Short-Term Sexual Strategies

Theories of Men’s Short-Term Mating
- Primary reproductive benefit:
  - Direct increase in number of offspring

Competition (usually Males)
- Sperm are cheap
- $\uparrow$ RS with # of matings

Choice (usually females)
- Eggs are expensive
- No $\Delta$ in RS with # of matings

Potential costs:
- Diseases
- Reputational damage
- Child survival
Theories of Men’s Short-Term Mating
- Potential costs: Violence from jealous husbands
- Violence from kin

Costs: Retaliatory affair by mate

“Honey, I have a confession to make... I’m seeing another woman.”

Theoretical Issue: Proper Functions v. Beneficial Effects

Class Thought Experiment
- If you were going to design a male to be highly successful at short-term mating, what “design features” would you install?
  - A. in the male’s mind
  - B. in the male’s body

Adaptive Problems Men Must Solve
- Partner variety

Adaptive Problems Men Must Solve
- Sexual accessibility
Adaptive Problems Men Must Solve
- Fertility assessment

Adaptive Problems Men Must Solve
- Avoiding commitment

Adaptive Problems Men Must Solve
- Minimizing risks

Evidence for an Evolved Short-Term Mating Psychology
- Physiological clues to short-term sexual strategies
  - 1. Testicle size

Testicle size in primates

Since species that live in multi-male groups exhibit larger testes, infer sperm competition.

- 2. Variations in sperm insemination
Physiological clues to short-term sexual strategies
- 3. Different sperm morphs -- Kamikaze and Blocker morphs

Psychological Evidence for an Evolved Short-Term Mating Psychology
1. number of partners desired

Ideal Number of Sex Partners Desired

Psychological Evidence for Short-Term Mating
- 2. Time elapsed before seeking intercourse

Joseph Smith, Mormon Founder
- "Monogamy seemed to him—as it has seemed to many men who have not ceased to love their wives, but who have grown weary of connubial exclusiveness—an intolerably circumscribed way of life.
- 'Whenever I see a pretty woman, I have to pray for grace.'—Fawn Brodie [from No Man Knows My History]

Likelihood of Intercourse After Various Time Intervals

Psychological Evidence for Short-Term Mating

3. Seeking sex with strangers in Florida

4. Lowering of standards in short-term mating

Lowering of Standards in ST Mating

Lowering of standards across the board: athletic, educated, generous, honest, kind, intellectual, sense of humor, emotionally stable...

5. Minimizing commitment after sex

6. The closing time phenomenon
– 7. Coolidge effect

– 8. Sex differences in sexual fantasies

**Pornography industry:**
1. Aimed primarily at males
2. Visual
3. Involves many different partners.
4. No commitment
5. Romance novels: women consumers, mate selection, emotional bonding.

– 8. Sex differences in sexual fantasies [con’t]

• Male fantasies: multiple partners, strangers, no commitment
• Female fantasies: single partner currently or previously had been romantically-sexually involved
• Male fantasies: were highly visual and usually included genitals and breasts.
• Female fantasies: more personal characteristics, and had an emotional context.
• Male fantasies: rapidly moved to an explicit sexual encounter
• Female fantasies: built slowly and did not always involve explicit genital sexual activity.

### Desire for Sexual Variety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward casual sex</td>
<td>~.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual permissiveness</td>
<td>~.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for extramarital affairs</td>
<td>50% v. 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for sex from opposite-sex friends</td>
<td>5 v. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently seeking short-term mates</td>
<td>5.5 v. 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of partners desired</td>
<td>(medians, modes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptivity to sex with strangers</td>
<td>75% v. 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygynous mating</td>
<td>83% of cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think about sex every day</td>
<td>54% v. 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults-only video consumers</td>
<td>80% male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Desire for Sexual Variety

- Time elapsed before seeking intercourse
- Closing time phenomenon
- Lowering standards for short-term mates
- Patronage of prostitutes
- Nature of sexual fantasies
  - Number of partners in fantasy
  - Frequency of partners switching
  - Novelty of partners in fantasy
- Incidence of extramarital affairs (50% v. 26%)
- Cross-cultural evidence from Korea, Japan, Brazil, the Netherlands, India, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Eritrea, and even in Texas.
Major Puzzle

- It’s clear that men have evolved a suite of adaptations designed to facilitate a short-term mating strategy.

