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Sexual Desire Discrepancy: A Dyadic Longitudinal Study

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SEXUAL DESIRE DISCREPANCY: A DYADIC LONGITUDINAL STUDY



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Introduction

- Various studies of sexual desire of individuals and couples (Anders, 2012)
- Research on sexual frequencies of individuals and couples (Herbenick, et al., 2010)
- Limited research examining individual and couple reports of actual and desired sexual frequencies (Willoughby, Vitas, 2012)
- Lack of dyadic non-clinical longitudinal research on sexual practices in mid-life
- Secure attachment consists of a safe haven and a secure base (Johnson & Whiffen, 2003)
- Adult couple attachment impacts emotional intimacy, closeness, and security

Hypothesis

- Insecure attachment predictor of a higher intercept and steep slope (actor and partner effects)
 - Insecure attachment positively related to intercept (Rise in insecure attachment increases SDD intercept)
 - Insecure attachment positively related with slope (Rise in insecure attachment result in larger slope)
 - Insecure attachment positively related to partner's intercept (Increase in insecure attachment increases partner's SDD intercept)
 - Insecure attachment positively related to partners slope (Rise in insecure attachment results in larger slope)
- Husband and wife SDD will be more severe across time (Slopes will become more steep)

Measures

Insecure attachment:

- Latent variable measured insecure attachment in couple relationship
- Taken from revised Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000)
- 7-point Likert scale
- 2 subscales of anxious and avoidant attachment

Sexual Desire Discrepancy (SDD):

- Created from actual minus desired sexual frequencies
- Desired sex frequency and actual frequency from RELATE (Busby, Holman, & Taniguchi, 2001)
- 7-point Likert scale; SDD ranges from 7 to -7
- Higher absolute value scores indicate increased variability in desired and actual frequency

Method

- Participants from 5 waves of the Flourishing Families Project (FFP)
- FFP is an ongoing longitudinal study of inner family life
- Marital couple data in study
- Demographics parallel local area
- Polk Directories/InfoUSA telephone recruiting
- In home interviews for study
- Sample =331

