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Experimental Design 3021
9-24-03

Journal Presentation

Title:
Human Female Orgasm and Mate Fluctuating Asymmetry
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Accepted April 20th 1995

Theory:
Male fluctuating asymmetry predicts female orgasm

Hypothesis:
Women with partners possessing low fluctuating asymmetry have more copulatory orgasms than women with partners possessing high fluctuating asymmetry

Theoretical Construct I:
Fluctuating asymmetry

Corresponding Operational Definition:

Measurements of subjects left and right side (foot width, ankle and hand width, ear length and width).

Theoretical Construct II:
Orgasm

Corresponding Operational Definition:

Answers obtained from questionnaires pertaining to orgasms

Design:

Study: Experimental

Subjects:
86 heterosexual adult couples involved in a sexual relationship. Subjects were collected from introductory psychology classes at the University of New Mexico.

Independent Variable I:
Fluctuating asymmetry

Scale of Measurement: Quantitative, ratio

Independent variable II:
Physical attractiveness

Scale of measurement: Quantitative, ordinal

Dependent Variable I:
Orgasm during copulation (intercourse).
Scale of measurement: Quantitative, ratio

Dependent Variable II:
HSR and LSR (high sperm and low sperm retention in the female) coinciding with male ejaculation.
Scale of measurement: Quantitative, ratio

Results:

Main Effect I:
Women with partners who possessed lower fluctuating asymmetry were reported by both partners as having more orgasms during copulation.
Significant predicting variable: $P<0.01$, large effect size
Fluctuating asymmetry was a significant predictor of HSR orgasms, $P<0.02$

Main Effect II:
Physical attractiveness was a non-specific predictor of HSR and LSR orgasms, $P<0.10$

Interaction:
Physical attractiveness and fluctuating asymmetry are related in that usually a physically attractive person will have low fluctuating asymmetry. However when combined with the results of the orgasm questioners, physical attractiveness was not always a predicting variable unlike fluctuating asymmetry.

Discussion:
The information collected in this study is certainly credible and valid. The authors took into account a great many confounding variables; even the effect taken should a participant lie on the questionnaire. My main concern with this study is why it was important in the first place. I'm assuming that the authors wanted to rule out or rule in the factor of fluctuating asymmetry, however there are so many confounding variables, how can they ever be sure? I was intrigued with the HSR and LSR accounts and their relationship to evolution. Should a woman feel either consciously or subconsciously that her mate is genetically sound (fluctuating asymmetry) she will have a higher sperm retention rate, thus increasing the chance of carrying on his genes.

Did the Operational Definitions Correspond well to the Theoretical Constructs?
Yes! They did correspond well; they provided the information needed to complete the study.

If the results were significant, did they have a big effect?
Yes! With $P<0.01$ I would definitely say that fluctuating asymmetry is a significant predictor of female orgasm.

What are the Potential Confounds?
Due to the fact that this study was a follow up study, the experimenters made sure to include many of the confounding variables they had not included in the previous study. Such as: Sexual experience, female's investment in the relationship, Love, sexual frequency, attitudes pertaining to sex and financial earnings. (I feel that mood, either of the males or females should have been considered as a potential confound)

Do you agree with the authors?
Yes! For most couples, if they are not attracted to their partner they are not going to be interested in sex, thus decreasing orgasm. Low and high fluctuating asymmetry does play a part in the attraction. Even if the fluctuating asymmetry is unnoticeable to the naked eye, which in some cases it was, subconsciously I believe it still plays a part (evolutionary tactics).

How would you have done the Study differently?
I would have accounted for the mood of the participants during copulation. Should a person be suffering from depression plays a part in whether they orgasm or even if copulation occurs.

Even if you are completely happy with the Study, what would you do next?
From the start of the study I would consider both male and female fluctuating asymmetry. I looked through the journal and all of the results appeared to be accounting for only male fluctuating asymmetry. How do we know that the male is even ejaculating to his full potential should his partner have high fluctuating asymmetry?