collected as part of a cross-cultural research initiative (the International Sex Survey [ISS]).

Method: Data collection was completed at the beginning of May 2022, with participants from 45 countries, including ethnically diverse populations. The final total sample size was approximately N = 82,000. ICD-11-based measures (Paraphilic Disorder Screening Scale and Compulsive Sexual Behavior Disorder Scale [CSBD-19]) were used to assess paraphilias (e.g., exhibitionism, voyeurism) and CSBD.

Expected results: Prior literature suggests that respondents meeting the criteria of one or more PDs are expected to report higher levels of CSBD, and respondents scoring above the cutoff score of CSBD-19 would show a greater likelihood of meeting PD criteria.

Conclusions: Examining the comorbidity between PDs and CSBD in a large, culturally and sexually diverse sample of women is necessary to develop clinical protocols for differential diagnosis, and to provide adequate treatment. Women in particular have been underdiagnosed and underserved in this regard; more investigation is necessary in order to properly define the extent of these disorders in this population and identify their particular needs.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Data Blitz Presentation / Présentation « blitz de données »

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

Impacts of Racial Attitudes on Sexual Response

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background. In laboratory settings, sexual arousal is commonly triggered through exposure to erotic films. Participants also appraise stimulus cues, like attractiveness of the actors. Laboratory studies typically use sexual stimuli depicting white actors and primarily recruit white participants. Thus, white participants do not view racially diverse sexual stimuli and racialized participants do not see themselves represented in the sexual films. Research suggests that race may be an important stimulus feature modulating women's sexual response (Reed Hughes & Anderson, 2007). The effect of race on sexual response may be further influenced by racial attitudes (Hsu et al., 2021) and identification with sexual films (Bossio et al., 2013). The current study examined how racial attitudes and identification impact Black and white women's sexual responses to race-congruent and incongruent sexual stimuli.

Methods. Participants were 142 self-identified Black and white women recruited through MTurk. Participants viewed erotic films depicting Black and white couples and reported their sexual arousal, appraisal of the male actors' attractiveness, racial attitudes, and identification with sexual stimuli.

Results. Moderated mediation analyses showed that male actors' attractiveness was moderated by women's implicit racial attitudes, and both sexual arousal and attractiveness were moderated indirectly by explicit racial attitudes through women's identification with sexual stimuli.

Conclusions. Sexual response research contributes to understanding sexual outcomes like low sexual arousal and desire. Considering effects of race and racial attitudes on sexual response ensures that we do not systematically disadvantage women of colour and erroneously interpret racial differences in sexual response as evidence of sexual difficulties.

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Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

Time for a Measurement Check-Up: Testing the Couple's Satisfaction Index (CSI) and the Global Measure of Sexual Satisfaction (GMSEX) Using Structural Equation Modeling and Item Response Theory

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Abstract / Abstrait

Relationship and sexual satisfaction are two central outcomes in the study of relationships and are commonly used in both academia and applied practice. However, relationship and sexual satisfaction measures infrequently undergo specific psychometric investigation. Utilizing measures with strong psychometric performance is an important but under-tested element of replication that has come under more scrutiny lately (e.g., Hussey & Hughes, 2020), and adequate measurement of constructs is an important auxiliary assumption underpinning theory-testing empirical work (Sakaluk, 2019). In this study, I propose periodic measurement check-ups including Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test factorial validity, measurement invariance to test for group comparability, and Item Response Theory (IRT) to assess the relationship between latent traits and their items/indicators. I use this format to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Couple's Satisfaction Index (CSI) and the Global Measure of Sexual Satisfaction (GMSEX), two commonly used scales of relationship and sexual satisfaction with a sample of 700 midlife (40-59 years old) married Canadians who were recruited by Qualtrics Panels. Results of CFA suggested that both models had "mixed" fit. Invariance testing provided robust support for intercept invariance across all the groupings tested. IRT analysis supported the CSI and GMSEX, however, there was evidence that the GMSEX provided somewhat less information for those high on sexual satisfaction. This measurement check-up found that the CSI and GMSEX were reasonably healthy with some important caveats. Implications are discussed in terms of replicability and meaning for scholars and practitioners.

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Mindfulness in Pregnancy Protects Against Declines in First-Time Mothers' Body-Image

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Abstract / Abstrait

Body-image and mindfulness are key contributors to sexual well-being. Pregnant individuals experience marked bodily changes from pregnancy to postpartum, with poorer body-image being linked to lower psychological, relational, and sexual functioning. Mindfulness—a purposeful, nonjudgmental awareness of present-moment experience—has been linked to lower psychological distress and higher sexual well-being and may help couples deal with pregnancy and postpartum-related bodily changes through nonjudgmental acceptance of one's own or partners' bodily changes. We tested the hypothesis of mindfulness as a protective factor against negative changes to couples' perception of new mothers' body-image from pregnancy to postpartum. Mixed-sex new parent couples (N = 257) completed measures across four time-points (two prenatal) from mid-pregnancy through 6-months postpartum. Mothers reported on their own body-image and partners reported on their perception of their partner's body-image using the Maternal/Paternal Adjustment and Attitudes Questionnaire (MAMA/PAPA); both partners reported on mindfulness using the Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). Parallel dyadic latent growth curve modelling indicated that, at pregnancy, initial levels of body-image and mindfulness were positively associated within-person and within-couples. Over time, mindfulness was stable for both partners. Mothers' body-image decreased from pregnancy to 6-months postpartum, whereas partners' perception of mothers' body-image did not. Mothers' higher mindfulness at pregnancy predicted slower subsequent declines in their own body-image. This study identifies mindfulness as a protective factor against mother's poorer own body-image across the perinatal period. Further understanding of new mothers' capacity for mindfulness may contribute to advice promoting their adjustment to new parenthood.

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Body Image Self-Consciousness as a Risk Factor for Sexual Function Problems: A Longitudinal Analysis of Pregnant Couples

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Abstract / Abstrait

Both pregnant individuals and their partners experience myriad changes to their bodies (e.g., significant weight gain) and sexual function (desire, arousal, orgasm, pain, satisfaction) during pregnancy. When pregnant individuals hold more positive perceptions of their own body, both they and their partners report higher sexual function. Body image self-consciousness (BISC)--feelings of insecurity about one's body during sexual activity--may be especially relevant to sexual function during pregnancy given body and weight changes, though this has not yet been examined dyadically. This study examined whether body image self-consciousness during sex was associated with both partners' poorer sexual function cross-sectionally and longitudinally. Expectant couples (N=257) independently completed surveys at 20- and 32-weeks gestation assessing BISC, overall sexual function, satisfaction, and desire.

Pregnant individuals' higher BISC was linked with their own poorer sexual function and sexual satisfaction in mid- and late-pregnancy (i.e., 20- and 32-weeks). Higher BISC at 20-weeks also predicted lower sexual satisfaction at 32-weeks. Among partners, higher BISC at 32-weeks was associated with their own lower sexual satisfaction at 32-weeks, and higher BISC at 20-weeks predicted their own poorer sexual function at 32-weeks. There were no significant associations for sexual desire or between an individual's own BISC and their partners' outcomes.

Consistent with theories of cognitive distraction, higher BISC may interfere with sexual function because distracting thoughts about one's body pulls attention away from positive aspects of the sexual experience (e.g., pleasure). Encouraging strategies (e.g., mindfulness) to focus on positive sexual cues may bolster pregnant couples' sexual function.

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Is Sexual Satisfaction with Your New Partner Meant to Be? Investigating the Role of Lay Beliefs of Sexual Satisfaction in the Unfolding of New Relationships

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Abstract / Abstrait

The present research investigated how beliefs around maintaining sexual satisfaction (i.e., lay beliefs of sexual satisfaction) prospectively shape relationship outcomes in brand-new dating relationships. We extend past work by examining the effect of lay beliefs longitudinally, and in the novel context of new relationships, when beliefs may critically impact a relationship's trajectory. Participants (of all gender and sexual identities ; N = 195) who had been dating a new partner for an average of 24 days responded to weekly questionnaires about their new relationship for ~12 weeks. We predicted that Sexual Growth beliefs (i.e., the idea that sexual satisfaction requires effort and work to maintain) would be associated with higher sexual satisfaction and higher relationship quality over the course of the study. In contrast, we expected that those high on Sexual Destiny (i.e., the idea that people are either inherently sexually compatible or they are not) would experience lower relationship quality and sexual satisfaction over the course of the study, particularly if they did not perceive high sexual compatibility with their romantic partner. These preregistered hypotheses were largely supported. Results provide further evidence and extension of the role of lay beliefs around sex in maintaining sexual satisfaction and relationship quality.

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On the Association Between Attachment and Sexual Satisfaction in Long-term Couples: Investigating the Role of Sexual Motives Over Time

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Abstract / Abstrait

Attachment theory postulates that attachment, caregiving and sex are three behavioural systems that are central to optimal couple functioning. However, few studies have examined the concurrent contribution of these systems to understand couples' sexual satisfaction. This prospective and daily-diary study examined the mediating role of daily sexual motives (attachment and caregiving sexual motives) in the association between attachment insecurities and sexual satisfaction 3 months later in 149 long-term mixed-gender/sex couples. Multilevel analyses revealed that men with higher attachment anxiety tended to endorse more attachment sexual motives (e.g., to promote intimacy, to feel loved or get reassurance), which was associated with their lower sexual satisfaction 3 months later. Conversely, they were also more likely to engage in sex for caregiving motives (e.g., to soothe and nurture their partner), which was associated with their higher sexual satisfaction over time. In women, higher attachment anxiety was also associated with more attachment and less caregiving sexual motives, but these motives did not predict their sexual satisfaction 3 months later. Moreover, for both men and women, attachment avoidance was not associated with their sexual motives and their sexual motives did not predict the partner's satisfaction over time. Overall, findings support the associations between the attachment, caregiving, and sexual behavioural systems. They also highlight the importance of considering why people have sex and if sexual activity is driven by insecurity when trying to promote sexual well-being.

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Puppy Philms: Exploring Body Image Within GBQ Men who Identify as Pups Using Cellphilming.

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Abstract / Abstrait

Pup play is a form of Bondage/Discipline, Dominance/Submission, and Sadism/Masochism (BDSM) role-play in which participants of sexual practices dress as, take on the role of, and mimic the behaviors of young canines. Puppy play has been growing particularly in gay, bisexual, trans, and queer communities (GBQ). Our research project explores how body image is reproduced through the beliefs and practices of GBQ men within the "pup community". Informed by cellphilming and focus group methods, participants created films using their cellphones about their experiences in the pup community as they relate to body image. We used Foucauldian discursive analysis and identified three discursive threads within our preliminary results: the pup headspace, the importance of pup clothing and gear, and pup gender expression. Firstly, some pups refer to their pup self as a separate entity from their human self; immersing into the pup headspace appears to alleviate the weight of male body image ideals. Secondly, the clothing gear used in the pup community has an important influence on the pup's perception of self and others. Pup gear helps some pups feel more desirable and less stigmatized through the dissociation of body ideals and their physical form. Finally, pup play creates a headspace in which the complex interplay between body ideals and gender expression is subdued. Participants described how the inclusive social nature of the community created an environment in which some pups may experience less body image tensions. This may contribute to more positive sexual health and wellbeing.

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Want You to Want Me: Motives for Extradynamic Flirting and Associations with Relationship Quality

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Abstract / Abstrait

Flirting is indirect verbal or nonverbal communication that conveys romantic or sexual interest (Speer, 2017). Although there is limited research to date, flirting is used to initiate new intimate relationships, for fun, but primarily represents a means of gauging partner interest (Henningesen et al., 2008). Individuals in established relationships also report flirting (Lee & Sullivan, 2018). We aimed to understand motives for flirting with extradynamic partners, and to what extent, if at all, frequency of flirting with others was linked to relationship quality among those in established relationships.

Participants (N=337) in committed, monogamous relationships were surveyed about occasions of flirting with an attractive alternative to their partner using open-ended items, as well as standard measures assessing relationship quality (Rusbult, 1983). Open-ended items addressing motives were content-coded to examine motivations reasons for extradynamic flirting behaviour. We examined links between frequency of extradynamic flirting and relationship quality outcomes.

Most (62%) reported at least one recent occasion of flirting with someone other than their partner. The primary motives were to (1) boost confidence or self-esteem, (2) for fun or entertainment, (3) to communicate attraction, or (4) gauge the interest of another person. More frequent reciprocated flirting with extradynamic partners was strongly negatively associated with relationship satisfaction, commitment, and investment in the relationship. Frequency was also positively associated with perceived quality of alternatives to the relationship.

This study extends limited work on flirting to the established relationship context. Findings suggest that rather than being harmless and fun, habitually flirting is linked to poorer relationship outcomes.

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Prevalence and Factors Associated with Sexual Aversion in a Canadian Community Sample

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Sexual aversion (SA) is a chronic condition causing marked distress and interpersonal difficulties. Yet, studies exploring its prevalence and psychosexual factors are lacking.

Aims: To estimate the prevalence of SA and examine its associated psychosexual factors among a community sample of Canadian adults.

Methods: A large web-based sample of the Quebec (Canada) adult population (n = 1,935; 53.5% women, 42.4% men, 7.3% trans/nonbinary) completed an online survey on sexual wellbeing. Logistic regressions were used to estimate associations between SA and psychosexual factors.

Results: The prevalence of SA was 9.75% (95% CI: 8.41-11.21) in the sample, 6.89% (5.17-8.96 95% CI) in men; 11.31% (9.41-13.45 95% CI) in women; 17.11% (9.44-27.47 95% CI) in nonbinary/trans individuals). A multivariate logistic regression model showed that SA was independently associated with psychological distress (aOR: 1.77, 95% CI: 1.33-2.38), sexual satisfaction (aOR: .59, 95% CI: .49-.70), sexual performance anxiety (aOR: 2.08, 95% CI: 1.45-2.98), discomfort with sex-related information (aOR: 1.02, 95% CI: 1.01-1.03), and self-identifying as asexual (aOR: 5.25, 95% CI: 1.19-21.12) or questioning one's sexual orientation (aOR: 4.13, 95% CI: 1,89-8,73). This model explained 31.4% of the log-likelihood of experiencing SA.

Conclusions: This study reveals that a substantial proportion of adults face distressing SA symptoms and that several markers of sexual and emotional wellbeing are associated with this condition. Further SA research is critical to explore additional intrapersonal and interpersonal mechanisms involved in SA etiology, and ensure that the needs of people living with SA are met with tailored interventions.

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Attachment Style and Distress in Couples Experiencing Sexual Desire Discrepancy

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Partners often vary in sexual desire within long-term relationships. Sexual desire discrepancy (SDD) is associated with lower sexual and relationship satisfaction for both partners and is a common reason couples seek therapy. Yet researchers have not fully explored factors that distinguish non-distressing from distressing SDD. One factor that may predict levels of distress is attachment style, given it captures emotional sensitivity to rejection. The current study examined the dyadic associations between insecure attachment style (i.e., anxious, avoidant) and sexual desire among couples experiencing both distressing and non-distressing levels of SDD.

Methods: Couples (N=202; 51% female; Mage= 28.0) were recruited through social media (e.g., Instagram, Twitter) and completed a survey assessing sexual distress (Derogati et al., 2002), adult attachment style (Wei et al., 2007), and sexual desire. Guided by the Actor Partner Interdependence model to account for interdependence of couples' data, we assessed whether attachment style moderated the relationship between SDD and distress. A second study (N=107) explored additional factors that might account for distress using open-ended methods.

Results: Those experiencing greater desire discrepancies reported higher sexual distress, but only for the partner with lower desire. Anxious and avoidant attachment did not moderate this relationship the relationship between SDD and sexual distress. Open-ended reports suggest that how partners attribute low desire might be key. **Conclusions:** Given the prevalence of discrepancies in desire, it is valuable to understand why SDD is differentially linked to distress. Our mixed methods approach, including first-person accounts, constitutes movement toward identifying key points of intervention.

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Examining Factors Associated with Sexual Distress Mitigation in Sexual and Gender/Sex Minorities and Majorities with Endometriosis

Samantha Levang, Dean Tripp, Caroline Pukall
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Abstract / Abstrait

Objective(s): Endometriosis is a painful, chronic inflammatory condition characterized by the presence of tissue similar to the lining of the uterus growing outside of the uterus. Despite the well-known relationship between sexual health and quality of life, few studies have focused on sexual distress in the endometriosis population. In addition, most studies that have focused on sexual distress have done so through a heteronormative lens via enlisting heterosexual participants and examining pain experienced during penile-vaginal intercourse. This research model has failed to acknowledge the experiences of those who identify as a sexual and/or gender/sex (SSG) minority. By enlisting a wide-ranging sample to include SSG minorities, and thus widening our lens of sexual activity, we may gain insight into ways in which anyone with endometriosis may mitigate their sexual distress. Given the significant knowledge gaps related to adaptive outcomes in those with endometriosis, the current study aims to examine vulnerability and resilience factors contributing to sexual distress in an inclusive sample of individuals with endometriosis.

Results: Interim analyses indicate a significant difference in sexual flexibility between SSG minorities and majorities, a positive correlation between sexual self-consciousness and sexual distress, and a negative correlation between sexual distress and sexual flexibility. The study is ongoing and updated results will be presented.

Implications: The results of this study will contribute significantly to clinical practice in terms of providing empirically informed targeted treatment strategies for individuals with endometriosis who experience sexual distress.

Keywords: Endometriosis, Sexual Distress, Resiliency, Sexual and Gender/Sex Minority

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Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

Attraction Toward One's Partner is Associated with Sexual Desire and Distress Among Couples Coping with Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder

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Abstract / Abstrait

Persistent and distressing low sexual desire is a common problem and frequent reason for pursuing sex or relationship therapy. The incentive motivation model of sexual response suggests that attractive stimuli activate the sexual response system. Attraction toward one's partner has been linked to relationship and sexual satisfaction, but no studies have examined its links to sexual desire or distress. Using a daily diary design, we examined associations between attraction toward one's partner (strong positive feelings that draw you toward your partner) and sexual desire and distress for women and non-binary individuals with Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD) and their partners.

Individuals with SIAD and their partners (N = 193 couples) completed daily online surveys measuring attraction for one's partner, sexual desire, and sexual distress. Analyses used multilevel modeling.

On days that individuals with SIAD reported higher attraction for their partner (relative to their average across all days), both they and their partners reported higher sexual desire, and partners reported lower sexual distress. On days that partners reported higher attraction, both they and the individual with SIAD reported higher sexual desire and partners reported lower sexual distress; however, individuals with SIAD reported higher sexual distress.

