

# Comparing Sexual Cognition and Risk by Gender

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# COMPARING SEXUAL COGNITION AND RISK BY GENDER

by

JACQUELYNNE A DAUK

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Honors in the Major Program

in the Department of Psychology

in the College of Sciences

and in The Burnett Honors College

at the University of Central Florida

Orlando, Florida

Spring Term, 2017

Thesis Chair: Dr. Chrysalis Wright

## **ABSTRACT**

The ways in which sexuality is perceived among members of society has undeniable consequences in regards to overall well-being. It was the purpose of the current study to investigate not only the nature of sexual cognition but also the differences in cognition based upon genders. More specifically, this study seeks to investigate the differences in sexual attitudes and thoughts among different genders that may make one more susceptible to different forms of sexual risk. In order to recognize these differences, societal influences such as social roles, parenting styles, and sexual education are all examined in regards to gender. Factors such as age and demographics were also considered. Participants consisted of university students who answered two forms of online questionnaires regarding sexuality. The first questionnaire pertained to identifying themes of sexual cognitions while the second questionnaire asked participants to divulge their sexual history in order to determine their relative sexual risk. Results indicate that there exists a mediational relationship between participant gender, sexual cognition, and sexual risk.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mother Sheila Marie, my constant source of inspiration. Your support continues to drive me. Thank you.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to take a moment to thank Dr. Wright. Thank you for your unwavering support and assistance throughout the years. Thank you for making my collegiate career so fulfilling and gratifying.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Beyond the obvious physical characteristics that differentiate genders, men and women both exhibit vastly different thinking styles and cognitive patterns that are unique to each sex. A number of differences between male and female cognition can be traced back to significant biological factors. Research has shown that the presence of sex hormones in males and females uniquely construct and shape cognition (Kimura, 1996). The presence of testosterone alone has been proven to have an effect on cognition and spatial performance tasks (Neave, Menaged, & Weightman, 1999). The different thought processes between genders results in different susceptibilities to types of sexually risky behavior. With the influence of the sexual revolution in the 1960s, along with newly developed technology, children growing up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are exposed to much different ideals regarding sex than that of their parents. The ever-increasing presence of technology has resulted in societal changes that undoubtedly affect traditional feminine and masculine roles. The internet in particular has made information regarding sex readily available at the fingertips of students across the nation. It should also be noted that childrearing practices and parental influence play an indisputable role in childhood intelligence and developmental processes (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1993). It is for these reasons that we must examine the similarities and differences between sexual cognition in males and females as well as the nature of sexual risk that both genders face.

### Societal Roles

It can be argued that past research on sexual cognition has limited applications to our current study due to the fact that U.S. society views sex in a much different manner than it did even five years ago. As stated previously, the role of technology and omnipresence of media has

impacted our society in numerous ways. Men and women occupy different roles in society today than in previous generations. The topic of gender identity has only just recently gained the attention of mainstream media. Perhaps now more than ever, sexual cognition is influenced by numerous factors and products of our current society. These different roles in society affect both sexual cognition as well as sexually risky behavior among men and women. Historically, men in society have been expected to pursue women and it has been seen almost as socially unacceptable for women to pursue men.

With recent revivals in feminist movements, women are occupying much different roles in relationships than they did previously. There are many women that are embracing their sexuality and making a point to extinguish negative stigmatization that surround female promiscuity. Now more than ever, members of society are advocating for equal domestic relationships, free of stereotypical male or female roles. In our present society, there exists a social norm that discourages males from seeking testing for sexually transmitted diseases (Parent et al, 2012). This blatant disregard of ones' health can be seen as yet another way that the masculinity in our culture can potentially allow for the expansion of sexually transmitted diseases in our society.

