Asymmetries and Relationship Functioning in Young Adulthood

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Background

- Homogamy perspective suggests that asymmetries signal differences in demographic characteristics, relationship views, and experiences that potentially lead to poorer outcomes.
- Previous research has focused on demographic asymmetries.
- We know little about the influence of couple-level relational and risk asymmetries on relationship functioning during young adulthood.

Current Investigation

- Assess effects of 3 types of asymmetries (demographic, relational, risk) on relationship functioning.
- Young adults in demographically and relationally asymmetric relationships will report poor relationship functioning.
- Either partner’s involvement in risk behaviors will be associated with poor relationship functioning.

Data and Sample

Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study
- Analyses relied on data from Wave V, collected in 2011, when respondents were aged 22-29.

Dependent Variables

- 24-item scale of IPV (CTS2)
- Any sexual non-exclusivity
- 9-item scale of relationship satisfaction

Descriptive Statistics

Figure 1: Distribution of Demographic Asymmetries

Figure 2: Distribution of Relational Asymmetries

Figure 3: Distribution of Risk Asymmetries

Figure 4: Odds Ratios Predicting Sexual Non-exclusivity

Table 1: OLS Regression of Intimate Partner Violence on Demographic, Relational, and Risk Asymmetries and Control Variables

Table 2: OLS Regression of Relationship Satisfaction on Demographic, Relational, and Risk Asymmetries and Control Variables

Results

- Demographic asymmetries are associated with greater frequency of IPV and higher odds of sexual non-exclusivity.
- Relational asymmetries are associated with IPV, sexual non-exclusivity, and relationship satisfaction.
- Risk behavior asymmetries are related to IPV, sexual non-exclusivity, and relationship satisfaction.

Conclusion

- Couple-level indicators, such as asymmetries, are important in understanding relationship functioning in young adulthood.
- Some asymmetries are more consequential to relationship functioning than others.
- Our future research will examine the underlying mechanisms through which asymmetries lead to IPV, sexual non-exclusivity, and relationship satisfaction.

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