For couples coping with SIAD, attraction toward one's partner may be important for stimulating feelings of sexual desire, which is consistent with the incentive motivation model of sexual response. However, attraction from one's partner was also linked to greater sexual distress, perhaps because it is perceived as pressure for sex.

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A Mixed-Methods Approach to Sexual Performance Anxiety in the Sexual Interactions of Adults

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Abstract / Abstrait

Introduction: Little is known about the links between sexual performance anxiety (SPA; i.e., fear in one's ability to engage in sexual acts adequately), sexual function, and relationship quality. Most research has focused on men's concerns about erectile functioning and premature ejaculation, with little research attention to women's experiences or to interpersonal concerns.

Aim: Using a mixed-methods approach, Study 1 focused on gathering a better understanding of cognitive, emotional, and relational experiences during episodes of SPA. Study 2 examined whether SPA was associated with higher sexual distress and sexual and relationship satisfaction in couples.

Method: Participants (n = 51) experiencing SPA were recruited via crowdsourcing for Study 1. They answered open-ended questions detailing their last experience of SPA, thought processes, and relationship dynamics. For Study 2, community-based couples (N = 228) completed an online survey assessing sexual performance anxiety, sexual distress, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction.

Results: Study 1: Directed content analysis revealed that men with SPA focused more on physiological functioning and avoidance coping strategies, whereas women with SPA focused on feelings of self-consciousness and inadequacy to sexually please their partner and approach coping strategies. Study 2: Guided by the Actor-Partner Independence Model—higher SPA was linked to higher sexual distress and lower sexual and relationship satisfaction in both individuals and their partners.

Discussion: This work advances sexual performance anxiety well into women's experiences, not just men's. It also adds new insights into links between SPA, the well-being of their romantic partner, and relationship dynamics.

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“Who do I need to spank?”: Navigating Queer Discourse and Disruption of Smite's 'Fabulous' Chiron Skin

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Abstract / Abstrait

Even though queer representation and visibility are increasing in video games, there is still harmful backlash that stems from a deep-rooted history of homophobia. Online multiplayer video games specifically are a hotbed for toxic behavior perpetrated against marginalized groups. Queer visibility in intentions is a positive step forward for games cultures but representations are not always readily accepted by queer audiences, as they appear within normative codified constraints. When the popular online MOBA game Smite by Hi-Rez released the ‘Fabulous Chiron’ skin in 2017, an LGBT+ specific in-game cosmetic for one of its characters, it sparked discourse regarding its stereotypical representation of queer sexuality. Chiron, the centaur from Greek mythology became outfitted in-game with pink bondage attire and rainbow accouterments, accompanied by hyper-sexualized voice lines. Using ‘Fabulous Chiron’ as a case study, this project will employ a two-pronged discourse analysis of the skin’s positionality within games cultures. Firstly, I will outline the skin in relation to queer videogame history - specifically regarding issues around stereotyping and caricaturing. Secondly, I will observe the use of this skin as a possible disruption to hegemonic play spaces through the lens of camp possibility. The objective of this project is twofold: to navigate the complex facets of sexual representations within play spaces, and to highlight conflicts and possibilities of queer play and disruption in online multiplayer games. Through my analysis, I intend to further dialogues regarding the role of queer use and sexuality in play as it relates to community visibility in online spaces.

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Having Sex Anyway - Why Not Get Paid for It?: Characteristics of Sugar Relationships from Both “Babies” and “Parents”

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Abstract / Abstrait

Sugar dating arrangements are relationships whereby an older partner (“sugar daddy/mama”) provides financial support to a younger partner (“baby”) in exchange for intimacy (Nayar, 2017). Due in part to stereotypes linking sugar arrangements to sex work, research is limited – most conducted in Africa or Asia. Few Western studies examine both sugar babies (SBs) and daddies or mamas (“sugar parents;” SPs) and their arrangements—the focus of this project. Forty-one individuals completed the survey following recruitment through social media. Thirty respondents (aged 20-52, 70% female-identifying) met criteria by reporting a recent/current arrangement (60% SBs, 33% SPs, .07% both). Directed content analysis (80% inter-rater reliability) was used to analyze reports. Additional data have been collected to ensure saturation in our coding procedure. Both SBs and SPs reported strong emphasis on intimate companionship despite the importance of sex within arrangements. SBs reported that money drives participation, but arrangements “[fit] multiple needs,” (e.g., pleasure). Beyond money, a benefit was having a relationship with clearly communicated boundaries and expectations. Loyalty was often rewarded; compensation frequently increased as trust in the SB developed. Disadvantages were concerns for safety (e.g., reputation, physical harm) for both, and SPs feared being used for their money. Notably, both perceived SBs as having equal or more power than SPs. Findings provide experience-near perspective from both SBs and SPs and support the view that sugar dating is distinct from sex work. The emphasis on quality time and trust-building lend to the conceptualization of sugar dating as a form of companionship.

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Examining the Online Language of ‘Incels’ Using Natural Language Processing

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Abstract / Abstrait

‘Incels’ are an online community comprised mostly of single men unsuccessful at finding a romantic and/or sexual partner who endorse toxic belief systems about women, relationships, and society at large. Amidst a rise of ideologically motivated violence linked to the online incel community in recent years (Hoffman et al., 2021), there exists a pressing need to study the psychology of individuals who subscribe to incel ideology in order to better understand how and why certain individuals may adopt these misogynist and misanthropic views. In the current research, we conduct qualitative analyses on large volumes of internet comments scraped from social media archives (i.e., Reddit.com) by applying Natural Language Processing (NLP) and machine learning techniques (Jelodar et al., 2019) to reveal meaningful patterns in text data. Specifically, the current analyzes over 10 million comments scraped from the most prominent ‘incel’ Reddit community forums identified in prior work (Papadamou et al., 2020) during the height of online incel activity (2015-2018) and prior to their banning and moderation. As the words people use reflect their psychological states (Pennebaker et al., 2003), the current research will present findings regarding word usage frequency, sentiment analysis, emotional content analysis, bigram analysis, and other common NLP techniques (e.g., topic modelling) to identify key distinguishing psychological characteristics of individuals who subscribe to incel ideology. Results from this approach will inform social psychological perspectives on singlehood and sexism research, and has broad implications for researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers.

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Virtual Reality Erotica: Arousing or Anxiety Provoking?

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Virtual reality (VR) erotica immerses users in 3D simulations of sex. While this tool may help researchers better understand sexual response, studies including VR sexual stimuli are scarce. A study found that women rated VR sexual scenes as more arousing than those shown in 2D. However, VR sex may also elicit anxiety, given that stimuli are realistic and not in the viewer's control, especially videos depicted from the 1st person point of view (POV). No study has examined negative affect in response to VR sexual scenes. We investigated whether women's anxiety was affected by 1) stimulus modality (VR vs. 2D) and 2) participant perspective (1st person POV vs. 3rd person POV). **Methods:** Thirty-eight women ($M_{age} = 20.79$, $SD = 2.23$) used a VR headset to view four erotic videos: 2D 3rd POV, 2D 1st POV, VR 3rd POV, and VR 1st POV (order counterbalanced). Before and after each video, participants completed the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-6). STAI-6 scores were subjected to a mixed-model ANOVA. **Results:** Analyses revealed an increase in pre- to post-video STAI-6 scores for every film ($ps < .01$, $ds = 0.53-1.00$), but the greatest anxiety response was observed for the VR 1st POV video. Women who viewed 2D stimuli first experienced greater decreases in anticipatory anxiety over time compared to women who viewed VR films initially, $p < .001$, $d = 0.88$. **Implications:** VR sexual videos elicited manageable levels of anxiety in a non-clinical sample of women. Future research should evaluate VR erotica within a clinical context.

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Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

Plurisexuality and Asexuality: Existing Beyond the Behaviour-Attraction-Identity Trichotomy

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Mononormativity is a pervasive societal force that socializes us from an early age to assume that everyone is monosexual (i.e., attracted to only one gender) and that monosexuality is both normal and healthy. In this study, participants' descriptions of their sexual orientation were analyzed with a critical eye to oppressive societal structures such as mononormativity, heteronormativity, biphobia, and the gender binary, to better explore how plurisexual and asexual individuals understand their sexual orientation outside of the attraction-behaviour-identity trichotomy.

Methods: Participants (n=424) were asked to reflect on their sexual orientation in light of previous survey questions regarding their sexual identity and Kinsey Scale ratings. Their responses were coded in two steps using first deductive then inductive reflexive thematic analysis. First, the data was coded deductively, noting the ways in which participant responses converged with and diverged from dominant understandings of sexual orientation that focus on sexual attraction, sexual behaviour, and sexual identity. Next, data that diverged from the attraction-behaviour-identity conceptualization of sexual orientation were coded inductively.

Results: Themes capture the limitations of dominant understandings of sexual orientation for asexual and plurisexual participants and the ways in which plurisexual participants understand themselves outside of societal myths and expectations.

Implications: Conceptualizations of sexual orientation must include the unique perspectives of plurisexual and asexual individuals, who may understand their sexual and romantic selves differently than monosexuals.

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Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

Patterns of Genital and Subjective Sexual Arousal in Cisgender Asexual Men

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Abstract / Abstrait

The aim of this study was to compare the genital and subjective sexual arousal of asexual men to allosexual (heterosexual and gay) men while exposed to two types of erotic stimuli: films of people engaging in sexual activity, and sexual fantasy. We examined sexual excitation (SE) and inhibition (SI) as a possible reason for group differences in arousal.

69 cisgender men (20 asexual, 27 heterosexual, 22 gay) underwent phallometric testing and completed questionnaires.

Cisgender asexual men in our study displayed genital and subjective sexual arousal comparable to allosexual men when given the opportunity to engage with self-generated sexual fantasy content, but not when presented with sexual content in the form of erotic films. This is consistent with the most common definition of asexuality, in that asexual men lack sexual attraction to the people depicted in the films. Asexual men may have some sexual interest in the content of their sexual fantasies, but this interest is not necessarily directed outwardly. Our findings suggest that the cognitive, attentional, and physiological pathways that are crucial for sexual responding are intact in asexual men. These findings support the notion that asexual men's capacity for sexual arousal is no different than allosexual men and provide evidence that lower levels of SE (rather than higher SI) may underpin lack of sexual attraction to others, which is argued to be a natural variation of human sexuality.

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Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

A Secondary Analysis of the Role of Strong Norms in Bisexual, Gay, Heterosexual, and Lesbian relationships

Maximiliane Uhlich, John Sakaluk
Western University, London, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Background. Queer people have historical and contemporary experiences of discrimination, stigma, and violence. Research on social groups suggests that norms—rules and expectations for group conduct—may emerge to provide responses to group threats, e.g., oppressing queer people.

Aims. Previous research demonstrated culturally shared and individually idiosyncratic norms in romantic and sexual relationships (e.g., Masters et al., 2013; Simon & Gagnon, 1986). Norm content—specific rules and expectations in relationships—established by queer people, differs from their heterosexual counterparts (e.g., Gabb, 2022; Hoff & Beougher, 2010). Compared to other groups, queer people in relationships seem to also have norms that are stronger (i.e., more clearly articulated, shared, binding) and/or may benefit more from strong norms than heterosexual people.

Methods. We used multilevel meta-analysis (Harrer et al., 2021) to synthesize effects from four independent samples (total N = 1174) containing data on sexual orientation, relationship norm strength, and relational well-being. We further tested whether norm strength differences and the association between norm strength and well-being are dependent on identification with particular queer identities, and/or particular forms of norm strength.

Results. Contrary to our hypothesis we did not find general differences in norm strength, or for particular sexual identities, or particular forms of norm strength.

Conclusions. Our findings suggest that similar degrees of norm strength govern queer relationships. Future research should distinguish which normative mechanisms (e.g., the content of/conformity to norms) are responsible for shaping relationships.

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“I Didn’t Want to be Noticed”: Stigmatization and Violence Among LGBTQ+ Youth Experiencing Homelessness

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Abstract / Abstrait

This qualitative study documents stigmatization and violence among LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness along with their adaptation strategies. Using minority stress model and intersectionality theory, this analysis is based on individual interviews conducted with 17 LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness aged 17 to 25. According to their stories, two life contexts were identified as the principal sources of stigmatization and violence: public space and intimate relationships. The occupation of public space exposes LGBTQ+ youth to experiences of stigmatization and violence that are heterosexist, cisgenderist and racist and that cause them to avoid others’ gaze. In the context of intimate relationships, the stigmas associated with bisexuality, trans identity and sex work motivate these young people to hide certain experiences from their partners. These results reveal that the systems of oppression that are heterosexism, cisgenderism, sexism and racism amplify the social exclusion of these youth, who are already marginalized due to being homeless.

Keywords: youth homelessness; LGBTQ+; stigmatization; violence; minority stress; intersectionality; qualitative research

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A Qualitative Account of Coping Following an Unwanted Sexual Experience Among Sexual and Gender Minorities Who Have Sex with Men

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University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Sexual consent among sexual and gender minorities who have sex with men (SGMSM) has not been thoroughly documented in the current academic literature. In the past decade, research has suggested that SGMSM are at a greater risk for experiencing non-consensual sexual experiences (NSEs) compared to their heterosexual male peers. Despite the high prevalence of NSEs impacting this population, very little research has been conducted on how these men cope after an unwanted sexual experience. The purpose of this project was to qualitatively examine how SGMSM cope following an NSE. Responses were collected from 128 SGMSM aged 19-64 (M = 31.90) who were recruited across Canada via snowball sampling, through social media posts (i.e., Facebook, Reddit, Instagram, Twitter) and SGMSM community organization mailing lists. Participants completed an online survey where they were asked to answer an open-ended question on whether they have ever experienced an NSE or unwanted sexual experience, and how they coped afterwards. Braun and Clarke's (2006) inductive thematic analysis guidelines were followed to analyze the qualitative responses. The following themes were identified: a) positive coping strategies (e.g., therapy), b) negative coping strategies (e.g., avoidance), and c) ongoing coping strategies (e.g., rumination/continued processing). The subthemes suggest that SGMSM tend to cope both maladaptively and adaptively following an NSE, but may also need to use coping strategies long after the incident. Findings can be used to inform public policy and provide program recommendations for researchers to develop more community resources specific to SGMSM.

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“You can’t win”: Examining FEMMEPHOBIA, GENDER-POLICING, and the Gender-tightrope that Women Walk

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Abstract / Abstrait

Women perform a balancing act in response to their experiences of gender policing. While women's experiences of being pressured to be more feminine or less masculine (i.e., gender policing rooted in gender norms) have been looked at extensively, minimal research has examined the pressure to be more masculine or less feminine (i.e., gender policing rooted in femmephobia). The current study asked participants (n = 172) checkbox and open-ended questions related to: 1. where they experience femmephobic gender policing; 2. by whom they experience femmephobic gender policing; and 3. their perceived rationale (e.g., to appear qualified, to avoid violence, etc.). The quantitative results found that femmephobic gender policing was primarily experienced in LGBTQIA+ communities, at school and in public spaces, by strangers and colleagues, and was largely attributed to a need to be accepted, and to be seen as competent, qualified, strong, and capable. The qualitative analysis suggested there are three overarching reasons why women experience femmephobic gender policing: 1. to avoid harassment and violence (e.g., sexual harassment and violence; street harassment and violence; workplace harassment; microaggressions; unwanted commentary or questioning; violence avoidance); 2. To comply with or challenge patriarchal standards and values (e.g., the tightrope; masculine right of access, masculine currency, the gender binary); and 3. to be accepted or fit into certain communities or contexts (e.g., LGBTQIA+ communities; masculine domains; and feminist spaces). This research systematically identifies the contexts in which women experience femmephobia, as well as illuminates an additional facet of gender policing experienced by women.

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Sexual Self-Concept: What Is It and Who's Ideas Does It Represent?

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Abstract / Abstrait

Sexual self-concept (SSC) is the domain of self-concept focused on sexual aspects of the self. Researchers have found that heterosexual and sexual-minoritized people's SSC is linked to their wellbeing. Many researchers have studied SSC, resulting in a proliferation of measures. However, the use of best practices in construct validation to create these measures is unknown. There are three phases of construct validity: substantive, structural, and external (Flake et al., 2017). Developing measures with this approach ensures replicability of research findings. Thus, the purpose of this method review was to (a) compare SSC conceptual definitions, (b) explore characteristics of SSC measures, and (c) describe participants represented in SSC measure creation. We extracted information from 67 peer-reviewed studies identified through a systematic search of five databases. In 50 studies, researchers provided a conceptual SSC definition; 14 were unique. There were 32 distinct measures, including 34 subscales. Researchers primarily tested the reliability and validity of these measures with White (38.3%), female (47.8%), and North American (47.8%) participants. Most studies (70.1%) did not describe participants' sexual identity; of the remaining, 75% consisted of predominantly heterosexual participants. None distinguished between cisgender/transgender/nonbinary participants. These findings question the validity, replicability, and generalizability of many SSC measures. Current SSC definitions and measures may not represent peoples' mental constructions of SSC, particularly those who are part of underrepresented groups. We will discuss ways that SSC-researchers specifically, sexuality-researchers generally, can improve the construct validity of their measures and, consequently, the replicability and generalizability of sexuality research overall.

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Gender Reveals and the Social Death of the Child

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Abstract / Abstrait

This paper examines the cultural phenomenon of the 'gender reveal party'. By providing a full genealogy of the 'gender reveal party', this paper works to understand how the social and cultural event of the 'gender reveal' has become embraced as a harmless cis celebration of a future child despite its functionality as a new type of hetero-futuristic policing. This paper argues that the 'gender reveal party' should be taken seriously as an attack on queer futurity and the trans child. Locating this new cultural phenomenon within Judith Butler's heterosexual matrix, I argue the dangers of futuristic gender performativity and its harmfulness to both children and the figure of the Queer child. Relying on foundational scholars, such as Judith Butler, Lee Edelman, Leo Bersani and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, this paper takes the 'gender reveal party' seriously as an attack on Queer futurity and applies a critical analysis to consider if 'gender reveals' should be taken seriously in Queer and Trans scholarship. Although seemingly innocuous to some, the cultural popularity of the 'gender reveal party' certainly makes it worth considering in the spaces of Queer and Trans studies, particularly in an exploration of Queer Futurity. Ultimately, this paper hopes to contribute to the field of Trans, and Queer studies in a small way through the analysis of the 'gender reveal' parties as a type of hetero-futuristic policing of the Child.