### Importance of Age

As Erik Erikson (1963) described in his theory of psychosexual development, adolescence is a period of change and exploration especially regarding romantic feelings and sexual emotions at the emergence of puberty. Especially in regards to formations of sexual attitudes and thoughts, adolescence is one of the most pivotal times in one's life. Arnett (2000) describes the ages of eighteen to twenty-five, what is now referred to an emerging adulthood, to



be considered a high-risk population in terms of sexual risk and behavior. Researchers have found that higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases, less condom usage, and higher rates of pregnancies were all common among women who had their first sexual experiences at an early age (Coker et al, 1994). Another study conducted found that females who experience trauma or abuse in their younger years are much more likely to develop distorted posttraumatic sexual cognitions (Marshall & Leifker, 2014). These flawed cognitions were found to correlate with risky sexual behavior and even distorted methods of coping with stressors.

### Parenting Styles

Growing up in modern American society, males and females go through distinctive experiences that affect developing sexual cognition. The manner in which parents chose to raise their children is shown to have massive effects on their sexual risk later in life. Parental communication in particular was shown to affect the ways in which adolescents perceive sex and subsequently the sexual risks that they may be exposed to later in life (Bersamin et al., 2008). In a longitudinal study conducted over several years, researchers determined that the way parents discuss the topic of sex directly affects their children's expression of sexuality (Kan et al., 2010). The study yielded results that suggested that dismissive maternal attitudes regarding sex ultimately encouraged increased sexual activity in adolescents. In comparison, it was also found that adolescents whose parents exhibited an accepting and open attitude regarding sexuality were found to have overall less sexual partners. Hutchinson (2002) noted that communication between adolescents and parents on sex is linked with the later onset of sexual initiation. Historically, daughters are observed more closely and held to a higher standard of scrutiny in comparison to their male counterparts. This increased protectiveness can often lead to rebellion especially in

adolescence among females which in part can make them more susceptible to obtaining sexual diseases. In another study, Rodgers (1999) concluded that greater amount of parental control exerted over daughters ultimately increased the odds that they would engage in sexually risky behavior. Females who were monitored less by their mothers were also found more likely to exhibit inconsistent condom use as well as engage in sex with multiple partners. Also, perceived sex roles are dependent on the presence of maternal intervention (Broverman et al., 1994).

However, parental emphasis on female protection can potentially lead to less supervision over male children. Parents often turn a blind eye to the activities of male children during adolescence especially if there is a female sibling in the same household. The lack of supervision could lead to more opportunities for males to engage in sexual risky behaviors. In society, men are often encouraged to pursue as many women as possible whereas females are condemned for having multiple sexual partners. In a study that examined sexual attitudes amongst males and females, males were found to be more sexually promiscuous than their female counterparts (Hendrick et al., 1985). The amount of attention that parents chose to devote to their children have an effect on the formation of their sexual cognition and in return their potential for sexual risky behaviors.

### Sexual Education

Over the last decade American society has seen a significant change in the presence of sexual education in schools. In recent years, there has been an increase in research regarding the formation of sexual cognition amongst teens and it is no surprise that the presence of sexual education in schools is a huge factor in the development of sexual identity. Regardless of the

dispute on whether or not sexual education should be taught in schools, it cannot be denied that sexual education does have an impact on the developing personas of students.

According to Lambert (2001), even minimal exposures to sexual risk or HPV-related information can lead to increased knowledge retention about this subject that can even be observed weeks later. A study was conducted which was aimed at assessing whether or not exposure to information regarding sexually transmitted diseases would be effective in reducing the amount of sexual risky behavior (Stock et al., 2013). The experimental group of this study received educational material on the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases and ultimately proved to be more knowledgeable regarding sexual risks. Members of the experimental group also reported being less willing to participate in risky sexual behaviors than the control group. There are many researchers that currently advocate for increased sexual education in schools in response to multiple reports that demonstrate that increased awareness of sexually transmitted diseases and infections leads to lower sexual risk behaviors exhibited amongst students. Helmer and colleagues (2015) found that failing to provide students with sexual education and the ability to make informed decisions directly increases their vulnerability to sexually risky behaviors and diseases. Kernsmith and Hernandez-Jozefowicz (2011) claim that gender roles amongst males and females are significant enough to warrant “gender-sensitive” peer education programs. Instead of attempting to combine male and female sexual education, it is theorized that gender-specific sexual education will ultimately be more effective in reducing instances of sexual assault and/or victimization.

