



Associations of Condomless Sex With Dyadic and Social Mutuality Among Black Women in Heterosexual Relationships.

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Theoretical Framework

Relational Cultural Theory: Relationships are essential to women and women seek mutuality in relationships. Mutuality is a shared exchange in which both persons experience personal growth and healthy development.

Intimate partner relationships that are low in mutuality can be problematic and often dismantle. To avoid losing an intimate relationship, compensatory strategies may be used, but likely have detrimental outcomes.

Background

Some young Black women may use condomless sex as a strategy to avoid losing the relationship. This could be fueled by experiencing sexual pressure from a male partner.

Engaging in condomless sex in the presence of STI risk may be an example of a compensatory strategy.

Experiencing mutuality in social relationships could exert a protective effect on using condomless sex in sexual relationships low in mutuality.

Problem Statement & Research Questions

For young Black women whose male partner engages in sex risk behavior, presenting a risk for a sexually transmitted infection, will condomless sex may be associated with lower dyadic mutuality and will high mutuality in other social relationships reduce the likelihood of condomless sex in sexual relationships characterized by low mutuality?

Controlling for age, education, employment, substance use before or during sex, and method of recruitment:

1. Is lower dyadic mutuality associated with higher frequency of condomless sex?
2. Does higher mutuality in social relationships mitigate against condomless sex with male partners?

Secondary Analysis:

1. Is lower dyadic mutuality associated with higher sexual pressure?
2. Does the type of social relationship (such as, sports teams or sororities) moderate the influence of dyadic mutuality on condomless sex?

Methods

Study design: Cross-sectional, descriptive study

Sample/setting: 118 Black women ages 18 to 29 who perceive their male sex partner(s) to have had sex with another person within the past 3 months. Study flyers will be distributed in urban communities in Boston. Online recruitment will be conducted through social media advertising.

Procedure: Eligible participants may use a smartphone, tablet or computer to complete an online consent form and then are directed to a secured survey on an encrypted website to complete the anonymous survey. Participants will receive an honorarium of \$20.00 for survey completion.

Measures: Number of condomless sex in past 3 months, dyadic mutuality (The Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire), social mutuality (The Relational Health Indices), sexual pressure (The Sexual Pressure for Women-Revised), Demographics: age, education, employment, method of recruitment, substance use before or during sex, and partner type.

Analysis: 1) Descriptive statistics, skewed data will be transformed. 2) Bivariate correlations with condomless sex. 3) multiple regression model with statistically significant bivariate correlations, controlling for covariates.

Anticipated Results

In high-risk sexual relationships inverse associations of dyadic mutuality with condomless sex are anticipated.

Social mutuality is anticipated to reduce condomless sex in high-risk sexual relationships with low dyadic mutuality.

Conclusions & Implications

If social mutuality reduces the compensatory strategy of condomless sex, then further research on efficacy of enhancing social connection in STI prevention efforts are suggested.

Potential future research:

- inverse associations of dyadic and social mutuality with sexual pressure to demonstrate construct validity.
- differences in types of social groups that decrease the association of dyadic mutuality with condomless sex in the presence of STI risk.

Study is limited by self-report and convenience sampling. Findings will not be generalizable to other populations, and causality cannot be inferred.