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But, They Are Kids! Implications and Considerations for Best-Practice in the Therapeutic Interventions with Youth Who have Engaged in Sexually Violent Behaviours: One Clinician/Researcher's Perspective

Sarah Ciotti

Brock, St. Catharines, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

A significant social justice movement, #MeToo, has drawn increased attention to the impact of sexual violence on victims. Importantly, to reduce victimization is to reduce sexual offending. Clinical research regarding the treatment of young people who have perpetrated sexual violence is emergent; it is difficult to assess recidivism risk of youthful sexual offenders given the lack of empirical research in this area. Notably, clinical best practice guidelines are based on therapeutic interventions with adult sexual offenders mostly from incarcerated populations. Contemporary research in this area asserts that early intervention is critical to reducing recidivism risk with youth with sexually violent behaviours. Although not all young people who perpetrate sexual violence go on to adult offending, a proportion of adult offenders engaged in sexually violent behaviour as adolescents. This presentation draws from professional praxis as a Registered Psychotherapist, with several years' clinical experience working with children and youth who have perpetrated sexually violent behaviours, and transdisciplinary social justice scholarship in childhood and youth studies. Dominant social discourse from both the left and right political ideology, underscores public perceptions supportive of punishment-based approaches to sexual violence in the criminal justice system. As affirmed in the principles of the YCJA and the UNCRC, it is important to recognize young people's unique developmental considerations whilst acknowledging the impact of their behaviour on their victims. Further research is needed in this area that engages young people in their own voices in order to understand how best to address their treatment needs.

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What is Going On? Understanding Perpetrator Strategy from the Perspective of the Bystander

Kate B. Metcalfe, Lucia F. O'Sullivan, Scott T. Ronis
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Rates of sexual assault have resisted change despite decades of prevention efforts. To address these unchanging rates, we need to understand better behaviours perpetrators enact and how perpetrators avoid obstruction by bystanders. Bystanders' reports about potential assaults might provide valuable perspectives about perpetrator strategy. Participants (N=247) were first surveyed about witnessed potential assaults then rated structured assault vignettes. Participants' reports of witnessed events were content-coded for strategies leading to assault. Multiple linear regressions determined whether rape myth acceptance (Payne, 1999), self-efficacy to intervene (Banyard, 2005), and previous victimization (Koss, 2007) predicted perceptions that vignettes depicted potential assault and required intervention. Of 99 participants who had witnessed a recent potential assault, most (93%) reported early physical pressure, including unwanted grinding, following, isolating, violating personal space, pulling, and blocking others, that typically escalated into more overt forced activity. Half (48.5%) reported verbal coercion, and 15.2% reported perpetrators pressuring a target to consume ever-higher levels of alcohol. Themes captured perpetrators' defensive interactions with concerned bystanders, including making excuses, feigning innocence, and using humour to divert attention from assault efforts. Respondent gender (female) and bystander self-efficacy predicted perceptions that vignettes depicted potential assault, $F(4,236)=8.91$, $p<.001$, and beliefs that intervention was necessary, $F(4,236)=7.29$ $p<.01$. Early physical pressure preceded more overt forms of assault. Research has not often captured these forms of physical pressure in earlier stages of (potential) assault; instead, verbal coercion is typically noted as the precursor. Increasing bystander self-efficacy would be valuable for increasing efforts to help.

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An Ethical and Critical Reflection Concerning Sexual Consent in the Context of Chemsex

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Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Chemsex is defined as a sexual practice between sexually-diverse men involving the use of specific psychoactive substances, mainly methamphetamine, GHB, and ketamine. These substances promote the prolongation and intensification of sexual relations, as well as disinhibition. The scientific literature on chemsex only briefly touches on the issues surrounding sexual consent. However, the very practice of chemsex involves consent. By considering the cultural aspects associated with chemsex, this presentation aims to generate ethical and critical thinking about sexual consent, and thereby fill in the gaps in the literature on chemsex.

Methodology

53 men and non-binary people shared their experiences with chemsex in semi-structured interviews lasting 60-90 minutes. The interviews were transcribed for thematic analysis.

Results

A significant portion of the people we met said they had experienced sexual violence. This violence took different forms, notably sexual harassment, sexual assault, but also sharing intimate images. Those who had experienced sexual violence reported some distress as a result of these experiences. However, the majority of participants felt that their sexual boundaries were respected in the chemsex context.

Conclusion

The results show the relevance of continuing to raise awareness about sexual consent among sexually-diverse men and non-binary people, particularly with regard to the use of digital technologies. Intervention strategies need to be developed in the field, but also when people practicing chemsex seek support from public and community services.

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Exploring 2SLGBTQIA+ People's Experiences with Intimate Partner Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ontario: A Multi-Methods Qualitative Study

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown measures spurred an epidemic of intimate partner violence (IPV), that is physical, psychological, financial, and sexual violence committed with the intent of harming a romantic partner. Sexual and gender variant people (2SLGBTQIA+) experience IPV at rates higher than cisgender, heterosexual people; however, the experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people with IPV in the Canadian context is not well understood.

Objectives

This study documents the experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people with IPV in Ontario and explores how the COVID-19 pandemic affected participants' IPV experiences and access to IPV and 2SLGBTQIA+ services.

Methods

We conducted 14 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 2SLGBTQIA+ people who experienced IPV since March 15, 2020, and 3 key informant (KI) interviews with representatives from 2SLGBTQIA+ community organizations and IPV service organizations. We audio-recorded and transcribed the telephone/Skype/Zoom interviews verbatim and conducted content and thematic analysis using inductive and deductive techniques.

Results

Participants experienced all types of IPV during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdown orders isolated participants with their perpetrators, resulting in novel or worsening IPV. Participants reported new or worsening mental health problems due to their IPV experiences. While IPV services are nominally 2SLGBTQIA+ friendly, there is logistical anxiety about serving these communities; indeed, participants were unlikely to access these services. 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations are underfunded and struggle to meet community needs.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused or worsened IPV for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and contributed to negative mental health outcomes. Provincial governments must increase funding to empower 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations to address IPV.

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Learning from Long-Term HIV/AIDS Survivors and Caregivers: HIV Oral History & Intergenerational Solidarity

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Abstract / Abstrait

As the urgency of the threat from HIV has declined over the decades and gay, bisexual, and queer (GBQ) men as well as Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary people have become more accepted in society, solidarity around HIV has lessened within LGBTQ2S+ communities and many AIDS service organizations have closed recently. However, HIV infection rates and even HIV stigma remain high within LGBTQ2S+ communities today, which necessitates ongoing solidarity in order to advocate for ongoing sexual health interventions. In this paper, our interdisciplinary team presents data from the community-based “HIV In My Day” research project, a collaboration between academic researchers and community partners, that collects oral history interviews in BC with long-term HIV/AIDS survivors and their caregivers. We focus specifically on the lessons identified by “HIV In My Day” participants and their messages for younger generations responding to HIV/AIDS today, including the importance of solidarity. We use feminist philosophical theories of solidarity, specifically empathetic and intergenerational accounts of solidarity, as well as related moral concepts, like relational and institutional trust, to understand these messages in order to learn from this oral history and guide future community-based research, HIV policy, and AIDS activism. Engaging these past narratives alongside contemporary experiences of sexual shame and stigma as well as new medical developments in HIV treatment and prevention (i.e. PrEP, U=U, etc.) across different generations can help LGBTQ2S+ communities build solidarity around their shared identities, sexualities, and lived experiences with ongoing HIV treatment, prevention, and care.

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Prostitution Embedded Within Blockchain: Toward an Emancipatory Infrastructure For Racialized Transgender Sex Workers

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Abstract / Abstrait

Racialized transgender individuals are exponentially more at risk, within the sex workers community, of acts of aggression and sexual violence. They are particularly vulnerable to sexually transmissible infections as well as socioeconomic barriers resulting from the stigma attached to the nature of their profession. This study's objective is to propose an emancipatory blockchain framework where prostitution can be conducted holistically and within which resources for psychosocial counselling, medical data transmission and HIV drug supply can be embedded. This study builds upon Foucauldian discourse analysis and 'sexual exoticization' critical theory to present the ontological value of addressing the plight of racialized transgender sex workers, as opposed to cisgender sex workers in general. A comparative analysis of Public Health Departments' data will provide for an epidemiological assessment of infection rates and psychosocial distress among members of this marginalized social class. This study will vulgarize blockchain, a technology used for the transmission of data and will highlight key advantages of its infrastructure. Blockchain is currently gaining momentum in the supply & demand trade commerce, international finances and, clinically, for COVID-19 and HIV prevention. However, the sex community has yet to harness its potential. In an effort to reduce the structural disadvantages that are endemic to its racialized transgender workforce and to prevent violence, this study presents the practical and innovative applications of a blockchain architecture for the prostitution industry.

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#GotBlood2Give: Exploring the Experiences of African, Caribbean, and Black Men Who Have Sex Men (cis and trans) with Blood Donation in Canada.

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Abstract / Abstrait

Introduction: Black gay, bisexual, queer and trans men (GBQTM) in Canada face intersecting forms of erasure and discrimination. The HIV epidemic has uniquely shaped the ways that Black GBQTM have been thought about and presented in research, which has informed specific questions in the Canadian Blood Services (CBS) donor questionnaire. While the questionnaire continues to evolve, questions about GBQTM remain contentious. The aim of this project was to understand the experiences of Black GBQTM in relation to blood donation in Canada.

Methods: #GotBlood2Give is an ongoing mixed-methods three-part research project conducted in Halifax, Montréal, Ottawa, and Toronto. We report preliminary findings from part one – an online quantitative survey distributed to Black GBQTM.

Results: 286 Black GBQTM across the four sites completed the online survey. Only 16.4% (n=47) of participants reported having ever donated blood. The most frequent reasons for having donated blood were that blood donation was something they believed in (n=30, 63.8%) and they felt that they were helping others (n=27, 57.4%). Among those who did not donate blood (n=210, 73.4%), the most reported reasons were that CBS did not allow them to donate (n=49, 23.7%) and that they had never been asked to donate blood (n=40, 19.3%). The remainder (n=29, 10.1%) skipped/preferred not to answer these multiple response questions.

Conclusion: Our findings suggest that Black GBQTM experience intersecting forms of discrimination reflecting broader CBS donor policies. Recommendations from this study highlight suggested changes to the CBS donor questionnaire that would improve blood donation experiences for Black GBQTM.

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Exploring the Future of Indigenous STBBI Research with the Feast Centre

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Abstract / Abstrait

The Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research (Feast Centre) is dedicated to community-led research and training across the four pillars of health (Clinical, Basic Science, Epidemiology and Social Science). Our intent is to contribute to cultural responses to STBBI through respectful and dynamic research collaborations. This presentation will explore the future of Indigenous sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI) research and the need to address the distinct needs of diverse Indigenous nations across Turtle Island. We are committed to the expansion of culturally appropriate, community-led research that centres Inuit, Métis, and First Nations ways of being and knowing. Future Indigenous STBBI research must amplify the voices of Indigenous peoples living with and/or affected by STBBI by decolonizing the research process through the use of Indigenous methodologies that are grounded in local worldviews, cultural values, and languages. We will explore Indigenous STBBI initiatives that are foundational to the Feast project by focusing on the outcomes of a national Indigenous community consultation and the findings of the project's Indigenous HIV scoping review. This presentation will build on these findings by integrating emerging themes from the Indigenous STBBI literature to advance key theoretical insights to develop an Indigenous STBBI research framework. This framework will be responsive to community-identified needs that highlight the inherent strengths of Indigenous communities, while striving to meet each community's unique needs through wholistic change that addresses the physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, and mental health needs of Indigenous peoples living with and/or affected by STBBI.

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Sexual Health Service Seeking Among Quebec Adults Living with A Sexual Dysfunction

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Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Sexual dysfunctions (SDs) are linked with increased sexual and psychological distress. However, few studies have documented the experiences and characteristics of sexually dysfunctional individuals seeking sexual health services. Identifying the barriers that prevent them from obtaining services is necessary for service providers to adapt their accessibility.

Aims: To examine the experiences and characteristics of people living with SDs seeking sexual health services, and potential barriers they may have encountered in obtaining these services.

Methods: An online survey on sexual well-being and sexual health services access was completed by 2,514 Quebec adults. Of the sample, 412 (16%) reported at least one SD in the past 6 months. Descriptive, correlational and comparison analyses were conducted on this subsample.

Results: People seeking sexual health services reported higher levels of psychological distress and a higher number of SDs than those who did not seek services. Among the participants who sought professional services, 40% reported being unsuccessful at obtaining any sexual health services. The most important barriers to sexual health services access were high costs (15.2%), long waiting lists for appointments (14.7%) or inability to schedule an appointment (5.8%), as well as not receiving appropriate information (9.6%). Individuals who obtained services reported significantly higher sexual satisfaction than those who did not. Finally, those who received professional services were older than those who did not.

Conclusions: Although many people with a SD seem to successfully obtain services, these findings promote the importance of increasing accessibility to sexual health services, notably by addressing the aforementioned barriers.

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Trans Liberation Under Neoliberal Governmentality: An Argument Against Rights

Heather Simmons

York University, Toronto, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

During the 1980s, increasing institutionalization of the North American gay and lesbian rights movement drastically shifted the goals and methods of LGBTQIA+ activism. Organizations began to focus on achieving access and equality through dominant institutions (such as military service and hate crime legislation) with the goal of achieving “equal citizenship”, rather than challenging the foundational inequalities embedded in such institutions. Despite the issues with this kind of approach, contemporary trans resistance is often expected to replicate this framework and make similar demands for trans-specific human rights and legal protections. I argue that a rights-based approach for trans liberation cannot succeed under the current iteration of biopolitical governance. Inspired by Henry Giroux’s concept of the biopolitics of disposability, I suggest that contemporary neoliberalism devalues trans lives (especially the lives of racialized trans women and femmes) to such an extent that they are viewed as expendable. Therefore, LGBTQIA+ advocacy which seeks to gain further transgender rights and legal protections from a state which views trans lives as expendable should be abandoned in favour of activist projects which address the most urgent issues facing the most vulnerable trans people; such as employment assistance programs, access to inclusive healthcare, decarceration and prison abolition projects.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Oral Presentation / Présentation orale

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

Gender/Sex/ual Majorities in Diversity-Focused Sex Research: Overempowering, Minority-Inclusive, and Majority-Situating Methodological Considerations.

Sari van Anders

Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Sex research often attends to issues of diversity, power, privilege, and oppression. One powerful way to explore these issues is “studying up”, i.e., focusing on those majoritized on the basis of gender/sex and/or sexuality (gender/sex/uality). But methods to address these topics have typically been built with insights from research with those who are minoritized and marginalized on the basis of gender/sex/uality. These approaches critically attend to oppression, and the research methods derived from them aim to empower marginalized participants, especially given the unequal power dynamics of academic spaces. But, gender/sex/ual majorities already hold positions of privilege; might critically-informed methods built from the margins be “overempowering”? And, might majorities push back against research methodologies that seek to contain, challenge, and query power? In this talk, I will discuss some key insights from our recent paper (van Anders, Schudson, Beischel, Abed, Gormezano, & Dibble, 2022). I will highlight how sex researchers can build theory and methods to “study up” in two important ways. First, methods need to be “majority-situating”, i.e., managing majoritarian privilege while also providing opportunities for gender/sex/ual majorities to grow and see they, too, are situated. Second, methods need to be “minority-inclusive”, i.e., validating, welcoming, and empowering to those minoritized on the basis of gender/sex/uality. These two approaches work synergistically, and I close by discussing how diversity-focused sex research with gender/sex/ual diversity can shed light on sexuality and power while not contributing to majority overempowerment.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Oral Presentation / Présentation orale

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

Good in Theory?: A Descriptive Review of Sexual Scientists' Use of Theory in Quantitative Research

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background

Sexual science has a complex historical relationship theory, as early figures promoted both atheoretical descriptive research (Kinsey) and abstracted models (Masters and Johnson). Moreover, and currently, sexual science is multidisciplinary in nature, shaped by hub disciplines that have their own unique traditions with respect to the form(s) and function(s) of theory.

Aims

In an attempt to understand if and how theory is used in sexual science, we conducted a descriptive review of the use of theory in published sexual science.

Methods

We reviewed all articles (n = 363) published in Journal of Sex Research and Archives of Sexual Behavior, and coded those reporting on original quantitative research for the disciplinary affiliation of the authorship team, and the presence and usage of theory. Of particular interest, when theory was determined to be present, we coded the research featuring (a) theory generalization; (b) theory extension; (c) theory-based justification; and/or (d) theory-based explanation.

Results

Our analysis reveals that a considerable amount of sexual science is atheoretical in its pursuits. Further, when sexual science is theory-focused, the goal of theory extension appears far less common than theory generalization, or the use of theory-based justification or explanation.

Conclusions

Our review raises many more questions than it provides answers: are sexual scientists publishing theory-focused research in other (non-sexuality) outlets?; do sexual scientists not find theory particularly useful (and if so, why)? While indulging these questions, we also consider the trade-offs for sexual scientists with respect to different methodological traditions of theory creation.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Oral Presentation / Présentation orale

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

POSTER PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

2. Porn Literacy: Sexual Pedagogy in the Age of Accessibility

krysta Fitzpatrick

Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

85.31% of North American youth have admitted to viewing pornography in some capacity--both intentionally and unintentionally. Given that schools fail to provide young people with adequate sexual education--often solely providing information on anatomy, disease, and pregnancy--many young people are turning to pornography for sexual guidance, leading to a myriad of problematic sexual beliefs and behaviours that not only impact young people's sexual relationships with others, but also with themselves.

We live in a deeply erotophobic society that consistently pushes open discussion of sex, sexuality, and pleasure into dark corners, ultimately shrouding it in shame. Our society ignores the fact that, according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, sex is as important to human need as food and shelter. Failing to properly educate young people on sexuality is not eliminating the topic from their minds, but rather pushing them to search for answers in places where the answers come from unreliable narrators. In this case, pornography.

Pornography is more accessible than ever. It is literally at every young person's fingertips, and the majority are admittedly consuming it. To combat pornography's inaccuracies, porn literacy aims to teach young people the tools to think about pornography critically, while also aiming to provide them with realistic, non-erotophobic sexual education.