### Internet and Media Influence

Our society has seen a number of changes in response to the technological revolution that we've witnessed in the past twenty years alone. According to findings from the Pew Research Center, daily internet use among adolescents has been steadily increasing since the year 2000 (Perrin & Duggan, 2015). With the rampant use of cell phones and handheld technological devices, information of any kind can be retrieved from the internet within a matter of seconds. Ward (1995) reports that sexual themes such as viewing women as sexual objects or perceiving dating as a sport are common in media sources that are popular amongst the younger population. This availability of information alone has changed how both children and adolescents learn about sex. In yet another study, an overwhelming amount of adolescents reported viewing sexual material online (Cameron et al, 2005). The same adolescents even reported unintentionally viewing through avenues such as misleading URL's and emails. Instead of seeking help from a parent or a teacher, the younger population is finding answers to their questions on the World Wide Web. According to the FBI, children may seek out sexual materials or even partners online to satisfy their curiosity and express their individuality. The internet often portrays sex in an unrealistic way, leaving young adults with distorted views on sex which in turn affects their sexual cognition. In respect to adults, Tylka (2015) found that the use of pornography was associated with issues in romantic relationships. For example, researchers concluded from this study that increased pornography use could be linked to men avoiding any feelings of love or infatuation and instead pursuing sexual satisfaction without intimacy or attachment to partners. This avoidance of intimate relationships can be a dangerous gateway into a lifestyle that consists of sexual risky behavior. The degradation of women that is common in violent/racy pornography

can also contribute to instances of sexual violence against women which in turn effects how our society regards female sexuality and their roles in relation to men.

Tinder is a website which accurately demonstrates the infiltration of sex into mainstream media content. Founded in 2012, Tinder is a website solely devoted to providing an effective method of meeting with strangers in the explicit pursuit of sexual desires. According to the New York Times, there are nearly fifty-million individuals who are taking part in this new dating fad and this applications popularity is only growing (Bilton, 2014). With these types of resources becoming the new norm in society, these forms of sexual exploitation have direct impacts on sexual cognitions. In regards to the media, researchers examine how sexual behaviors are influenced by outlets such as television shows, movies, magazines, and even music. The study concluded that sexual content in these media outlets both directly and indirectly influenced participants (Ward et al., 2011). For example, those who more frequently engaged in other sources of mainstream media were more likely to endorse causal sex and promiscuity amongst peers. It was also noted that there was a strong connection between the early engaging of sexual behavior and exposure to sexually explicit movies.

### The Current Study

Within the past decade alone, the societal definition of the word gender has expanded considerably. This widespread change in gender perception affects sexual thought processes as well as sexual risks one may encounter. In order to fully understand the risks associated with genders, it is essential that we also consider the thought processes that influence particular behaviors. It was a goal of this study to develop a more complete understanding of the relationship between sexual risk and underlying cognitive processes amongst genders. It was

hypothesized that male and female participants would have varying sexual cognitions. It was expected that male participants would adhere more to sexual stereotypes than female participants. It was also hypothesized that variations in sexual cognitions among males and females would be associated with increased sexual risk (see Figure 1).

## **CHAPTER TWO: METHOD**

### Participants and Procedures

Data for this study came from a recent study conducted at the University of Central Florida (UCF) via the Sona System. Participants in the original study took 32.50 minutes to

complete the online questionnaire and received class credit or extra credit for their participation. The current study was submitted to the IRB for review and was deemed non-human subjects research (see Appendix A) considering that new data was not collected. A total of 1,013 college students participated in the original study. A total of 111 participants were deleted from the study because their responses indicated that they were not involved with the survey or they did not answer important questions in the study, leaving a total sample size of 902. The majority of participants were female ( $n = 647$ , 71.7%) and identified as white ( $n = 613$ , 68%). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 59 ( $M = 21.58$ ). Two hundred and eighty-six (31.7%) participants indicated that they were in their freshman year, 12.7% ( $n = 115$ ) were sophomores, 29.5% ( $n = 266$ ) were juniors, 25.4% ( $n = 229$ ) were seniors, and the remaining .7% ( $n = 6$ ) were graduate students.