Results

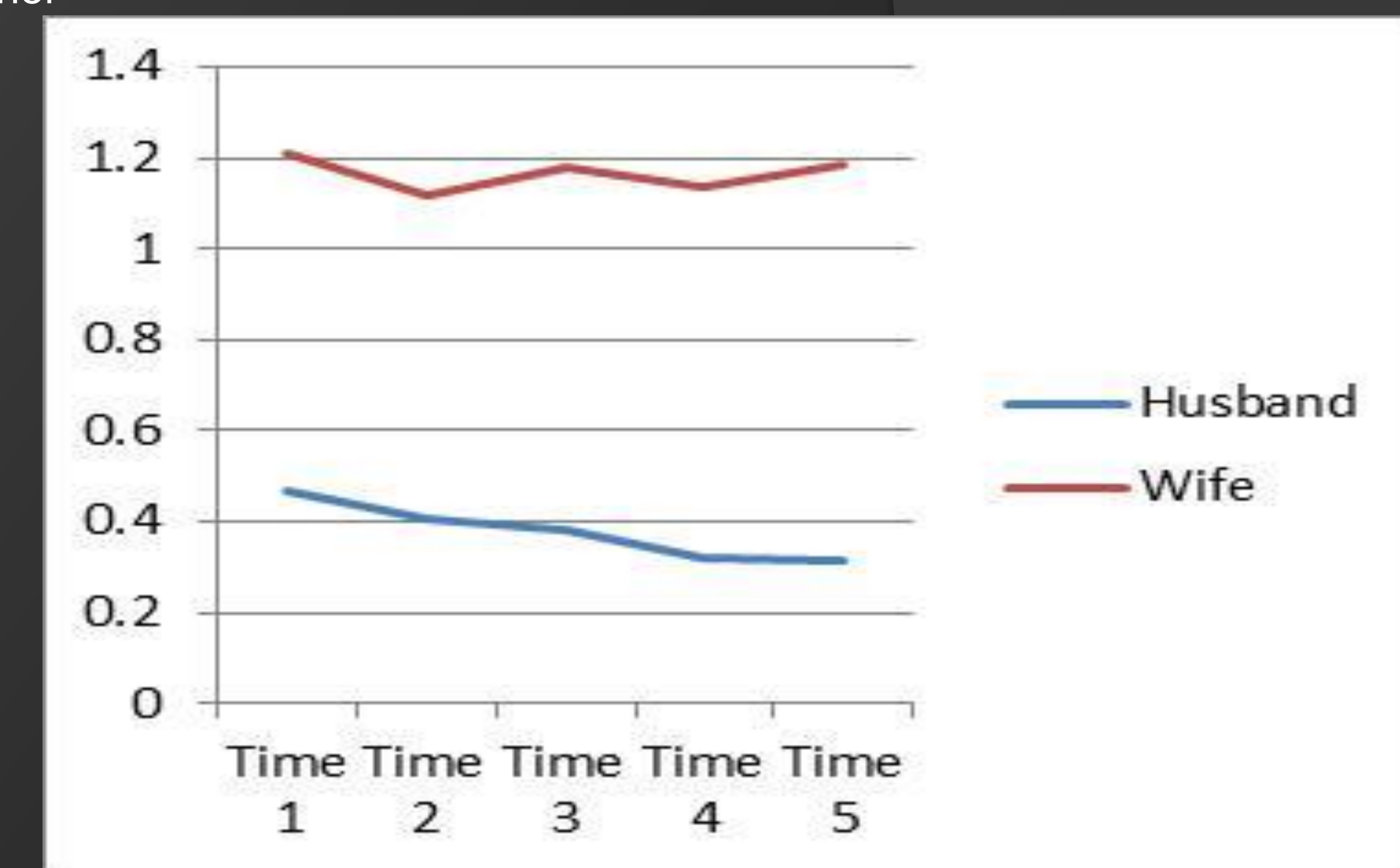
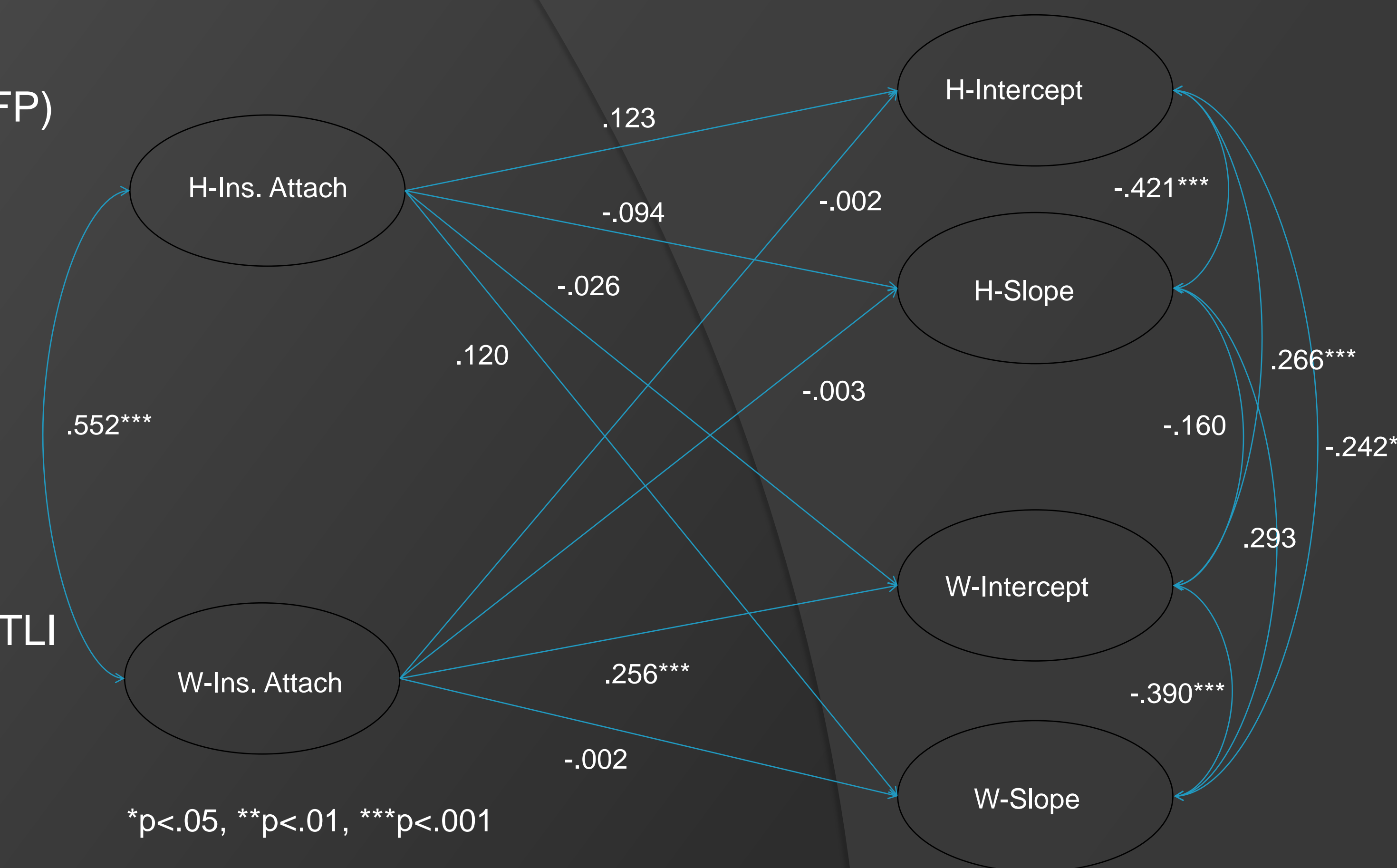
- Significant model fit indices RMSEA <.05 (.000); CFI >.95 (.96); TLI >.90 (.96)
- Wife insecure attachment significant predictor of wife intercept
- Wife insecure attachment and husband insecure attachment correlated or change together
- Husband slope and intercept inverse correlation
- Wife intercept and husband intercept correlated or change together
- Wife slope and husband intercept inverse correlation
- Wife slope and wife intercept inverse relationship

Conclusion

- For every 1 unit change in wife insecure attachment, there was a .256 increase in the SDD starting point
- Attachments are positively correlated in dyads
- As husbands SDD score changes, their growth across time has an inverse change
- As wives SDD score changes, husbands SDD score similarly changes
- As husband's SDD score changes, wives growth across time has an inverse change
- As wives SDD score changes, wives growth across time has an inverse relationship
- Insecure attachment wasn't a predictor for husband intercept or wife and husband slope
- Data show a less steep slope for wives and more steep slope for husbands across time
- Data shows a higher starting point for wives than husbands

Implications & Limitations

- This research adds to the limited knowledge about non-clinical SDD's of mid-life dyads
- This research can be used to develop interventions in the sex therapy and attachment realms
- Non-clinical sample for more clinical research question
- Research using different predictors is needed



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