This research argues the benefits of teach porn literacy by examining negative tropes found in mainstream porn, reviewing statistics based on youth and porn consumption, and discussing what critical thinking can be provided by teaching young people to be media savvy about their porn consumption.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

3. Exploration de la réalité des femmes non-monogames consensuelles au Québec : vécu relationnel et expérience des services de santé et services sociaux

Sophie Parent

Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke (Qc), Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Problématique : La non-monogamie consensuelle (NMC) désigne l'ensemble des relations dans lesquelles les partenaires consentent à d'autres relations extradyadiques (Conley et al., 2013). Actuellement, entre 2,4% et 4% des canadien-ne-s vivraient leurs relations de façon NMC et une personne sur cinq l'aurait déjà expérimenté (Fairbrother et al., 2019). Les femmes semblent moins intéressées par la NMC que les hommes et l'on trouve peu d'études sur les expériences vécues des personnes NMC dans les services, ainsi que l'impact que cela peut avoir sur celles-ci. (Brewster et al., 2017)

Objectifs : L'objectif de la recherche serait d'explorer la réalité des femmes NMC au Québec, en documentant leur vécu relationnel, ainsi que leurs expériences des services de santé et des services sociaux reçus.

Méthodologie : Des entretiens semi-dirigés seront réalisés au cours de l'été 2022 auprès de 7 à 12 femmes pratiquant la NMC et ayant consulté au moins un-e professionnel-le de la santé et services sociaux. Les verbatims seront transcrits et encodés dans N'Vivo 10. La théorie du stress minoritaire (Meyer, 2003) sera utilisée dans l'analyse thématique, ainsi que l'analyse féministe intersectionnelle, opérationnalisée par les matrices de pouvoir de Collins (2000).

Retombées anticipées : Comme ce phénomène est très peu étudié hors des États-Unis (Brewster et al., 2017), il est pertinent de s'y intéresser pour la pratique du travail social au Québec et au Canada, afin de prévenir la stigmatisation et orienter les pratiques. Des résultats préliminaires pourront être présentés lors de la conférence.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

4. Growing Together Through our Cultural Differences: Self-expansion and Sexual and Relationship Quality in Intercultural Relationships

Hanieh Naeimi¹, Alexandria West², Emily Impett¹, Amy Muise³

¹University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. ²Duke University, Durham, USA. ³York University, Toronto, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Intercultural relationships in which partners have different cultural backgrounds are increasingly common. However, intercultural couples may face additional barriers in the maintenance of their relationships, including communicating effectively about cultural differences (*cultural sharing*) and reconciling their cultural and couple identities (*identity integration*). Despite challenges, intercultural relationships may also provide opportunities for novel perspectives and experiences, which are associated with relationship satisfaction and sexual connection (i.e., passion, sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, and sexual frequency). Across three studies ($N=896$)—a cross-sectional study of people in intercultural relationships, a dyadic study of intercultural couples, and a pre-registered experimental study—we found that *self-expansion*—novelty or growth as a result of the relationship or a partner’s culture—was associated with relationship quality, cultural sharing, and identity integration. In the first two studies, people who engaged in more cultural sharing in their relationship reported more self-expansion, and in turn, higher relationship quality, couple-cultural identity integration, passion, sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, and sex frequency. In the third study, self-expansion boosted relationship quality and the benefits were strongest for people who did not already have higher levels of cultural sharing in their relationship. Our findings reveal that sharing cultural differences can provide novel opportunities for growth in intercultural couples, which is associated with the maintenance of relationships and sexual quality. This work is important because it extends self-expansion theory to the study of intercultural relationships and provides insight into how couples can maintain the quality of their connection and their sexual lives together over time.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

5. L'analyse et intervention multimodales: Un modèle novateur pour intervenir auprès des personnes présentant des comportements sexuels inappropriés et une déficience intellectuelle

Sophie Higgins

Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Rouyn-Noranda, Canada. Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Trois-Rivières, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Mise en contexte : L'intervention auprès de personnes présentant une déficience intellectuelle (DI) et des comportements sexuels inappropriés (CSI) représente un défi pour les intervenants. Le modèle d'analyse et intervention multimodales (AIMM) semble un modèle prometteur, répondant aux recommandations des études à ce sujet. Ce modèle propose une intervention en trois volets : 1) la gestion du risque de récurrence, 2) la gestion des comportements lorsqu'ils surviennent et 3) un plan de traitement et de réadaptation afin de développer les compétences de la personne.

Objectif : L'étude vise l'évaluation des effets de l'AIMM sur la diminution des CSI, l'augmentation des comportements alternatifs et la diminution des conséquences et impacts des CSI.

Méthode : Un protocole à cas unique auprès de quatre participants a permis l'observation continue des comportements ciblés pendant un an. Puis, deux échelles de mesure ont mesuré la gravité des comportements ainsi que les conséquences et impacts avant et après l'étude.

Résultats : Les résultats suggèrent que l'AIMM contribue à la diminution de la fréquence et de la gravité des CSI. L'évolution des comportements alternatifs est plutôt nuancée. Puis, les résultats présentent une diminution significative des conséquences et impacts des CSI après un an.

Conclusions : L'AIMM est un modèle prometteur afin de diminuer les CSI tout en travaillant au développement des compétences de la personne par une approche positive et individualisée. Toutefois, la mise en place de l'ensemble des volets présente son lot de défis pour les intervenants.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

6. Does Christianity Matter to Sexual Behaviour in Canada Today?

Megan Werger, Tina Fetner, Nicole Andrejek, Meghan Bird
McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Religion has a special role in governing sexuality. Given Canada's colonial history in which Christianity—both Catholicism and Protestantism—have dominated many areas of social life, including sexuality. Historically, most Canadians have been affiliated with a Christian church, and subject to the sexual mores of their denominations. However, like many postindustrial nations, Canada has been drifting away from Christianity since the 1960s. Today, a large portion of the Canadian population has no religious affiliation, and Canada's religious landscape has diversified with immigration patterns resulting in the growth of numerous non-Christian religious groups, including Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. We analyze original survey data from the Sex in Canada research project to understand whether the sexual behaviour of Canadians who are affiliated with Christian religious institutions differ from those who are not. We find that Catholic, evangelical and mainline Protestants report less frequent masturbation and oral sex than Canadians with no religious affiliation. We consider the implications of the ongoing influence of Christianity on the sexual behaviour of Canadians.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

7. Development and Validation of the Sexual Consent Barriers Scale and Sexual Consent Rewards Scale

Jessica Edwards, Uzma S. Rehman
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Abstract / Abstrait

Affirmative, unambiguous, and explicit sexual consent is essential to all forms of sexual activity. Yet, there is ample evidence that people do not practice direct forms of consent communication, even when they believe it is important and/or valuable to do so (Jozkowski et al., 2014). What accounts for this discrepancy? We developed the Sexual Consent Barriers Scale (SCBS) and Sexual Consent Rewards Scale (SCRS) to assess the relative strength of various rewards and barriers to consent communication, basing the content on a prior qualitative investigation (Edwards et al., 2022). In Study 1, participants (N = 291) responded to the initial pool of items (66 items for the SCBS; 22 items for the SCRS) based on consent experiences in their current relationships. Exploratory factor analyses suggested a 7-factor structure for the SCBS (*Conflict, Partner Emotions, Own Emotions, Consent is Unnecessary, Initiation, Intoxication, Sexual Quality*) and a 1-factor structure for the SCRS (with items reflecting the benefits of consent to sexual enjoyment, safety, relationship quality, etc.). Study 2 (currently underway with a target of 300 participants) will test the factor structure of each revised measure (34 items for the SCBS, 12 items for the SRCS) and assess construct validity (e.g., correlation of each scale/subscale with sexual consent behaviour, attitudes). Development of these scales will facilitate research to inform an understanding of the broad spectrum of factors that influence sexual consent decision-making, and inform the design of more comprehensive consent interventions.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

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8. When a Woman’s Body Says “Access Denied”: An Exploratory Analysis of TikTok Posts Related to Difficulties with Penetrative Sex

Darian Allard, Elke Reissing, Anna Rogic
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Vaginal penetration difficulties are prevalent and lead to negative impacts in the lives of sufferers. Although these difficulties are common, there is a lack of documentation on the etiology and manifestations of these difficulties as well as established treatments to manage the symptoms themselves. The objective of this study is to examine TikTok content related to vaginal penetration difficulties. The nature of the content will be explored using a content analysis framework to identify prominent themes of social media posts of sufferers and treatment providers. A search of predetermined hashtags and terms (such as ‘vaginismus’, ‘genito-pelvic pain’, and ‘pain with sex’) was used to identify posts, yielding 120 TikTok posts published over a one-month period. Relevant posts were either: (a) published by TikTok creators who primarily post pelvic pain-related content; or (b) posts found through the search of the predetermined hashtags and terms. Content from the extracted posts was analyzed by two research team members, and prominent themes were identified. Review of the posts demonstrated that individuals creating TikTok content related to difficulties with vaginal penetration primarily do so to share their experience with others, often through humor. This content is typically received in a supportive environment that encourages others to share details of their experiences. Themes identified from the extracted data were: (a) Negative impact on self worth; (b) effects on romantic relationships, (c) experiencing invalidating responses from sexual partners, (d) negative experiences with medical professionals, (e) preferred treatments, (f) misinformation, (g) perceived causes, and (h) difficulties with tampons.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

9. A Mixed Methods Approach of Sharing Knowledge of Psychological Therapies for the Psychosexual Health of Prostate Cancer Survivors and Partners in British Columbia

Bibiana Kemerer¹, Ryan Flannigan^{1,2}, Celestia Higano², Monita Sundar², Eugenia Wu², Christine Zarowski², Sarah Munro^{1,3}, Lori Brotto^{1,4}

¹University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. ²Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver, Canada. ³Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences, Vancouver, Canada. ⁴Women's Health Research Institute, Vancouver, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Introduction: A recently completed clinical trial found that Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) improve the sexual health of couples after prostate cancer (PCa). Given that psychological approaches are not a part of routine clinical care, there is a need to bring this evidence into practice to make patients aware. The goal of this project was to share information about CBT and Mindfulness to PCa couples using a patient-engaged format.

Methods: This was a knowledge translation (KT) tool development project. We engaged a team of researchers and clinicians to utilize the Knowledge to Action (KTA) Cycle and Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) to create sexual education materials for patients in the Prostate Cancer Supportive Care Program (PCSC). To inform tool creation, we followed the KTA cycle steps: adapting to the local context, and assessing barriers, by conducting a focus group of PCSC staff and consulting PCA patient couples.

Results: Using the CFIR, key considerations from our focus group emerged, and were: 1) to implement education materials during clinical appointments with a sexual health nurse, and 2) to prevent overwhelming patients by implementing the tools in two steps. Using the KTA cycle, we created two education tools: 1) a notecard introducing the major goals of CBT and Mindfulness, which links to 2) a webpage and education video (<https://pcscprogram.ca/module-2/mind-cbt/>) on how to practice therapy skills at home.

Implications: We effectively utilized KT frameworks for implementing information about mindfulness and CBT into routine clinical practice; specifically cancer survivors afflicted with sexual dysfunction.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

10. Intimacy in Isolation: Online Casual Sexual Relationships, Consent and Desire during COVID-19

Mira Gitelman, Jarvis Wiradharma, Maria Gurevich
Ryerson University - Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Aim: The objective of this study was to understand how individuals in casual sexual relationships negotiate consent and desire within digital sexual spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background: Sexual practices are being reshaped by technology-mediated sexual interactions (TMSI). Intermittent COVID-19 lockdowns have led to escalating reliance on TMSI (Döring, 2020), with greater online sexual diversification reports, in some cases (Lehmiller et al., 2021). TMSI are navigated distinctively across a diverse spectrum of genders, sexual identities and relationships types, and are differentially structured by variegated dominant sexuality discourses (Courtice & Shaughnessy, 2018; Marcotte et al., 2021). Additionally, there is limited research focusing on how individuals navigate sexual consent during TMSI (Courtice et al., 2021).

Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 participants. Adopting a feminist post-structuralist lens (Gavey, 1989), discourse analysis was used to explore patterns in the interview transcripts.

Results and Conclusions: Two prominent discursive constructions emerged: 1) Digital Intimacy as Safety Valve and Escape Hatch and 2) Digital Desires and Opportunity Trade-offs. Safety valves included: anonymity as a consent control buffer and communication accelerator; the interactive relationship between implicit and explicit consent; and trust as a key pillar of online practices. Desire opportunities and trade-offs included: spontaneity in-person preferences versus online screening possibilities; and unique pleasure opportunities afforded by online intimacies. Participants also described differences between queer and heterosexual online consent and desire practices. The current research promotes an understanding of how consent and desire are navigated in TMSI in relation to anonymity, power, norm flexibility, and partner vetting.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

11. What is Romantic Chemistry? A Content Analysis of Lay Definitions of Romantic Chemistry

Alexandra Liepmann, Eric Tu, Amy Muise
York University, Toronto, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Although chemistry is often referred to in pop culture, usually to describe an intense romantic or sexual connection between two people that ignites a relationship, this phenomenon has not been well examined in academic research. In the current study, we were interested in examining the common categories in laypeople's definitions of romantic chemistry. We recruited 200 participants from CloudResearch and asked them to define romantic chemistry in their own words. Two coders conducted a content analysis using an inductive coding strategy to identify the common categories within participants' definitions. Coders began by creating initial codes from the direct quotations of the participants, then grouped the initial codes into broader categories based on similar responses. Our analyses are currently ongoing. Preliminarily, we have found that people described chemistry using categories related to similarity (e.g., shared goals/interests), compatibility (e.g., clicking or being 'in sync'), connection (e.g., being drawn toward each other) and sexual attraction. Participants also described chemistry as involving unexplainable feelings (e.g., energy, magic), with high intensity (e.g., overwhelming, addiction) and physiological responses (e.g., butterflies, tingling) towards another person, while still being comfortable and enjoying each other. Additionally, people often described these connections as effortless and occurring instantaneously, with both partners holding mutual interest. This study provides novel information about how laypeople understand romantic chemistry that will be used to inform a self-report measure of romantic chemistry to test if and how romantic chemistry is associated with relationship development and maintenance.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

12. Dissociation and Sexual Concerns in Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: The Role of Identity Cohesion

Élise Villeneuve¹, Alison Paradis¹, Audrey Brassard², Mylène Fernet¹, Marie-Pier Vaillancourt-Morel³, Natacha Godbout¹

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Abstract / Abstrait

As the number of individuals identifying as transgender has increased so too has individuals' ability to access procedures to physically affirm their gender, with more and different types of venues participating. It is unclear whether, under these conditions, individuals' post-procedure expectations are being met and if not, what consequences it might have. The primary goal of this project was to explore trans feminine adults' experience physically affirming their gender, to ascertain how expectations about procedures were established and the relationship between fulfillment of expectations and individuals' post-procedure satisfaction. Using semi-structured interviews, we explored the experience of trans feminine adults who had had one or more affirmation procedures over the past five years. We focused on participants' recollection of the quality and amount of pre-operative support they received, their familiarity with the procedures and outcomes based on peers' experience, and the impact of these procedures for their gender affirmation and quality of life. Preliminary data indicated that individuals vary in their post-procedure satisfaction and the degree to which their expectations were met. Participants said a variety of factors influenced how 'ready' they felt for their procedures. Pre-operative support from medical providers played an important role in establishing individuals' expectations, especially for participants' who lacked a strong connection to the trans community or experience with previous procedures. Participants' advice for others pursuing procedures suggests that more or a broader source of pre-operative information might reduce the emotional impact of the procedure as well as improving individuals' sense of satisfaction.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

13. +Fière/+Proud: A Mobile Application to Empower LGBTQIA2S+ Youth and their Family in the Face of Stigma

Inès Ait Abdelmalek^{1,2}, Morgan Vallée^{3,2}, Ophélie Larocque^{4,2}, Jimmy Chau^{5,2}, Olivier Bourdon^{6,2}, Mathias Rossi^{7,2}, Silke Jacmin-Park^{8,2}, Annie Pullen-Sansfaçon⁹, Isabelle Ouellet-Morin¹⁰, Robert-Paul Juster^{7,2}

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Abstract / Abstrait

LGBTQIA2S+ people are anywhere from 1.5 to 4 times more likely than cisgender heterosexual people to report depression, anxiety, suicidal behaviors, substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behaviors, homelessness, and victimization. LGBTQIA2S+ youth face unique stressors both publicly (e.g., victimization) as well as personally (e.g., “coming out” process). To address this, we aim to create a new application to be piloted by 10 LGBTQIA2S+ youth ages 13-17, 10 LGBTQIA2S+ emerging adults ages 18-25, and 10 parents of LGBTQIA2S+ youth. This new app called *+Fière* in French or *+Proud* in English will be an LGBTQIA2S+ version of the *+Fort: Stronger than Bullying* © mobile application. In the first phase of the research program, participants will try out the *+Fort: Stronger than Bullying* © mobile application for four weeks, before participating in 60 minute long individual and focus group interviews. Feedback and suggestions will be discussed to tailor the mobile application to LGBTQIA2S+ youth. In the second phase, other participants will test the *+Fière/+Proud* mobile application for four weeks, before participating in interviews in the same format as the first phase. Eventually, the study will include a randomized controlled trial with objective biological measures (e.g., stress hormones) to evaluate its effectiveness as well as the creation of modules on the history of the LGBTQIA2S+ community. *+Fière/+Proud* aims to help LGBTQIA2S+ youth foster adaptive strategies in the face of stigma and identify the needs of parents by drawing on the expertise of several researchers and the partnership of LGBTQIA2S+ organizations.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

14. Through Intimacy Comes the Introduction to PnP/CHEMSEX

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Université de Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

PnP-CHEMSEX is a form of sexualized substance use (SSU) amongst men who have sex with men. This practice has recently gained a lot of interest by researchers. The literature documents that sexual and gender-diverse people (SGD) consume more substances than the rest of the population. In our ongoing study, we look to understand the use methamphetamine among (SGD) people, to identify their needs, and to propose guidelines for health and social services.

An interesting component that has emerged from our research are the factors that lead to one's initiation to the (SSU) of methamphetamine.

As part of this project, two groups were interviewed, MSM who use methamphetamines (n=53) and those who work with them as service providers (n=21). Semi-structured interviews and thematic analyses were conducted.