### Measures

#### Demographic questionnaire

Participants answered four questions related to their current age, race/ethnicity, and gender.

#### Sexual Cognitions

Participants answered a total of 88 questions to assess their sexual cognitions. These questions were used to assess particular themes of sexual cognitions found in previous research. Seven questions derived from Ward (2002) and ter Bogot et al. (2010) were used to assess the cognition that dating is a game or recreational sport ( $\alpha = .70$ ; scores ranged from 7-42), eight questions (Ward, 2002) were used to assess the cognition that men are sex driven ( $\alpha = .77$ ; scores ranged from 8-48), twelve questions (ter Bogot et al, 2010; Ward, 2002) were used to

assess the cognition that women are sex objects ( $\alpha = .73$ ; scores ranged from 12-72), four questions (ter Bogot et al, 2010) were used to assess the cognition that men are tough ( $\alpha = .64$ ; scores ranged from 4-24), sixteen questions modified from Ward, Handbrough, and Walker (2005) were used to assess participants feminine and masculine ideals ( $\alpha = .85$ ; scores ranged from 8-48 for feminine ideals and 8-48 for masculine ideals), fourteen questions (Ward et al., 2005) were used to assess participants sexual stereotypes ( $\alpha = .83$ ; scores ranged from 14-84), nine questions (Burt, 1980) were used to assess participants sex role stereotyping ( $\alpha = .80$ ; scores ranged from 9-54), nine questions (Burt, 1980) were used to assess participants adversarial sexual beliefs ( $\alpha = .80$ ; scores ranged from 9-54), and an additional ten questions (Burt, 1980) were used to determine participants sexual conservatism ( $\alpha = .81$ ; scores ranged from 10-60). Participants responded to all questions using a 6-point Likert type scale (*strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree, strongly agree*). Higher scores indicated a higher level of that sexual cognition. The complete list of questions can be found in Appendix B.

### Sexual risk

Participants answered a series of open-ended questions pertaining to their sexual histories to assess their sexual risk. Questions were derived from Turchik and Garske's (2009) sexual risk survey (SRS). The original questionnaire asked participants to report their sexual behaviors in the past six months and had an alpha reliability of .93. However, because participants can better accurately report their sexual behavior if the time is limited to three months (Napper et al., 2010), the current study focused on a three-month time period. Example items include "How many partners have you engaged in sexual behavior with but not had sex with," "How many



times have you had anal sex without a condom,” and “How many times (that you know of) have you had sex with someone who has had many sexual partners.” Items were summed to derive a total sexual risk score that was used in analyses. Alpha reliability for the current study was .79. The complete list of questions can be found in Appendix C.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

Preliminary analyses to assess the reliability of scales, distributional characteristics, and the extent of missing data were conducted first. Missing data were minimal for most variables (< 5%) and were found to be missing completely at random (MCAR). Therefore, a simple mean substitution imputation method was used (Kline, 2005). This method involves replacing the missing data with the overall mean value for the variable. There is the possibility that replacing missing data in this manner can distort the distribution of the data. However, it had no detectable effect on this dataset. This method of handling missing data is preferable to deletion methods as it allows for complete case analyses, does not reduce the statistical power of tests, and takes into consideration the reason for missing data (Twala, 2009). Moreover, this method of data imputation is a good representation of the original data if the missing data is less than 20%, which was the case in the original sample (Downey & King, 1998).

Data was analyzed in SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sexual cognitions and sexual risk among male and female participants. Sexual cognition variables of viewing dating as a sport, the perception that men are sex-driven, viewing women as sex objects, the perception that men are tough, sexual conservatism, masculine ideals, feminine ideals, sexual stereotypes, sexual roles, adversarial sexual beliefs, and sexual risk were all examined. These sexual cognition variables were compared to both the male and female participants in order to determine if there were any significant differences.

### Correlations

In order to determine relationships among the different sexual cognitions examined in the current study, Pearson correlations were conducted. The Evans (1996) method of interpreting

and classifying  $r$  values was used in order to interpret Pearson correlation coefficient values. The Pearson correlation coefficient values are displayed in Table 1. As the data indicates, there were significant relationships among the various sexual cognitions and sexual risk examined in this study.