- But . . . mathematically, number of short-term matings must be identical for the sexes, given an equal operational sex ratio.

Costs to Women of Short-Term Mating

- 1. Loss of partner
- 2. Loss of partner’s investment
- 3. Risk of physical and sexual abuse
- 4. Risk of pregnancy
- 5. Damage to reputation

Women’s Short Term Mating -Perceived Costs-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lose current partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Current partner stops investing in you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Get a sexually transmitted disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Anger family if they found out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Get pregnant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reputation damage among high-status people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reputation damage among potential partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reputation damage among friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Miss opportunity to meet a more desirable mate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thought Experiment

- Why would women ever engage in short-term mating?

- What benefits might be great enough to outweigh the risks and costs?

Hypotheses About Adaptive Benefits to Women of Short-Term Mating

- a. Resource benefits
- b. Genetic benefits
- c. Mate switching
- d. Mate skill acquisition
- e. Mate manipulation

Behavioral Evidence:

Women DO Engage in Short-Term Mating

- 1. Hooking up
- 2. EPC’s
- 3. Prostitution
- 4. Sex with strangers
**Physiological Evidence**

- Women more likely to have high sperm-retention orgasms with affair partner

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**Women’s Mate Preferences in Short-Term Mating**

- Physical attractiveness
- Masculine men (esp. when ovulating)
- Extravagant resource display
- Risk-taking “bad boys”

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**Women’s Short Term Mating - Perceived Benefits -**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual gratification</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve skills of attraction and seduction</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer men desirable mates</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to break-up with current partner</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect current partner</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive jewelry, money, clothing, free dinners</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a short term partner willing to spend a lot of time with you</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance or increase self esteem</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover other interested partners</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify characteristics thought important in long term partner</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Sex Differences in Benefits of Short-term Mating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receive jewelry, money, clothing, free dinners</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.9***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify characteristics thought important in long term partner</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.8*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Men Higher**

- Receive sexual gratification: 7.9, 7.4**
- Self esteem increased: 7.0, 5.9***
- Feel good about yourself because of more than one sexual partner: 7.0, 5.5***
- Status increased by being seen with someone other than partner: 5.9, 4.3***
- Reputation increased among friends: 5.8, 3.7***

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**Contexts Triggering Women’s EPC Strategy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows partner is having an affair</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner is unwilling to have sex</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex with partner unsatisfying for a long time</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner is verbally abusive</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be with someone else you find attractive, with no chance of being discovered</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect partner of having an affair</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner is physically abusive</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You believe you cannot find a more compatible partner</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your partner has lied to you about major issue</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner lives out of town</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner cannot hold down a job</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sex Differences in Contexts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner cannot hold down a job</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.7*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person you meet is willing to spend a lot of time with you</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.1*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Men Higher**

- Partner stops taking care of physique: 6.0, 5.0***
- Sex with partner is too infrequent: 6.9, 5.9***
- Suspect partner of having an affair: 7.1, 6.4***
- Meet someone who is better looking than your partner and seems interested in you: 6.5, 5.5***
Psychological Evidence

- Women’s perceptions of benefits of short-term mating: resources, better partners
- Women’s perceptions of why they have affairs:
  - Dissatisfaction with primary partner
  - Emotional involvement with EPC partner
- Women’s perceptions of contexts in which they are likely to engage in short-term EPC mating

Empirical Tests: Hypotheses Most Supported

- Mate switching

Hypotheses That Are Promising

- Good genes

Hypotheses Not Supported

- Status enhancement

Context Effects on Short-Term Mating

- 1. Father absence
- 2. Stepfather presence
- 3. Transitions across life: e.g., divorce
- 4. Sex ratio—surplus of women
- 5. Self-perceived mate value – no effect