Participants who self-identify as (SGD) who use methamphetamine report being introduced to PnP-CHEMSEX through two noteworthy means: the significant other, or as a social/cultural phenomenon. The significant other being a "partner" or "lover" with whom the individual had an established relationship, and the social/cultural phenomenon being tied to witnessing and hearing about methamphetamines use within (SSU). Understanding the origins of one's initiation to (SSU) of methamphetamine can be an important component in the development of appropriate harm reduction and awareness strategies.

Using a poster presentation, we wish to showcase these two means by which methamphetamine is introduced to (SGD) individuals within our study, in the hopes of broadening our understanding, opening the discourse, and pushing us to reflect on this matter.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

Poster Presentation / Présentation par affiches

Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

15. Is Compassion Sexy? An Examination of the Effects of Self-Compassion and Other-Oriented Compassion on Sexual Satisfaction and Sexual Desire

Kaylee Dyall, Tanvi Vora, Christopher Quinn-Nilas, Sydney Knapman, Jessica Nause, Courtney Loveless
Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Constructs stemming from Buddhist philosophy, such as self-compassion, have been the focus of recent therapeutic perspectives and research in sex therapy. However, these constructs are highly intra-individual, focused predominantly on attention and kindness toward the self. One missing piece is empirical evidence for the effects of other-oriented compassion - a similarly theorised construct to self-compassion but focused instead on a kindful disposition toward others. We examine how compassion may be associated with sexual outcomes in marriage (a fundamentally interindividual question). Thus, the goal of this study was to test the associations between compassion and self-compassion, as well as their relation to sexual satisfaction and sexual desire. Seven-hundred midlife married Canadian individuals were recruited via Qualtrics panels. A path analysis model was estimated to test these simultaneous effects across gender groups (controlling for age and marital duration). Contrary to expectations, results indicated that compassion was not associated directly with sexual satisfaction or sexual desire for men nor women (inclusive of cisgendered and transgendered). Self-compassion was significantly associated with sexual satisfaction and sexual desire for women, however, for men self-compassion was only associated with sexual satisfaction and not sexual desire. The findings have implications for the empirical foundation of new therapeutic perspectives involving self-compassion, with our findings suggesting that self-oriented constructs like self-compassion appear to have an association with sexual outcomes independent of the inter-oriented mechanism of compassion. It may be that other-oriented compassion is associated only with partners' outcomes - future dyadic studies should test this possibility.

Presentation Type / Type de présentation

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16. The Role of Perceived Sexual Autonomy Support in Romantic Relationships

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Abstract / Abstrait

Autonomy—experiencing a sense of choice and acting on intrinsic interests and values—is central to sexuality. Research on self-determination theory suggests that people who engage in sex for autonomous reasons and satisfy their sexual needs experience better personal, relational, and sexual outcomes. The extent to which people perceive a romantic partner as supporting their sexual autonomy, however, is relatively unknown. In the current research, we examined the role of perceived sexual autonomy support (i.e., feeling that a partner provides choice and encourages self-initiation) in promoting personal, relational, and sexual well-being. In a cross-sectional sample of individuals in romantic relationships (N = 248), we ran a confirmatory factor analysis on an adapted measure of perceived sexual autonomy support from a romantic partner, finding support for a 4-item one-factor model. People who perceived higher sexual autonomy support from their partner reported greater sexual need fulfillment as well as personal, relational, and sexual well-being. We will extend these findings in a pre-registered 21-day daily experience study of couples (N = 284) by examining whether daily perceptions of sexual autonomy support are associated with sexual need fulfillment, and in turn, greater personal, relational, and sexual well-being for both partners over the course of the study. This research is the first to examine the interpersonal context of sexual autonomy in romantic relationships and inform how perceiving a partner as autonomously supportive in the sexual domain can promote well-being.

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17. The Implications of Comprehensive Sex Education on Female Genital Mutilation on Conakry

Felicia Gisondi

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

The objective of this research is to observe the implementation of a sexual health education program called FOMBAL and to subsequently document any change in attitudes of parents of children enrolled in FOMBAL through parent-child interactions. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has zero health benefits and only harms women and girls both physically and psychologically (World Health Organization, 2020). However, this procedure is practiced globally on over 200 million women and little girls according to The World Health Organization (2016). The aim of this research is to observe whether there are shifts in parental attitudes towards FGM as a consequence of the child receiving comprehensive sex education in school by FOMBAL, “as mediated through parent-child interactions”. In order to review the psychosocial changes related to Comprehensive Sexual Education, through transferred knowledge amidst child-to-parent communication. This will be done using a focused ethnography methodology using structured individual interviews with 15 parents of children attending the sex education program provided by FOMBALE, an NGO working in Guinean schools observation of the children learning at school will also be done, to monitor what educational content the child is being exposed to. Interviews (in-person/over zoom) will be done with parents that will be asked what (CSE) knowledge from school has been discussed at home, and how this information has contributed to change-or not- their individual perspectives and intentions regarding FGM (Doucet, M. H., Delamou, A., et al). The results from this study will help understand how this type of intervention works -or not- .

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18. Asexuality: Quality of Life without Sexual Attraction

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Abstract / Abstrait

It has become more common for adults to claim identities outside of what was historically the 'norm'. One such identity is asexuality. Asexuality (not feeling sexual attraction) was previously diagnosed as a desire disorder but now is also counted as a sexual orientation. This newer perspective is supported by research indicating that some individuals are 'attracted to none' throughout their life and capable of sexual arousal and by the fact that many asexual individuals are undistressed by this experience, characteristics at odds with many sexual disorder diagnoses. The proportion of adults counted as asexual varies depending on how it is assessed (e.g., 2-10%; Schaeff, unpub. data). We investigated whether there is an admixture of individuals under the asexual umbrella, those with a relatively high quality of life (QoL), consistent with asexuality reflecting a position on the sexual attraction continuum, and others, with a lower QoL, for whom not feeling sexual attraction may correlate with factors that may reflect challenges such as lower body comfort and less comfort with sexuality or adverse childhood experiences. Preliminary responses to an online anonymous survey by adults who do and do not feel sexual attraction suggest that understanding the anchor points and levels of QoL could be a useful method for asexual individuals to explore their experience of not feeling sexual attraction. If there is a range of experiences, it is important for individuals in the asexual community and those who support them to understand and be able to differentiate between the experiences.

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19. Do Immigrant and Canadian-Born People Experience Technology-Mediated Sexual Interactions (TMSI) Differently? Sometimes!

Pari-Gole Noorishad, Krystelle Shaughnessy
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Culture influences people's sexual behaviours. Researchers have found that an ever-growing number of immigrants in western societies tend to have less in-person sexual experiences than western-born people given cultural taboos on sexuality. However, there is no research on immigrants' technology-mediated sexual interactions (TMSI). TMSI include exchanging, sending, or receiving self-created sexual content with another person(s) via communication technology. TMSI are widespread in western societies. Immigrants may engage in TMSI instead of in-person sexual activity because they afford privacy and anonymity. It is not clear if immigrants engage in TMSI to the same extent as western-born people. Thus, we explored immigrant and Canadian-born people's TMSI.

Undergraduate students (N = 131 immigrants, 175 Canadian-born) completed a French online survey on TMSI. They reported their engagement in six global TMSI (e.g., cybersex, sexting, haptic sex), and 29 specific TMSI (e.g., exchanging, sending only, receiving only). We summed specific TMSI to create a total variety of experiences.

We found that Canadian-born participants engaged in a wider variety of TMSI than immigrants (M = 9.80, SD = 6.60; M = 7.20, SD = 6.22; $t(304) = 3.47$, $p < .001$). Chi-square tests indicated that significantly more Canadian-born than immigrant participants engaged in cybersex and sexting but not phone sex, avatar sex, virtual-reality sex, or haptic sex.

Our results suggest that immigrant and Canadian-born people's TMSI differ for common, but not emerging forms of TMSI. These findings contribute to knowledge about technology use for sexual interactions in societies encompassing several cultural groups.

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20. Daily Associations Between Affect and Sexual Rejection Behaviours in Couples Coping with Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder

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Abstract / Abstrait

Individuals commonly experience chronic, distressing low levels of sexual desire, termed Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD). Women and non-binary individuals with SIAD are often in relationships with partners who have higher desire, which can result in sexual rejection (i.e., declining a partner's sexual advances). Sexual rejection is associated with lower sexual and relationship satisfaction, however rejecting a partner in a reassuring way (e.g., affirming attraction to them) is associated with better outcomes than hostile rejection (e.g., criticizing a partner). Yet there is limited knowledge of factors—such as positive and negative affect—that may be associated with sexual rejection behaviours.

Thus, we examined whether daily fluctuations in the affect of both the individual with SIAD and their partner were associated with the individual with SIAD's sexual rejection behaviours.

Individuals with SIAD and their partners ($N=193$ couples) independently completed 56-days of daily diaries online, reporting on positive and negative affect, and the individual with SIAD reported their sexual rejection behaviours. Results were analyzed using multilevel modelling.

On days when individuals with SIAD and their partners reported less positive affect or greater negative affect, individuals with SIAD reported using more hostile sexual rejection. We found no associations between affect and reassuring sexual rejection.

Our findings suggest that both members of a couples' daily affect is linked to how individuals with SIAD decline their partner's sexual advances. Specifically, less positive and greater negative affect may make hinder emotion regulation abilities in individuals with SIAD, leading to more hostile rejection.

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21. Does Self-Compassion Facilitate Sexual Minority Well-Being in the Face of Need-Thwarting PDA Experiences?

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Abstract / Abstrait

When sexual minority persons experience real or perceived stigma when sharing or refraining from sharing affection in public, they may feel thwarted in the fulfillment of their basic needs to feel autonomous in their actions and related to their partner(s). Research suggests that need-thwarting life experiences can undermine a person's well-being in the moment and over time in the form of memories. We investigated whether sexual minority individuals who are more compassionate with themselves reported better well-being in the face of a need-thwarting PDA (aka., public display of affection) experience. A sample of 170 LGBTQ-identified adults (mean age 28.6 years, 43.5% women, 43.5% lesbian or gay, 75.3% white) described a negative episodic memory of sharing or refraining from sharing affection in public with a same-sex partner and rated the memory for autonomy and relatedness need satisfaction. They also completed measures of self-compassion, positive and negative emotions, and global well-being. Regression analyses revealed that self-compassion did not moderate the links between need satisfaction in the negative episodic memory and a) positive emotionality or b) global well-being. Need satisfaction significantly and positively predicted positive emotionality but not global well-being, whereas self-compassion predicted both positive emotionality and global well-being. Results suggest that self-compassion may not significantly buffer sexual minority well-being in the face of need-thwarting PDA experiences; however, it does independently predict positive psychological functioning. Further, the findings suggest that episodic need satisfaction predicts momentary well-being but not social and psychological functioning. Research and clinical implications will be discussed.

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22. Who Values Pleasure? A Descriptive Study Into How a National Sample of Undergraduate Students Evaluate The Importance of Sexual Pleasure.

Sydney Knapman¹, Jessica Nause¹, Christopher Quinn-Nilas¹, Kaylee Dyll¹, Courtney Loveless¹, Tanvi Vora¹, Jessica Wood², Alex McKay², Jocelyn Wentland²

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Abstract / Abstrait

Prior studies have suggested that higher sexual frequency is associated with higher life satisfaction. However, these studies rarely consider if and to what degree participants believe pleasure to be important which may be a critical variable to understand. The importance of sexual pleasure may be an overlooked boundary condition for the downstream effects of sex on well-being. Although research has thoroughly examined the correlates of a satisfying sex life, little is known about the correlates of how individuals rate the importance of sexual pleasure. Additionally, undergraduate students are at a unique developmental stage in that they may not have substantial sex education (Franklin & Dotger, 2011) and may be exploring new sexual relationships for the first time. The goal of this descriptive study was to examine the demographic, relational, and sexual correlates of believing sexual pleasure to be important. A cross-sectional national survey of 1511 Canadian undergraduate students (ages 18-24), including a large number of LGBTQ+ participants (n = 390), completed a questionnaire focusing on sexuality and well-being themed items. Results of correlations, t-tests, and multiple regressions suggested that individuals who rated sexual pleasure as important had higher emotional satisfaction within their relationships, higher sexual satisfaction, communicated more frequently about their sexual preferences, and reported higher pleasure from their last sexual encounter. No statistically significant differences were observed between gender groups and the importance of pleasure did not differ between heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals. Implications are discussed in terms of sex education of undergraduate students, and sexual development of adolescent students.

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23. An Investigation into Parental Attitudes Toward Sexual Health Education Guidelines in Canada: Results From a National Study of Parents.

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Abstract / Abstrait

The Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education provide a framework for the development, implementation, and evaluation of comprehensive sexual health education (CSHE) in Canada (SIECCAN, 2019). The most recent version includes nine Core Principles underlying quality CSHE. Although the vast majority of Canadian parents support SHE, the extent to which they support the Core Principles is not known. The current study evaluated parents' support for the Core Principles and examined parent characteristics (gender, education, religiosity) associated with greater support. Participants were 2,000 parents with children attending either elementary or secondary school in Canada. Participants rated their agreement on 11 statements based on the 9 Core Principles. The majority of parents (73% to 86%) agreed with all the Core Principles - the most contentious was the statement specifying SHE as a basic right (roughly 14% disagree/strongly disagree). Strong intercorrelations between agreement on the 11 items and high internal consistency (Alpha and Omega coefficients $>.94$) suggested that individuals were consistent in the magnitude of their agreement/disagreement with the different Core Principles. Thus, we created a variable that indexed parents' overall agreement, the CSHE Core Principles Index, that we used in subsequent analyses. Cisgender women had significantly higher scores on the CSHE Core Principles Index than cisgender men and gender diverse individuals. Individuals with more extensive education and who were less religious had significantly higher scores on the CSHE Core Principles Index. Policy and curricular implications are discussed considering the importance of parents' views on policy and practice.

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24. Expanding our Understanding of Sexual Communication: How are Different Dimensions of Sexual Communication Associated with Relationship Quality?

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background

Sexual communication (SC) is a broad construct (i.e., disclosure of sexual preferences, consent communication) and can be characterized by dimensions including depth of communication, perceived consequences, perceived importance of the topic, and the quality of the communicative interaction. These dimensions have not been assessed simultaneously, which is critical for understanding their joint and unique contributions to relationship and sexual quality. Further, SC has been operationalized differently across studies, making it difficult to compare findings and develop theories. We investigated four dimensions of SC (depth; consequences; importance; overall quality) and their unique and combined effects on relationship quality.

Methods

Participants (N = 164) completed the Couple Satisfaction Index measuring relationship satisfaction (Funk & Rogge, 2007), the Sexual Disclosure Scales to assess depth, perceived consequences, and importance of disclosures (Brown & Weigel, 2018), and the Dyadic Sexual Communication Scale to measure satisfaction with SC (Catania, 1998).

Results

Correlational analyses showed that individuals with higher relationship satisfaction were more likely to perceive more positive consequences of disclosures, perceive greater importance, and engage in deeper disclosures. When relationship satisfaction was regressed simultaneously onto the communication variables, the same pattern of findings was observed. Each of the communication variables also contributed unique variance to relationship satisfaction while controlling for SC satisfaction.

Conclusions

Our findings support the importance of considering different dimensions of SC as each dimension contributes unique variance in relationship satisfaction. If replicated using prospective, longitudinal studies, these findings have implications for how SC is conceptualized and measured in sexuality research.

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25. Girls Supporting Girls: A Qualitative Exploration of the Functions and Benefits of Communication in Young Women's Close Friendships

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Abstract / Abstrait

This research follows up on our studies of teenagers' perspectives on romantic relationships in which many girls and boys expressed having difficulty communicating effectively. Communication is essential to successful romantic relationships. Research has established communication as a strength in girls' friendships, though the mechanisms that foster strong communication in these friendships are not clear. A grounded theoretical analysis was applied to semi-structured interviews with 48 girl-friendship dyads who self-identified as being close friends. Discussion topics included those aspects that enhance and/or maintain their friendships; perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of girls' friendships; perceived differences between girls' and boys' communication; and impacts of COVID-19 on their interpersonal relationships. Themes emerged during our discussions, with four predominating during preliminary analyses: Methods for Maintaining Relationships during COVID-19; Humour as a Form of Bonding; Female Nurturance; and Perceptions of Gendered Expectations that Influence Friendships. Many girls reported pruning friendships as a result of COVID-19, noting that the friendships that persisted grew stronger during the lockdown. Pairs expressed bonding in ways unique-to-them through shared emotional intimacy and humour. Most participants identified gendered expectations' influencing interpersonal interactions, with some girls believing that boys rely on girls for emotional support that they do not receive from their other boys. However, several girls noted exceptions to expectations regarding same-gender and cross-gender friendships. Emerging themes exemplify navigational challenges encountered in other close relationships. Research investigating girls' perspectives on strengthening and maintaining friendships can inform efforts to support healthy communication development amongst youth.

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26. “I stopped wearing dresses, even though I always loved them”: Examining Women's Responses to Femmephobic Experiences

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Abstract / Abstrait

Women experience both the devaluation and regulation of their femininity, referred to as femmephobia (Hoskin, 2019). Stemming from femme theory (Hoskin, 2013), femmephobia seeks to reproduce and reinforce social norms surrounding patriarchal femininity. The concept of femmephobia was first explored among femme lesbians but is experienced by people across identities (Blair & Hoskin, 2015; Hoskin, 2019). Despite the accumulating research documenting the existence of femmephobia, how individuals respond to these experiences remains unexplored. In response, the current study uses mixed-methods to examine women’s responses to femmephobia. Participants were asked to describe whether they attempted to modify any of the feminine qualities, behaviours, styles, or feelings they felt were targeted in the femmephobic incident they reported. Results of the deductive thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) supported the hypothesized response types of amplification, suppression, and no change to feminine expressions following the femmephobic incident. Our discussion of these results will focus on the overwhelming frequency of the suppression response and its implications. In addition, the quantitative results focusing on how femmephobia interplays with internal and external factors, such as minoritized identities, appearance identity, accumulative experiences of femmephobia, and internalized patriarchal beliefs about femininity will also be discussed. Our results contribute to the growth of femme theory by illuminating women’s responses to femmephobia and the implications for sexual, romantic, and family relationships. Implications for clinicians working with femme clients and/or those whose expressions of femininity result in microaggressions, conflict, or violence will also be discussed.