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were examined to determine participants average level of sexual risk as well as the various sexual cognitions examined in this study. Means and standard deviations for each variable can be found in Table 2. Participants reported low levels of viewing dating as a sport, men as sex driven, women as sex objects, sexual stereotypes, and adversarial sexual beliefs. Participants reported moderate levels of the view that men are tough and sex roles. Participants reported high levels of both masculine and feminine ideals as well as sexual conservatism. Additionally, participants reported somewhat low levels of sexual risk.

### Independent $t$ Tests

A series of  $t$ -tests were conducted in order to determine if there were significant differences among sexual cognitions and sexual risk based on participant gender. The cognition of viewing dating as a game or recreational sport was found to be significant,  $t(900) = 4.10, p = .04$ . It was determined that males held this view more than females. The cognition that men are sex driven was also found to be significant,  $t(900) = 8.61, p = .00$ . In regards to this cognition, male participants also held this view more than the female participants. The cognition consisting of adversarial sexual beliefs was found to be statistically significant,  $t(900) = 7.14, p = .00$ . Male participants were found to hold this cognition more so than female participants. The cognition including sexual stereotypes was found to be statistically significant,  $t(900) = 5.21, p = .02$ .

Male participants were also found to identify with this cognition more so than female participants. No other significant relationships were found. Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 3.

#### Mediational Analysis: Test of Joint Significance

A Test of Joint Significance (TJS) was used to examine a mediational relationship between participant gender, sexual cognitions, and sexual risk. In the TJS the path from the predictor (gender) to the mediators (sexual cognitions) and the path from the mediators to the outcome variable (sexual risk) must be significant in order to conclude a mediational relationship (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998). Prior to performing the mediation analysis, the predictor variables, mediator variables, and outcome variables were transformed into  $z$  scores.

The first set of analyses consisted of analyzing sexual cognitions in regards to participant gender. The results can be found in Tables 4-13. Results indicated that participant gender was able to predict the following sexual cognitions: dating is a sport, men are sex driven, women are sex objects, men are tough, sexual stereotypes, sex roles, and adversarial sexual beliefs. The second analysis examined how sexual cognitions were associated with participant sexual risk. Results can be found in Table 14. Results indicated that the sexual cognitions of dating is a sport, men are sex driven, and sexual roles were associated with an increase in sexual risk while the sexual cognition of sexual conservatism was associated with a decrease in sexual risk.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine any possible relationships between sexual cognition and participant genders in hopes of being able to identify and prevent sexual risk. It was hypothesized that male and female participants would have different sexual cognitions and that male participants would adhere more to sexual stereotypes than female participants. It was also hypothesized that variations in sexual cognitions among males and females would be associated with increased sexual risk (see Figure 1). Results of the Test of Joint Significance indicated that the path from the predictor (gender) to the mediators (sexual cognitions) and the path from the mediators to the outcome variable (sexual risk) were in fact significant. These significant findings indicate that there is a mediational relationship present between variables (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998). This supports the initial hypothesis that there is in fact a relationship between sexual cognitions and sexual risks.

Before elaborating on the hypotheses, it is important to highlight that participants reported low levels of viewing dating as a sport, men as sex driven, women as sex objects, sexual stereotypes, and adversarial sexual beliefs. Participants also reported moderate levels of the view that men are tough and sex roles. Participants reported high levels of both masculine and feminine ideals as well as sexual conservatism. Additionally, participants reported somewhat low levels of sexual risk. Also, it is important to consider that the various sexual cognitions examined in this study were related to each other. It was determined that there were multiple significant correlations among various sexual cognitions. The cognition of women being viewed as sex objects was found to be correlated with multiple sexual cognitions such as the perception of men being viewed as tough as well as the masculine ideals. These findings support the idea that

societal influences have a complex effect on the perceptions of sexual expression. The findings in this study also relate to the conclusions of a study that found sexual ideals imposed by media outlets throughout society directly affects participant behavior regarding sexual expression (Ward et al., 2011).

