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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 & Whiten, 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 grow across time has an inverse change
• As wives SDD score changes, wives grow 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

References