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28. Stress, Resilience, and Specific Health and Wellness Needs of Trans, Non-Binary, and Gender-Diverse People

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Abstract / Abstrait

Stress affects each individual, but not in the same way. The minority stress model provides a way to understand how belonging to a minority community exposes one to specific external (e.g., discrimination) and internal (e.g., anticipation) stressors. Several studies have shown that transgender people report significantly higher rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation than cisgender people. However, very little research has been done to assess trans and/or non-binary and/or gender-diverse (TNBGD) people's coping strategies and resilience, and their specific health and wellness needs. This collaborative qualitative study aims to study stress and resilience among TNBGD people, and focuses on how stigma influences health and wellness. A sample of 31 TNBGD adults, ages 18-37 (M = 25.1, SD = 4.4), were recruited from social media and community-based online groups. The sample consisted of 2 trans women, 4 trans men, and 25 non-binary individuals (3 identified as transfeminine, 9 as transmasculine, and 13 were non-specified). All participants completed an online semi-structured qualitative interview about their experiences as TNBGD individuals. The interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis method. Interpretation discrepancies were resolved via consensus. Themes that emerged included: sources of stress and stigma, perception of resilience, protective factors, coping strategies, well-being needs, access to health services, trans-specific and non-trans-specific issues regarding methods used in health research, and inclusion of TNBGD people in health research. The current study uses community-based practice to help make health research more transparent, inclusive, and in tune with the actual needs of the TNBGD community.

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29. Enhancing Sexual Satisfaction: The Role of Arousal During Coupled Participation in Self-Expanding Activities

Justin Shimizu

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Abstract / Abstrait

Research on self-expansion has demonstrated that in romantic relationships, shared participation in self-expanding activities may enhance relationship quality. It remains unclear however, whether certain types of activities are more beneficial than others. Using daily experience data from n = 122 couples over 21-days, I examined whether self-expanding activities which produce high (vs moderate vs low) physiological arousal leads to greater increases in sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction. Results from regression and correlational analyses of 4212 coupled self-expanding activities independently rated for arousal, revealed no significant associations between arousal, sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, or relationship satisfaction. Exploratory analyses however, found that experiencing higher daily activity arousal compared to one's own average, is linked to increased sexual satisfaction. In contrast, when the partner reports lower than their average daily activity arousal, actors also report greater sexual satisfaction. Moreover, self-reported increases in arousal were positively associated with sexual desire. These findings support previous research which suggests that arousal is not a necessary characteristic of shared self-expanding activities for improving relationship quality and provides preliminary evidence of a possible relation between arousal and sexual functioning. Implications of these findings are discussed.

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30. Understandings of Casual Sex in an Undergraduate Sample: Definitions, Barriers, and Improvements

Sophie Landry, Lisa Dawn Hamilton
Mount Allison University, Sackville, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Casual sex is a common part of the undergraduate university experience, and often happens in the context of hookup culture. Hookup culture has been shown in past literature to be linked with negative outcomes, but there is a lack of research on identifying ways to promote more positive casual sex experiences. The present study examined how students define casual sex, the barriers to positive casual sex experiences, and ways in which individuals can improve casual sex experiences. Participants were undergraduate students at a small university (men = 9, women = 28, genderqueer/fluid = 1) who participated in one of seven focus groups. The majority were heterosexual (23), but participants also identified as bisexual (7), queer (3), lesbian (2), and gay (1). Participants defined casual sex as the absence of “normal” relationship components, and it rarely had its own definition. Participants also described a “pre-hookup script”, which gave women agency in terms of their sexual desires. Participants were aware of key barriers to positive casual sex experiences identified in previous literature, but what mostly emerged from our sample were tensions in communication. That is, communicating relationship and sexual desires was recognized as a barrier since it was defined as being “awkward” and “taboo” (partly due to the Traditional Sexual Script), but it was also seen as a way of improving casual sex experiences. Better understanding how individuals can challenge and navigate through the tensions of relationship and sexual communication could lead to less distress, and more positive casual sex experiences.

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31. Sexual, Romantic, and Identity Milestone Timing: The Role of Sexual Communication, Sexually Explicit Media, and Sexual Health-Risk Behaviours

Nicholas Hennessey, Lucia O'Sullivan
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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Youth and young adults experience a variety of sexual, romantic, and sexual identity-related milestones during their development. We examined how individuals identifying as heterosexual or sexual minorities differed in their timing of sexual, romantic, and identity milestones. We predicted earlier timings of milestones from increased sexually explicit media (SEM) consumption, increased health-risk behaviours, and poor school- and home-based sex education.

Methods: Participants (N=213) were surveyed about ages at various milestones, SEM use (Szymanski & Stewart-Richardson, 2014), sex histories, school, and home-based sex education (Weaver et al., 2002), and health-risk histories (Cleland, 2014). We used ANOVA to compare ages at milestones between heterosexual and sexual minority participants, and linear regressions to predict timing.

Results: Heterosexual participants self-disclosed, $F(3,187) = 9.23, p < .001$, and integrated, $F(3,179) = 10.20, p < .001$, their sexual orientation earlier than sexual minority participants. Poorer extent of sexual health education predicted earlier ages of sexual identity self-disclosure, identity integration, and age at first (received) oral sex. Participation in sexual health-risk behaviours significantly predicted earlier ages of first other-sex kiss for all groups. Increased SEM consumption predicted earlier ages of first received oral sex and active performance of penile-vaginal sex.

Conclusions: Far more overlap than discrepancies in timing of developmental milestones were noted in reports of individuals identifying as sexual minority versus heterosexual. Extent of sexual health education and sexually explicit media consumption significantly predicted milestone timings. Future research should examine how sexual health education and sexually explicit media contribute to youth's development of a sexual identity.

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32. Sexuality and Multifaceted Masculinity: How White Men's Perceptions of Masculinity are Impacted by Feminism and Racialization

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Abstract / Abstrait

This study explored how majority men's perceptions of racially/ethnically diverse men's masculinity were impacted by the feminist label, and how sexuality is implicated in this.

We report here on the white men (N = 612) to explore majority constructions of racialized masculinity. Participants viewed stimuli of men in one of six conditions in a 2 (feminist vs. non-feminist) X 3 (Asian vs. Black vs. white) design. They rated target men's masculinity via 20 items drawn from the literature to construct a multifaceted masculinity scale that was not built only from whiteness.

Exploratory factor analysis on the masculinity items revealed five subcomponents of masculinity: success, risk-taking, sexual orientation, domineering, and performance. Two subcomponents particularly related to sexuality included sexual orientation and sexual performance. 2X3 MANCOVA revealed that the degree and the direction of the difference in masculinity ratings for feminist and non-feminist men depended on the target's race/ethnicity and which masculinity subcomponent was being evaluated. For example, participants were significantly more likely to view feminist men as gay across race/ethnicity, but the effect was the biggest for East Asian men. However, race/ethnicity did not moderate the lower ratings on the performance factor for feminist men.

The racialized gender stereotypes about Black and East Asian men impact the ways that feminist labels influence majority men's perceptions of other men's masculinity. Furthermore, masculinity is clearly multifaceted: if and how the feminist label and race/ethnicity interacted to influence masculinity varied by masculinity subcomponent.

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33. Examining the Influence of Pre-HAART Experiences on Older, Self-Identifying Gay Men's Contemporary Constructions of Quality of Life (QOL): A Canadian Perspective

Ingrid Handlovsky^{1,2}, Anthony Theodore Amato^{3,4}, Olivier Ferlatte^{5,6}, Hannah Kia⁷, Marilou Gagnon^{1,8}, Catherine Worthington⁹

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Some gay men experience diminished quality of life (QOL) due to historical and ongoing discrimination. Older gay men (50+) are a group of particular interest given the significance of living through a collective trauma - the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Despite the unique adversity faced by this population, little is known about how older gay men conceptualize QOL and how their understanding of QOL is shaped by the sociohistorical context of HIV/AIDS, information necessary to support the overall well-being of older gay men.

Method: Twenty men took part in semi-structured interviews via Zoom. Data collection and analysis were concurrent as per a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) approach. Questions focused on men's experiences during the HIV/AIDS pandemic – with sensitivity to contextual features, namely discrimination - and how perspectives on QOL have shifted over time.

Results: QOL is comprised of three processes: (1) developing and cultivating meaningful connections, (2) growing into and embracing identity, and (3) appreciating the capacity to do what brings you joy, all of which are underpinned by the central phenomenon of experiencing contentment. Experiencing contentment was made possible by adopting, implementing, and refining the interconnected processes over time. QOL evolved over the course of participants' lives, informed by the intersections of shared historical and contextual elements, and further impacted by maturation.

Conclusion: QOL for older gay men is uniquely informed by a context of disadvantage. The resilience demonstrated by participants warrants further investigation to meaningfully support the psychological well-being of older gay men.

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34. Sexual Competence at Debut: Links with Authoritative Parenting and Sexual Well-Being

Claire Leighton, Sarah Vannier
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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Sexual competence is a framework that describes first sex based on contextual factors: willingness, perception of “right” timing, intrinsic motivation, and contraception. Only 44-55% of teens are sexually competent at debut and little is known about factors leading to sexual competence. This project explores authoritative parenting, defined by autonomy granting, acceptance, and behaviour control, as a predictor of greater sexual competence at time of sexual debut, and in turn, greater sexual well-being

Method: In a pilot study, 99 university students (M age = 19.6) completed measures of sexual competence at debut, guardians’ general parenting style, and guardians’ parenting style regarding sex and dating behaviour. Data collection from a second, non-university sample (ages 18-24) is underway (target N = 324). Participants will complete measures of sexual competence at first sex, parenting style, and current sexual well-being (satisfaction, distress, desire).

Results: 37% of participants met the criteria for competence at debut. As predicted, participants who were sexually competent at first sex described their parents as more authoritative in general, $t(95) = 3.91$, $p < .001$, $d = .82$, and authoritative in regards to sex and dating behaviour, $t(96) = 1.95$, $p = .05$, $d = .41$. Data from study 2 will be analyzed in August 2022.

Conclusions: Authoritative parenting may indirectly support the development of sexual competence by fostering global competence and decision-making skills in adolescents. This study supports sex-positive approaches to intervention by demonstrating that a climate of acceptance, autonomy, and trust is associated with positive sexual health behaviours.

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Abstracts appear in the same order as in the Conference Program.

35. A Critical Approach to Understanding Shame Among Sexually and Gender-Diverse Men Who Practice Chemsex

Joseph De Piano, Ida Giugnatico, Jorge Flores-Aranda
Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

The problematic use of methamphetamine among sexually and gender-diverse men (SGDM) is a public health issue which usually takes place in the context of chemsex, a complex social phenomenon involving a wide range of emotions in this population.

The aim of this presentation is to question a central theme in this phenomenon, that of shame as a complex and multifaceted emotion tied to the problematic use of methamphetamine among SGDM.

Using the Rapid Assessment Process, we conducted semi-structured interviews with SGDM that use methamphetamine (n=52) in various regions of Quebec. The analysis of these empirical data will be conducted through a critical approach that draws on the disciplines of sexology and philosophy.

SGDM who use methamphetamine describe that at the core of their use, there is a strong feeling of shame associated with the need to resort to this substance to have a fulfilling sexuality, coupled with the sense that they are judged by others.

There is a clear link between shame, internalized homophobia, the consumption of methamphetamine and the desire to have a fulfilling sexuality. People who use methamphetamine are ashamed of the reasons behind their use, of the fact of practicing chemsex and of using methamphetamine, thereby prolonging their suffering.

An interdisciplinary approach is needed to better understand the complex emotions of these people whose suffering remains unheard, partly due to the inability of services to draw on multiple sources of knowledge and promote a holistic, comprehensive vision of health.

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36. Correlates of ‘Incel’ Identification in Single Adults

Amelia Hamilton, Samantha Joel, James Kim
Western University, London, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

The ‘incel’ subculture refers to online groups consisting of single men who adopt a nihilistic, anti-feminist worldview stemming from their inability to attain a romantic partner (Hoffman et al., 2020). Recently, there have been increasing numbers of violent acts by self-identified incels, highlighting the importance of examining the psychological characteristics of individuals who ascribe to this toxic ideology. To date, research has yet to systematically establish a proper definition of an incel, although current perspectives suggests self-identification with the term is a key element in establishing membership (Williams et al., 2021). Here, we investigate the prevalence of individuals’ identification with the term ‘incel’ among single adults as well as key psychological correlates.

Participants consisted of 894 single adult individuals recruited from Reddit.com who completed an online survey consisting of measures of variables theoretically relevant for distinguishing incels from non-incels, including: causal attribution patterns (Peterson et al., 1982), relationship and sexual experiences (Burgess et al., 2001), trait aggression (Webster et al., 2014), sexist attitudes (Glick & Fiske, 1996), rejection sensitivity (Downey & Feldman, 1996), and sexual narcissism (McNulty & Widman, 2010). Notably, participants also reported the degree to which they self-identified with the label ‘incel’. While data have yet to be analyzed, pending exploratory correlational analyses will establish which variables are uniquely predictive of incel identification and thus reveal important information directed towards understanding what leads certain (single) individuals to adopt extreme misogynistic and nihilistic belief systems.

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37. An Examination of Gender Inclusivity in the Content and Scoring of Alcohol Risk Screening Tools

Annabelle Moore¹, Tara Raessi², Alexandra Uhrig², Alex Abramovich¹, Sarah Dermody²

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Abstract / Abstrait

Transgender individuals experience a greater probability of risky alcohol use compared to their cisgender counterparts, largely due to issues regarding stigma and discrimination. Despite the need for gender-inclusive, alcohol-related medical assessment and care, we lack information about the suitability of existing screening tools for use with transgender people. These screening tools were originally designed with cisgender individuals in mind and may include gendered language and different scoring cut-offs based on one's sex or gender, which can present issues when used with transgender and non-binary individuals. To assess the suitability of current problematic drinking measures for use in transgender populations, we reviewed common screening tools of at-risk drinking for the presence of gendered language and scoring. We first consolidated a list of commonly used screening tools, arriving upon a total of 24 measures. Two independent raters then reviewed each measure for gendered language (e.g. policeman, wife) and scoring (i.e. different scoring cut-offs for men/males versus women/females). Results revealed that 5 of the 24 measures included gendered language and 3 used gendered scoring. Though these results appear encouraging, it is worth noting that several of the measures using gendered language and scoring are among the most frequently used measures of problematic alcohol use in research and clinical practice (e.g. the MAST and AUDIT-C). We discuss future directions for research and propose transgender inclusive practices for assessing problematic alcohol use, including recognizing the clear distinction between sex and gender in measures and developing scoring guidelines for transgender and nonbinary individuals.

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38. "I couldn't help but wonder...": Representations of Sexually Explicit Behaviours in "Sex and the City" and "The L Word"

Kate Burton, Hannah Hicks, Sara Crann, Dana Menard
University of Windsor, Windsor, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Sex and the City and The L Word are two television series featuring all-female casts that were considered groundbreaking when they originally aired in the late 90s and early 00s due to their frank depiction of explicit sexual content. Their enduring popularity with viewers is evident from their recent reboots 20 years after their original run: And Just Like That and The L Word: Generation Q. Despite their popularity with fans, both have been underresearched. The purpose of this study was to examine depictions of sexually explicit behaviours in the original Sex and the City and The L Word as well as their modern reboots, And Just Like That and The L Word: Generation Q. All episodes from the original runs of The L Word and Sex and the City as well as the first season of each reboot were submitted to a quantitative content analysis using a coding sheet and manual developed for this study. In the original series, The L Word featured more explicit instances of oral sex and intimate touching in comparison to Sex and the City, which in turn included more explicit instances of kissing, total explicit behaviours and total orgasms per hour relative to The L Word. In the rebooted series, Generation Q included more instances of explicit sexual behaviour compared to And Just Like That and both original series featured more explicit sexual behaviours than their reboots. The implications of these findings and their potential impact on both straight and LGBTQ+ viewers are considered.

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39. Group Sex Harm Reduction Practices: Sexual Consent, Substance Use, and Sexual Health

Nini Longoria¹, Leah Shumka², Nathan Lachowsky²

¹University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. ²University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Group sex has a long history and remains an important cultural phenomena (e.g., BDSM dungeon events, swingers' parties). The limited scholarship on group sex outlines the interrelatedness of pleasure and danger within these "risk environments". We sought to describe the range of "harm reduction" strategies employed by group sex practitioners. Our community advisory committee of group sex practitioners/organizers informed our recruitment and interview strategies. We recruited 20 participants of diverse genders, orientations, ages (all >18 years) and abilities for individual interviews via sexual networking sites (e.g. FetLife, Squirt) and social media. Eligible participants lived in southwestern British Columbia and reported group sex in the past 3 years. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically. Participants described a range of harm reduction strategies, generally responding to three overlapping domains of potential risk: sexual consent, substance use, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Participants described elaborate, explicit, and uncompromising consent standards within organized GS events (e.g., vetting attendees, consent "police", group meetings, color-coded wristbands). Substances were overwhelmingly described as restricted or forbidden to avoid undermining consent. Although, sometimes alcohol and marijuana were used as social lubricants. Participants described consistent barrier use, regular testing, and limited penetrative sex for STI prevention. The tight-knit nature of group sex communities fostered STI disclosure expectations and personal accountability. Harm reduction in group sex environments was largely established as explicit social contracts, cultural standards, and community norms. Opportunities to share these proactive and prosocial practices in broader society would foster better sexual equity, health, and wellbeing.

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40. Sexual Agency: A Protective Factor Against Sexual Regret?

Kalyca Hébert, Terry Humphreys
Trent University, Peterborough, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Sexual regret is a negative sexual experience (NSE) which has received scant research attention. It is important to discern which factors might mitigate instances of sexual regret. This study investigates the association between sexual agency and sexual regret. Constructs of sexual agency, such as assertiveness, efficacy, and confidence will be measured to determine if greater agency is related to less regret and more willingness to engage in sex.

Methods: Community participants are currently completing an anonymous online survey which asks them to consider their most recent sexual encounter and reflect on that experience. The survey is comprised of: measures on sexual satisfaction, regret, and communication; scales measuring sexual agency; and items on willingness to engage in sex. An estimated 300 participants will be recruited.

Results: This presentation will highlight how one's sexual agency is associated with the amount of regret, satisfaction, and willingness for that encounter. Multiple regression will be used to determine if sexual agency predicts more positive evaluations of a past sexual encounter. It is anticipated that those who report greater sexual agency will report less regret and dissatisfaction and more willingness to engage in sex than those with lower sexual agency.