The perception of adversarial beliefs regarding sexual attitudes was also found to be related to the perception of sexual roles. This relationship reflects what previous research has expressed in regards to the presence of societal standards and extreme beliefs that shape the way sexual roles are perceived and internalized. These findings suggest that sexual stereotypes and perceived gender roles are certainly still present in our society, even if they are changing along with our cultural landscape.

As noted in the results, the cognition that men are viewed as tough had the least amount of variance which indicates that participants held the most similar views regarding this perception. However, this particular theme was associated with the least amount of survey questions which may have influenced this relatively low standard deviation. Likewise, the cognition of women as sex objects had the most variance which suggests that the participants had the most divergent views regarding this theme.

Results of the current study supported the first hypothesis in that male participants were more likely to hold certain sexual cognitions in comparison to female participants. For example, male participants were found to be more likely to view dating as a game or recreational sport. It was also determined that men were more likely to identify with the cognitions of adversarial sexual beliefs and sexual stereotypes. These findings support previous research that found that men are more likely to behave with more sexual promiscuity than females would traditionally

exhibit (Hendrick et al., 1985). Male participants were also more likely than female participants to hold the cognition that men are sex driven. With the majority of participants being female, it is particularly interesting that male participants reported that their own gender is more likely to hold the belief that males are motivated by sex. Women were not determined to hold any sexual cognitions more so than males, which is also surprising due to the fact that women account for the majority of participants.

The second hypothesis, that variations in sexual cognitions among males and females would be associated with increased sexual risk, was also supported by the results of the current study. For instance, participant gender was associated with the sexual cognitions of dating is a sport, men are sex driven, women are sex objects, men are tough, sexual stereotypes, sex roles, and adversarial sexual beliefs. The presence of differing cognitions between genders supports earlier research which stated that the presence of male hormones has a direct effect on cognition (Neave, Menaged, & Weightman, 1999). A number of these sexual cognitions such as the comparison of dating to sports, the view that men are motivated by sex and the perception of sexual roles were all then associated with an increase in sexual risk. The male perception of dating in a competitive manner could be used to support previous findings that suggest the male gender may be more susceptible to sexual risk due to their reluctance to seek diagnostic testing (Parent et al, 2012). The correlation between the perception of sexual roles and an increase in sexual risk further illustrates the importance of parenting styles. Erik Erikson (1963) stressed the importance of environment and close relationships in the development and expression of sexuality which is consistent with the findings of the current study. Sexual conservatism was associated with a decrease in sexual risk. This finding can be explained by the fact that sexual

conservatism may include maintaining celibacy which can be considered an effective form of protection against any sexual risk.

### Limitations

As discussed previously, U.S. society has an interesting combination of both glorifying sex in the media while simultaneously shaming members of society who tend to be more open with their sexuality. The amount of pressure imposed by society to not disclose sexual history or even personal beliefs regarding sexuality may have affected participant motivation when completing the questionnaires. The fact that the questionnaire was completed by college-aged students could have also had an effect on their willingness to answer questions honestly. Of the students that participated, more identified as freshman than any other year in college. It can be assumed that freshman who are just beginning their college career hold different societal cognitions and conceptions as compared to those in their senior year who are preparing to enter the workforce. This could also be considered a limitation of this study. Participants who may have experienced or been subject to sexual trauma or abuse may be reluctant to answer questions in regards to sexual risk or sexual history. For example, females who have been subject to sexual trauma or abuse are more likely to develop posttraumatic sexual cognitions (Marshall & Leifker, 2014). This hesitation may result in a participant answering falsely in order to preserve self-esteem. The inability of this study to isolate participants who may have experienced such trauma or changes to said cognitions can be considered another limitation to this study. The fact that the majority of participants were white females could also have limited the results of the study. Additionally, the current study examined male and female participants only and did not take into



account varying views of gender that participants may have had. This study also focused on heterosexual dating and sexual behaviors.

#### Further Research

At this time in society, it appears that technology is advancing at an incredibly fast rate. Future studies should be conducted in order to keep up with the ever increasing influence of technology in society. As technology continues to grow and provide humans with instant methods of communication, it is very important that we continue to study the subsequent effects on sexual cognitions as well as the perception of sexual ideals and forms of sexual expression.