Conclusions: This study provides much needed information on sexual agency. This characteristic may serve as a protective factor against NSEs. This research can serve to advocate for the inclusion of sexual agency and boundaries as necessary topics in sexual health curriculums. Promoting sexual agency in Canadians can be essential in reducing instances of NSEs.

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41. A critical reflection on the performance of Iranian MeToo movement in addressing epistemic injustice

Faezeh Daemi

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Abstract / Abstrait

In social justice circles, questions about how to map and then address epistemic injustice are important. Miranda Fricker sees epistemic justice as a process of personal and social 'training' and believes the source of epistemic injustice lies in sub-optimal or bad training. She also has studied epistemic injustice in the sexual harassment example. In this paper, I address this argument in a new context: Iranian women's epistemic injustice as it has been taken up in the recent Iranian MeToo Movement.

My argument consists of three parts. Firstly, I show that Iranian women suffer epistemic injustice regarding the perception and assertion of sexual assault from both the viewpoints of testimonial and hermeneutic injustice. Secondly, I introduce how within the safe space offered by the Iranian MeToo Movement, women express concern about systemic discrimination and the prevalence of sexual abuse. Third, I show how this movement was successful in addressing testimonial injustice among Iranian women by mobilizing their stories and creating a collective identity that Iranian authorities could not ignore or deny but also how despite good intentions it has failed so far to address hermeneutic injustice by ignoring the link between insufficient sex education and high rates of sexual assault. Iranian women's assault accounts shared by MeToo activists on social media indicate a lack of sexual education. I propose that the Iranian MeToo movement can address hermeneutic injustice by attempting to influence curriculum changes in sex education in Iran by using its credibility.

Keywords: Iranian MeToo, Sexual health, Sex education

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42. The Experience of Asexuality: Its Complicated

Catherine Schaeff

American University, Washington DC, USA

Abstract / Abstrait

The number of individuals identifying as asexual has risen significantly in recent years, especially among young women. It's not known to what degree this represents a shift in reporting (e.g., increased social acceptance and sexual awareness) or an increase in individuals not feeling sexual attraction. Nor is it clear if asexuality is a neutral state (i.e., a sexual orientation) or reflects a level of distress. Using data from an anonymous online survey, we found that asexual individuals reported lower body satisfaction than non-asexual individuals even when the over-representation of non-cis individuals within the group was accounted for. Although there was significant overlap in membership among groups, how individuals reported "not-feeling-sexual-attraction" (pattern of sexual attraction, sexual orientation, or sexual experience) tracked with modest differences in several characteristics (e.g., feeling emotional attachment with sex partners or romantic attraction) suggesting that in addition to being more representative, allowing for a broader expression of "not-feeling-sexual-attraction" could reveal important aspects of experience among asexual adults. Asexual individuals had (and wanted to have) less frequent dyadic sex and were less likely to engage in romantic or sexual relationships, behaviors that are thought to influence individuals' quality of life. Previous research showed that many asexual individuals do not feel distress about "not-feeling-sexual-attraction". Exploring how asexual individuals assess their quality of life (foci and relative level) is needed to understand the diversity of experiences of those under the asexual umbrella.

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43. Technology-mediated Sexual Interactions, Social Anxiety, and Sexual Wellbeing: A Scoping Review

Krystelle Shaughnessy, Cassandra Fehr, Marilyn Ashley, Justine Braham, Patrick Labelle, Allison Ouimet, Serena Corsini-Munt, Andrea Ashbaugh, Elke Reissing
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Technology-mediated sexual interactions (TMSI) are interpersonal exchanges via technology of self-created sexual material in text, photo, video, auditory, avatar, or haptic format. There is little research on factors that predict both TMSI experiences and their sexual wellbeing outcomes. Social anxiety—anxiety experienced in response to social or performance situations—may predict TMSI and its consequences. From a cognitive-behavioural perspective, TMSI may function to avoid or mitigate anxiety caused by in-person sexual interactions. Whether these functions increase or decrease sexual wellbeing in the context of social anxiety is unclear. To explore the role of social anxiety in TMSI and its outcomes, we conducted a scoping review. We executed a comprehensive search strategy across eight databases. Of the 4151 unique references identified, 110 met our initial inclusion criteria. We added 7 articles from searching reference lists. We then excluded 98 articles about in-person sexuality only, or pertaining to anxiety that was theoretically and conceptually distinct from social anxiety (e.g., attachment anxiety). The 19 included articles addressed social anxiety constructs and diverse TMSI-related experiences, but no sexual wellbeing outcomes. Most studies were with adult (18+, 58%) men and women (79%; none specified cisgender, transgender, or nonbinary), did not specify sexual orientation (58%), and were conducted in Western countries (95%). The pattern of results suggested that social anxiety may predict some but not all forms of TMSI. We propose recommendations to address gaps and limitations from a cognitive-behavioural perspective to expand research, knowledge, and interventions on TMSI, social anxiety, and sexual wellbeing.

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44. Interpreting Bodily Sensations as Sexual Arousal or Anxiety in Varying Contexts

Lucas Walters, Leanne Kane, Andrea Ashbaugh
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

BACKGROUND: Some bodily sensations associated with sexual arousal and anxiety are similar (e.g., increased perspiration). The interpretation of a bodily sensation may depend on the context where sensation is experienced. We examined whether context influences the interpretation of bodily sensations. **METHOD:** One-hundred-eighteen students read 18 vignettes depicting various contexts where descriptors of sensations were inserted. We ran two 3 (context: erotic/threatening/neutral) x 3 (sensation: sexual/autonomic/sad) x 2 (sex: male/female) Generalized Linear Mixed Models to examine if the sensation was labelled as sexual arousal or anxiety. **RESULTS:** For sexual arousal, the interaction between context and sensation was significant. Participants were less likely to label any sensation experienced as sexual arousal in a threatening versus neutral context, whereas they were as likely to label any sensation as sexual arousal in an erotic versus neutral context. For anxiety, the interaction between context and sensation was significant. Participants were more likely to identify any sensation as anxiety in a threatening versus neutral context, and equally likely to label any sensation as anxiety in the erotic versus neutral context. Compared to autonomic arousal, other sensations were less likely to be labeled as anxiety. In both models, there were no differences in how sensations were labelled in males and females. **CONCLUSION:** The interpretation of bodily sensations depends on both the context and sensation. In neutral contexts, the sensation experienced corresponds to the sensation described, however when the context is threatening, context prevails whereby anxiety is experienced regardless of the sensation described.

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45. The Impact of Sexual Health Education on Sexual Communication

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: This study will explore the relationship between one's sexual health education (SHE) and sexual communication during their first and most recent sexual experience with a partner. The examination of two time frames will allow us to assess the impact of SHE over time. The main hypothesis is that individuals who perceive their sexual health education as having been of high quality will engage in more communication behaviours during their first and most recent partnered sexual experience.

Methods: An online survey explored the connections between one's overall SHE and verbal and non-verbal sexual communication during two important sexual events: participants' first and most recent sexual experience with a partner.

Results: Data collection is ongoing and approximately 450 participants are anticipated. The results of this study will highlight the influence of SHE on sexual communication behaviours during participants' first and most recent sexual experience with a partner. By collecting additional demographic information and including a broader range of sexual activity, this study aims to better parse groups/communities that may benefit from a more thorough and comprehensive SHE. Analyses will also be run to investigate differences between the two time frames as well as differences among various demographic groups (e.g., gender, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity).

Conclusions: If supported, this study will provide a foundation for more educational interventions on sexual communication. This study will continue to support inclusive and comprehensive SHE, with a special focus on sexual communication.

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46. Genital Reactions of Victims During Sexual Assault: A Scoping Review

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Abstract / Abstrait

Sexual assault is a problem worldwide, including in Canada. In a 2018 national survey, 30% of females and 8% of males reported having been sexually assaulted since the age of 15¹. Despite these large numbers, only 4% of sexual assaults are reported to the police¹. Although there are many reasons why victims may choose not to report, one may be the presence of a genital response during the assault^{2,3}. Indeed, 20% of victims experience victim-blaming¹ and some people, including judges, erroneously believe that a sexual assault becomes consensual if the victim experienced genital responses⁴. Laboratory studies have found, however, that women can exhibit genital reactions (e.g., vaginal blood flow) to scenarios of sexual assaults even though they report finding them unappealing⁵. Similarly, some men have reported experiencing erection and ejaculation in anxiety and fear-inducing situations⁶. The aim of this scoping review was to estimate the frequency of genital reactions (e.g., erection, lubrication, ejaculation, orgasm) among victims during sexual assaults. We retrieved 13,896 potentially relevant articles from six databases. After double screening by independent reviewers, only nine articles and one book were found to contain pertinent information. They are currently being coded by two independent reviewers. The frequency of reports of genital reactions will be discussed for male and female victims separately, along with other information about the assault (e.g., gender of perpetrators). In the era of the #MeToo movement, this study will shed light on an understudied phenomenon that likely causes confusion, shame, and guilt in victims of sexual assault.

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47. How do 2SLGBTQ+ Individuals Experience Medically Assisted Reproduction? A Comparative Portrait of Service Appreciation, Quality of Life and Psychological Adjustment

Zoé Benoit¹, Nathalie O. Rosen², Meghan Rossi², Sophie Bergeron¹, Audrey Brassard³, Katherine Péloquin¹

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Abstract / Abstrait

Although 20% of couples who seek medically assisted reproduction identify as 2SLGBTQ+, services are primarily based on a medical/cisgender definition of infertility (Gregg, 2018), which fails to account for 2SLGBTQ+ couples' experience of social infertility--that is, their inability to conceive due to their relationship status (Lo & Campo-Engelstein, 2018). As such, despite research showing that the appreciation of services is intimately related to psychological well-being, little is known about the specific experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals as they go through MAR as compared to mixed-gender/sex couples. As such, the present study aimed to compare the appreciation of MAR clinic care, the infertility-related quality of life, and the psychological adjustment of 2SLGBTQ+ couples to that of mixed-gender/sex couples going through MAR. To this end, 315 couples (33.17±5 years) seeking MAR (13.3% 2SLGBTQ+) completed online measures. Repeated measure ANOVAs (with dyads) showed that there were no significant differences in the appreciation of services, the relational and social quality of life, and the psychological adjustment (depression, anxiety) of 2SLGBTQ+ and mixed gender/sex couples. However, the quality of the emotional ($F(1) = 10.48, p = .001$), "mind-body" ($F(1) = 7.07, p < .01$) and overall quality of life indexes ($F(1) = 9.16, p < .05$) were significantly higher in 2SLGBTQ+ couples. These results provide a first step toward understanding the experience of MAR for couples identifying as 2SLGBTQ+ and developing services sensitive to their needs.

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48. Sexual Arousal Increases Willingness to Engage Erotically with Robots

Madison Williams, Simon Dubé, Maria Santaguida, Rachel Hu, Brian Yim, Taylor Gadoury, Aaron Johnson
Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Technological advances progressively increase the access to sex robots. However, there remains little research on this topic, nor the (state) factors that may influence people's interest in such artificial erotic agents. One such factor is sexual arousal: the autonomic activation that prepares the body for sexual activities. Sexual arousal has been found to influence (non-)sexual decision-making, but has yet to be studied in the context of relation to human-robot erotic interaction.

Aims: Based on previous research, we hypothesized that participants would be more willing to engage erotically with robots when sexually aroused than when unaroused (H1); and that levels of sexual arousal would positively predict willingness to engage erotically with robots (H2).

Method: A sample of 115 adults (Women = 46, Men = 60; Age: M = 31.39, SD = 12.11) completed a two-part online study, which included questions about their willingness to engage erotically with robots (e.g., have sex with, love, be friends with, engage in an intimate relationship with) before and after being exposed to an erotic video (manipulation). Their (sexual) arousal and valence were assessed at baseline and post-manipulation.

Results: Sexual arousal increased willingness to engage erotically with robots (supporting H1). Level of sexual arousal weakly, positively predicted willingness to have sex with a robot (partly supporting H2).

Conclusions: These findings are important given that sex robots are designed to elicit sexual arousal, a state which may in turn influence our decisions. Future studies should examine whether gender differences exist within this pattern.

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49. Gender Identity-Based Differences in University Students' Alcohol Outcomes

Alexandra Uhrig, Sarah Dermody
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Abstract / Abstrait

University students are at high risk for high alcohol use and related harms, and transgender students may be at particularly high risk. We report the results of multiple negative binomial regression analyses using contrast codes to compare differences in alcohol use and related harms between gender identity subgroups in a large (N = 92,824), national sample of Canadian university students. Results adjust for age, race/ethnicity, and a mischievous responding variable.

Results showed that cisgender participants consumed significantly more drinks compared to transgender participants ($b = 0.21$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI [0.10, 0.32]), as did cisgender men compared to cisgender women ($b = 0.19$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [0.17, 0.20]), and transgender women compared to transgender men ($b = 0.47$, $SE = 0.17$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.81]). Cisgender men drank heavily significantly more often than cisgender women ($b = 0.29$, $SE = 0.0$, 95% CI [0.26, 0.32]), as did binary transgender participants compared to nonbinary participants ($b = 0.45$, $SE = 0.16$, 95% CI [0.13, 0.78]), and transgender women compared to transgender men ($b = 1.05$, $SE = 0.29$, 95% CI [0.47, 1.65]). Lastly, cisgender men experienced significantly more harms than cisgender women ($b = 0.08$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [0.06, 0.10]). These findings describe alcohol outcomes between different gender identity subgroups, suggesting that transgender identity is not consistently associated with high alcohol use and related harms.

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50. The Mediating Role of Shame on the Relationship Between Discrimination and Psychological Well-Being of Asexual People: Preliminary Findings

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Abstract / Abstrait

Studies on sexual minorities have shown that they are more at risk of poorer mental health due to minority stress factors. However, studies on how these factors affect the well-being of asexual people remain scarce. The current study addresses this gap by examining the influence of discrimination on the psychological well-being of asexual people, and the mediating role of shame on this relationship, as well as the moderating role of social support in the relationship between discrimination and shame. The sample used in this cross-sectional study comes from *VisaJe*, a project about the stigmatization of sexually inexperienced emerging adults. Data collection was done through an online questionnaire and validated scales were used to measure the study variables. A total of 190 asexual participants answered the questionnaire ($M_{age} = 26.85$, $SD = 6.66$; 55.8% cisgender women). Preliminary analyses indicate that shame is positively related to social anxiety ($r = .631$; $p < .001$), psychological distress ($r = .647$; $p < .001$), as well as negatively related to emotional well-being ($r = -.427$; $p < .001$) and social support ($r = -.339$; $p < .001$). Furthermore, discrimination is positively related to shame ($r = .356$; $p < .001$) and negatively related to social support ($r = -.355$; $p < .001$). The moderated mediation model will be tested with PROCESS v.4.0 macro in SPSS 28. This study will help shed light on the challenges underlying asexuality and will provide the basis for educators and therapists to implement more inclusive approaches to sexual diversity while demystifying asexuality.

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51. Talk to me About Desire: A Qualitative Investigation of Women's Experiences

Shannon Reid

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Abstract / Abstrait

Sexual desire is a complex psychological construct, and there is variability in the extant desire literature around how to define it. However, desire has been generally defined as an urge to engage in sexual activity, either alone or with a partner. Our scientific understanding of desire, like most things, arose from a model of male sexuality; however, there are important, gendered experiences of desire that have been overlooked, pathologized, or reduced to a numerical rating of frequency or intensity. The goal of this study was to explore how women in long-term relationships experience desire. Participants included 21 women over the age of 25 who were in a relationship for longer than two years. Most were married or cohabitating and reported having children. They participated in semi-structured interviews about their desire for partnered sex and masturbation. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Themes in the data fell into four categories: desire manifestation, reasons for participating in sex, facilitators and inhibitors of desire, and desire definitions. Notably, desire was most often described as responsive in nature rather than manifesting spontaneously. Furthermore, desire was impacted by a wide range of factors further supporting that women's desire is more nuanced than measures of frequency and intensity of sexual thoughts can capture. An understanding of responsive desire is integral to understanding desire in women.

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52. The Promises and Perils of University Hookup Culture in the Digital Age

Nicole Andrejek

McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada. CAMH, Toronto, Canada

Abstract / Abstrait

Social scientists have found university hookup culture to be constituted by casual sexual intimacy and have shown it to be a highly gendered and heteronormative sexual field. There is, however, limited research investigating how newer technologies, like hookup apps, are impacting undergraduate women's experiences navigating hookup culture. By drawing on original survey data (N=196) and focus groups (N=21) with undergraduate women at a university in Ontario, Canada, I examine the role of technology in hookup culture and explore some of the promises of dating/hookup apps to improve undergraduate women's experiences. On one hand, I find that apps allow undergraduate women to be more selective compared to their participation in the in-person sexual fields of hookup culture, such as bars and nightclubs, and are also beneficial for women seeking female partners. However, among women seeking male partners, I find that the promise of technology to undermine some of the traditionally gendered norms of the in-person hookup scene is limited. I find that there are many gender-based risks, which necessitates the implementation of a variety of digital and in-person strategies to attempt to mitigate safety risks online and when meeting potential partners in person. Ultimately, my research shows that there are some benefits of technology for undergraduate women but reveals the resilience of the traditional gender norms and sexual scripts, while also contributing important insights regarding the diverse manifestations of sexual harassment and non-consensual sexual encounters in university hookup culture.

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53. With Pleasure: Pornography Viewership Among Female Undergraduate Students

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Abstract / Abstrait

Research about pornography viewership in the age of the internet is limited and scholarship exploring the experiences of female pornography viewers is almost non-existent. The intention of this thesis is to address this staggering void in scholarship and provide a space for young female viewers of pornography to discuss their personal experiences. Twenty-one undergraduate females were interviewed for this study, all of whom had experience viewing pornographic material, whether that be in the form of video, audio, photographic, or written erotica. These semi-structured interviews revealed that female viewers of pornography are critically engaging with the material they are consuming. Not only do they have an abundance of critiques of pornography, but they have established creative and meaningful avenues for circumventing their concerns and obtaining sexually satisfying pornographic material that fits their definition of the erotic. One of the most common avenues for alternative erotic material is written erotica, such as romance novels and fan-fiction. The consumption of written pornography among young females is a fascinating route for further scholarship.

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54. Vulnerability and Resilience: A Longitudinal Examination of Minority Stress and Coping Processes in a Sample of LGBTQ+ Individuals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: The Minority Stress Model (MSM) proposes that LGBTQ+ people experience unique stressors that contribute to negative mental outcomes. The model also suggests that minority coping resources, such as social support and LGBTQ+ community connectedness, can buffer against the negative impacts of minority stress. However, past research examining the protective role of LGBTQ+ community connectedness has been inconsistent. The COVID-19 pandemic presents a unique circumstance in which minority stressors may have been exacerbated while coping resources may have become less accessible. In the current study, we examined MSM processes with a sample of LGBTQ+ people during the early period of the pandemic to understand LGBTQ+ individuals' experiences of resilience.

Methods: Between April and August 2020, we conducted a 28-day diary study with 553 LGBTQ+ participants, to examine their pandemic experiences. Participants completed measures of LGBTQ+ identity concealment and rejection, social support, LGBTQ+ community connectedness, and mental health.

Results: Multilevel modelling was used to examine three MSM processes. The first model examined the effect of two minority stressors, identity concealment and rejection, on mental health. The second and third models examined the moderation effect of social support and LGBTQ+ community connectedness, respectively, on the relationship between minority stress and mental health. Together, these models allow us to assess minority coping processes within the context of a global stressor.

Conclusions: The findings of the current study have implications regarding LGBTQ+ individuals' experiences of the pandemic but also highlight the vulnerability and resilience of LGBTQ+ people outside of this world event.

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55. Sexual Racism: Digital Intimacy Experiences among Racialized Women during COVID-19

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Abstract / Abstrait

Aim: We explored how racialized women navigate racial and gendered identities in digital and offline contexts, with a focus on sexual racism and its impact on self-perceptions and self-presentations.

Background: Sexual racism, often disguised as personal preference (Robinson, 2015), is an increasingly vital issue with rising racism linked to COVID-19. The COVID-context is transforming the erotic landscape by rapidly expanding an already escalating reliance on digitally-mediated sexual intimacies to forge intimate and romantic relationships (Courtice & Shaughnessy, 2017). With a predominant focus on men who have sex with men (Thai, 2020), much less research addresses racialized women and sexual racism in digital intimacy platforms, and within COVID-context specifically.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 racialized women. Adopting a feminist post-structuralist lens (Gavey, 1989), discourse analysis was used to explore patterns in the interview transcripts.

Results and Conclusions: Two prominent discursive constructions emerged: 1) Personal Preferences or Erotic Exclusions: Locating the Elusive Red Line and 2) Gendered Sexual Subjectivity Subversion in Online Spaces. Racial partner preferences by non-racialized individuals were framed as erotic exclusions: a) racialized desires were situated within the context of systemic racism and historical oppression and b) positioned as superfluous screening when swiping is an option. Racial partner preferences by racialized populations were constructed as personal preferences and historically justifiable. Strategies for formulating digital identities were constructed as averting abject sexual subject positions and safety screening. This research promotes an understanding of sexual partner specification based on race in the context of 'intimate justice' access (Bedi, 2015).

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56. What are the Barriers Faced by Women Living With Female Genital Mutilation in Quebec: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Female genital mutilation (FGM) is defined as the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. Because of the acceleration of migration, FGM is increasingly recognized as an important issue in Western countries. However, knowledge about the impacts of FGM on women's sexual health and their experiences with sexual health-related services remains scarce.

Aims: We are conducting an exploratory qualitative study to document the experiences of women with FGM living in Quebec with sexual health services and interventions.

Methods: Nine semi-structured interviews with women living with FGM were conducted and data were analyzed thematically.

Results: While the plurality of experiences characterizes the results of this study, three themes were identified, each representing a form of barrier to the accessibility and use of sexual health services. First, participants discussed a reluctance to use sexual health services, because they perceived health professionals to lack knowledge regarding FGM and to be insensitive to the reality of women with FGM. Second, the pervasive taboo surrounding sexuality and specifically FGM itself makes it uncomfortable for women to discuss intimate issues, especially with those unfamiliar with FGM. Third, women perceive that there are no sexual health resources adapted to their reality and that services available are useless for them because they do not consider their experience as women with FGM.

Conclusion: Given the near absence of resources specifically available for women with FGM, more research is needed to design, evaluate, and implement sexual health promotion interventions adapted to their needs.

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57. I've Got a Feeling: Longitudinal Associations Between Couples' Regulation Strategies For Negative Emotions about Sex and their Sexual Distress

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Sexual challenges are common for couples and frequently elicit negative emotions, like anxiety and frustration; however, little is known about the strategies that people use to regulate emotions in their sex lives and how these relate to sexual distress. We examined the longitudinal associations between regulation strategies for negative emotions about sex and sexual distress in long-term couples.

Methods: A sample of 151 mixed- and same-gender couples in long-term relationships completed online surveys about sexual distress and adapted measures of regulation strategies for negative emotions about sex (avoidance, problem solving, distraction, acceptance, reappraisal, suppression) at baseline and 12 months later. Analyses consisted of a cross-lagged autoregressive model using the actor-partner interdependence framework.

Results: We found bidirectional associations between emotion regulation strategies and sexual distress. Individuals' higher use of suppression at baseline predicted their partner's higher sexual distress 12 months later. In addition, individuals' higher sexual distress at baseline predicted their own higher use of distraction and problem solving 12 months later.

Conclusions: Suppression was the only emotion regulation strategy that predicted higher sexual distress, for the partner, over time. Concealing negative emotions about one's sexual relationship may result in a more stressful sexual interactions for a partner, evoking sexual distress. Moreover, those who experience higher sexual distress might need to rely more heavily on emotion regulation strategies to cope. The bidirectional relationships we observed suggest that interventions aimed at reducing suppression or alleviating sexual distress might promote better emotion regulation and overall sexual wellbeing for couples.

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58. Recalling, Reacting, but Not Really Regretting: Memorable Experiences of Sexual and Romantic Infidelity

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Infidelity (extradyadic involvement that violates a monogamy agreement; Thompson, 2016) is common and distressing for many, and often a reason for seeking couples therapy. Although researchers have examined predictors and outcomes (Blow, 2005), little is known about perceptions of the infidelity experience itself. This research examined reports of how infidelity develops, evolves, and dissolves, and related primary relationship outcomes.

Methods: Participants were recruited into a larger study on monogamy maintenance and attraction ($N=735$; 12.7%). The current analyses include those who reported engaging in infidelity in their current relationship; $N=94$). All responded to open-ended questions regarding their “most memorable” (not defined) experience of infidelity. Using content coding, we examined (a) infidelity stories, (b) aspects participants would change about those experiences (i.e., regrets), (c) whether infidelity motives aligned with perceived outcomes, and (d) factors contributing to regrettable- or unforgettable- experiences.

Results: Few reported feeling guilty, despite many wishing the infidelity never happened. Infidelity motives typically aligned closely with perceived benefits. For example, feeling neglected in one’s relationship and reporting needs fulfilled by extradyadic partner. The majority did not regret their infidelity. However, participants were more likely to report regret when there were sexual and romantic components to it compared to sexual components alone.

Conclusions: Individuals reported a range of positive and negative aspects to their recent infidelity. Low guilt and infrequent regret might reflect perceived benefits aligned with reported motivations, cognitive dissonance around socially-stigmatized activity, and/or other justifications. Romantic feelings appear to make more regrettable episodes than sex alone.

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59. Is Intercourse Everything? Sexual Activities that Older Adults Consider as Being Sex

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: Older adults engage in sex. However, we do not know what sexual activities they consider as being sex.

Aims: The goal was to examine what sexual activities older adults considered as having 'had sex' and to determine differences by gender and whether they engaged in these activities.

Methods: 286 older adults (M age=65.52, SD=4.97) were recruited online. Two questionnaires assessed whether 19 different sexual activities constituted having 'had sex' ("Would you say you 'had sex' if...") and whether they engaged in them.

Results: Most participants considered genital activities, such as vaginal intercourse (93%), brief/partial intercourse (82%), oral-genital contact (70%), and hand-genital contact (62.8%), having 'had sex'. Only 11% considered non-genital activities (deep kissing, hugging/cuddling) having 'had sex'. More women than men considered hugging/cuddling as having 'had sex'. More men than women considered contact with breast/nipples and anal intercourse having 'had sex'. On average, participants engaged in five different activities. Most older adults engaged in hugging/cuddling (77%), followed by hand-to-genital contact (45%), deep kissing (44%), and vaginal intercourse (41%). Engaging in more non-genital activities was associated with considering more of these activities as having 'had sex'. Engaging in more genital activities was associated with considering more non-genital and genital activities as having 'had sex'.

Conclusions: Older adults consider a wide range of sexual activities as being sex and have broad sexual repertoires. These findings have important implications for the promotion of sexual wellbeing, as having a broader sexual repertoire is associated with greater sexual wellbeing.

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60. Why Did You Let Go? Experiences Of Avoiding Public Affection Sharing Among Individuals In Same-Sex, Gender Diverse And Mixed-Sex Relationships

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Abstract / Abstrait

While public displays of affection (PDA) are a commonplace for those in mixed-sex relationships, PDA within marginalized relationships can draw negative reactions. Individuals in same-sex and gender diverse relationships engage in PDA less than those in mixed-sex relationships, despite equal desire for affection. The current study explores experiences avoiding PDA in a sample of individuals in same-sex, gender diverse and mixed-sex relationships, as well as analyses of the association between the frequency of refraining from PDA and relationship well-being. We hypothesized that the association would be moderated by both PDA-related vigilance and relationship type. The current study used measures from a larger study about PDA. The survey captured the responses of 1530 participants and included measures of relationship quality, PDA-related vigilance, and frequency of and reasons for refraining from PDA. Participants were asked to give descriptions of their experience(s) refraining from and ceasing PDA. Reasons for avoiding PDA were organized into six themes: Audience, Feelings, Location, Feasibility, Relationship Factors, and Danger. Trading Down was a theme unique to refraining while a Concern for Safety was an additional theme for ceasing. Participants in same-sex and gender diverse relationships reported significantly more refraining and ceasing than those in mixed-sex relationships. The association between frequency of refraining from PDA and relationship well-being was moderated by PDA-related vigilance, relationship type, and a combination of the two. In conclusion, people in marginalized relationships avoid PDA more than those in mixed-sex relationships and frequently cite a concern for or actual danger as the reason.

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61. Being solo ‘when everyone else’ has a romantic partner: A qualitative inquiry of singlehood in established adulthood

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: The increasing number of singles in adulthood is the greatest demographic change since the “Baby Boom” in North America. As such, sexologists, researchers, clinicians and policymakers would benefit from increased knowledge on established adult singles’ (EAS) realities, challenges and needs.

Objective: The aim of this study was to examine how stigmas and myths about EAS affect their experiences as solo.

Design and Method: Three focus groups (FG) were conducted online between July and November 2021, with 19 established adults in total. Participants (47% men; Mage = 39.42, S.D. = 4.71) mostly identified as heterosexuals. Thematic analyses were conducted on NVivo 12 after each transcript was carefully read and commented from two team members.

Results: Participants reported anticipated griefs (e.g., maternity, property access). Emotional ambivalence was salient: participants oscillated between feelings of freedom, pressure, incompetency, solitude, and anxiety (e.g., of ‘being alone until death’). They were also confronted to negative perceptions of adult singlehood (e.g., perceived failure in seduction and in maintaining a romantic relationship over time)--especially women--, and to gendered stigmas (e.g., “fuckboy” or “douchebag” in men, careerist or “maneater” in women).

Conclusions: Social clock, developmental and stigma theories are especially informative for understanding the realities of EAS who evolve outside the couple institution. Even though singlehood in established adulthood is often perceived as a developmental derogation to adulthood expectations of romantic lasting involvement, finding love was described as a plus in EAS’ lives, not a necessity. The theoretical and clinical implications of these findings will be discussed.

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62. Dominant Discourses on Coming out to Parents in Women Who Love Women: A Scoping Review

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Abstract / Abstrait

Dominant discourses (i.e., concepts, research foci and explanations constructed by researchers) can strongly impact the ways in which clinicians shape therapeutic interventions. They can also greatly influence and structure narratives used by individuals to make sense of their experiences. The purpose of this project was to highlight current dominant discourses on coming out to parents in women who love women and to identify their limits and opportunities. We conducted a scoping review of the scientific literature that included a search in five academic databases (i.e., Cairn, Érudit, GenderWatch, Medline, and PsycInfo) since the legalization of gay marriage in the United States and Canada (2004-2021). We first identified 1,277 documents (e.g., peer reviewed articles, theses, and books) of which 30 documents, representing the current data, were extracted and synthesized in this review. Thematic analysis was used to identify emergent themes related to coming out to parents in women who love women. Based on a preliminary analysis of the data, dominant discourses include seeking to (1) identify predictors that explain negative parental reactions to a child's coming out, (2) understand ways in which negative parental reactions to coming out affect sexual identity development and psychological well-being of lesbian and bisexual women, and (3) distinguish the distinct set of challenges faced by women holding multiple marginalized identities (i.e., race, sex/gender, class, and sexual orientation) when navigating coming out (or not) in family and community contexts. The opportunities and limits of those discourses are discussed as well as clinical implications.

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63. Dyadic Associations Between Child Maltreatment and Sexual Communication Patterns in a Sample of Diverse Couples

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Abstract / Abstrait

Communication occupies a crucial role in couples' functioning (Byers, 2011). Facing difficulties while discussing sexual disagreements might be anxiety-provoking and triggering for partners (Rehman et al., 2019), especially for those who have experienced child maltreatment (CM). Few studies displaying mixed results have been conducted on CM and communication (Nguyen et al., 2017; Rosenthal & Freyd, 2017) but no dyadic study has examined the extent to which both partners' CM might be associated with their own and their partners' sexual communication patterns. The aim of this study was to examine the dyadic associations between partners' CM and their sexual communication patterns. A sample of 309 long-term diverse couples (Mage = 32.67 years, 51.9% women, 1.7% non-binary individuals) completed self-reported measures of CM and sexual communication patterns including collaborative (collaboration between partners when addressing sexual issues) and negative (blame or criticism) sexual communication patterns. Analyses guided by the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model showed that a person's greater experience of CM was associated with their own and their partner's greater use of negative sexual communication patterns. No significant actor and partner effects were found with collaborative sexual communication patterns. Gender and sexual orientation moderated these associations (e.g., the association between CM and collaborative communication patterns was stronger in nonbinary partners). Findings provide preliminary empirical support for targeting sexual communication in therapy for couples with an experience of CM, with a particular attention towards sexual and gender diverse individuals.

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64. Group Sex, With No Sex? Dispelling Myths About Motivations and Risk for Engaging in Group Sex

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Abstract / Abstrait

While it is broadly understood that some people engage in group sex, few understand the rationale, assuming that practitioners are a fringe group pursuing hedonistic desires. The objective of this research was to determine how individuals transition into group sex, their motivations for doing so, and the satisfaction they derive from such practice. The overarching goal was to identify how participants balance pleasure and risk in such environments. We recruited 20 participants of diverse genders, orientations, ages (>18 years) and abilities for individual interviews via sexual networking sites and social media. Eligible participants lived in southwestern British Columbia and had to have engaged in group sex at least once in the past 3 years. What our thematic analysis revealed was surprising, as few participants cited sexual gratification as the main motivating factor for engaging in group sex. For most, group sex was about creating a strong sense of community among like-minded individuals; a community that eschewed hegemonic sexual mores and instead, embraced sex positive principles and values. In fact, participants sometimes discussed not having sex at all at these events. Participants overwhelmingly valued the closeness and psychological safety of the community. This corresponded with how individuals identified becoming introduced to the lifestyle, with some being exposed by having ties to other groups including those who are consensually non-monogamous (e.g., polyamorous individuals, partners, and groups or those engaged in “swinging”) and/or kink communities. Sometimes, group sex was discovered organically, through free sexual expression and experimentation with friends (sometimes in youth).

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65. Sexual Responsiveness in the Face of Sexual Challenges: The Role of Sexual Growth and Destiny Beliefs

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Abstract / Abstrait

One way couples can maintain high sexual satisfaction, even when faced with sexual challenges, is by having a partner who is responsive to their sexual needs. People's (lay) beliefs about how sexual satisfaction in relationships is maintained are associated with how they respond to sexual challenges, possibly because of differences in their sexual responsiveness (i.e., their motivation to meet their partner's sexual needs). Specifically, sexual destiny beliefs are beliefs that a satisfying sex life results from finding the "right" partner and initial compatibility, whereas sexual growth beliefs are beliefs that satisfying sexual relationships require hard work and effort to maintain. Across three dyadic studies, including a clinical sample, a daily experience study, and a weekly study during COVID-19 lockdowns (N = 402 couples), and using multilevel modeling, we found that people higher in sexual growth beliefs reported more sexual responsiveness to their partners and were perceived as more sexually responsive by their partners, even when coping with clinically low sexual desire (Study 1), at times when they reported unmet sexual ideals (Study 2), and in the face of sexual changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Study 3). In contrast, people higher in sexual destiny beliefs were less sexually responsive, particularly when coping with low sexual desire or unmet sexual ideas, which may exacerbate the negative outcomes related to sexual challenges. The current research provides initial evidence that implicit sexual beliefs are associated with sexual responsiveness and can buffer or exacerbate sexual challenges in romantic relationships.

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66. Sources of Information About Sexuality During Pregnancy and Postpartum

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Abstract / Abstrait

Background: New mothers experience a variety of sexual changes and concerns during pregnancy and postpartum. Despite this, little is known about the sources of information that mothers use or prefer to use to gain access to sexuality information.

Method: To date we have collected data from 147 women who were pregnant (75%) or gave birth in the past 6 months (25%). All participants completed online measures about their use and preferences of 15 sources of information regarding five common sexual concerns (i.e., sexual functioning, safety of sexual behaviour, sexual desire, changes in body image or feelings of attractiveness, relationship with partner).

Results: No source of information was used universally. The most used sources were online search engines (29-50%), pregnancy/parenting websites (38-50%), health care providers (19-58%), apps (26-37%), and online forums (23-35%). Health care providers were the most common source for information about safety of sexual behaviour. Digital sources were the most common for information about sexual functioning, desire, body image, and relationship with partner. Although no source of information was universally preferred, health care providers were the preferred source across all topics (57-83%). Other most preferred sources included online search engines (51-65%), pregnancy/parenting websites (51-58%), apps (44-63%), and partners (48-57%).

Conclusions: The results suggest that women use a variety of digital and traditional sources of information to access sexuality-related information during pregnancy and postpartum, although there appears to be a gap between sources women use and sources they prefer. These findings hold implications for effectively distributing evidence-based information.

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