In order to further understand sexual cognitions, it is recommended that future research attempt to focus on the adolescent population in order to shed light on the formation of sexual cognitions as well as the ways to prevent incidents of sexual victimizations and other risks. Examining the younger population could potentially allow us to understand the emerging societal shifts in attitudes regarding sexuality. As stated previously, the presence of maternal intervention has an indisputable influence on the perception of sex roles on adolescents as they develop (Broverman et al., 1994). Perhaps there should be more research conducted in the future regarding parenting styles and communication. In order to reduce sexual risk in our society, we must first examine the influences of emerging sexuality in adolescents and how their cognition affects their future behaviors. By examining factors such as maternal influences and parental communication in regards to sex, future researchers may be able to more accurately identify and prevent sexual risk among a population that will soon enter our society as adults.

## **APPENDIX A: IRB OUTCOME LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

From : **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To : **Chrysalis L. Wright and Co-PI: Jacquelynnne Dauk**

Date : **May 21, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 05/21/2015 the IRB determined that the following proposed activity is not human research as defined by DHHS regulations at 45 CFR 46 or FDA regulations at 21 CFR 50/56:

Type of Review: Not Human Research Determination  
Project Title: Sexual cognitions and sexual risk by gender  
Investigator: Chrysalis L Wright  
IRB ID: SBE-15-11340  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: N/A

University of Central Florida IRB review and approval is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are to be made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human subjects, please contact the IRB office to discuss the proposed changes.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 05/21/2015 04:06:53 PM EDT

IRB manager

## **APPENDIX B: SEXUAL COGNITIONS QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Casual sex is okay.
2. You don't need a relationship to have a good time; all you need are two people who are attracted to each other.
3. Sexual activity is desirable as early in a relationship as possible.
4. It's okay to have sex with several different people, because then you start getting good at it.
5. Dating is basically a game, a battle of the sexes, where both males and females try to gain the upper hand and manipulate each other.
6. A good way to reward or punish someone is by giving or withholding sex.
7. A man will be most successful in meeting or picking up women if he has a "rap" or uses flattery, sexy, or cute pick-up lines.
8. Men more often think of sex and therefore they cannot be faithful to their girlfriends.
9. Men are mostly interested in women as potential sex partners and don't want to be "just friends" with a woman.
10. It's difficult for men to resist sexual urges and to remain monogamous.
11. It is natural for a man to want to admire or ogle women and to comment on their bodies, even if he has a girlfriend.
12. Something is wrong with a guy who turns down a chance to have sex.
13. Men who are "good with the ladies" and who can get any woman into bed are cool.
14. Men are always ready and willing for sex; they think about it all the time.
15. It is only natural for a man to make sexual advances to a woman he finds attractive.
16. Women should really take care of their appearance; men don't want an ugly woman as a girlfriend.
17. A woman has to look sexy in order to be attractive to men.
18. It is cool for a guy to have a sexy girlfriend.
19. Women are sexual objects whose value is based on their physical appearance.
20. An attractive woman should expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.
21. Women should be more concerned about their appearance than men.
22. Using her body and looks is the best way for a woman to attract a man.
23. Women should spend a lot of time trying to be pretty; no one wants to date a woman who has "let herself go."
24. There's nothing wrong with men whistling at shapely women.
25. It bothers me when a man is interested in a woman only if she is pretty.
26. There is nothing wrong with men being primarily interested in a woman's body.
27. Being with an attractive woman gives a man prestige.
28. Handsome boys can get any girl.
29. It is cool for a girl to have a real hunk as a boyfriend.
30. Girls prefer a tough guy as a boyfriend.
31. As a boy you better be a macho than a nerd.
32. It is okay to have sex with someone you are very much attracted to but don't know very well.
33. Sex belongs only in married relationships.
34. It is important for a man to be athletic or in good shape

35. It is important for a man to be intelligent
36. It is important for a man to be cool or stylist
37. It is important for a man to be daring or to be a risk taker
38. It is important for a man to be physically attractive or 'fine'
39. It is important for a man to be nice or polite
40. It is important for a man to be funny or to have a good sense of humour
41. It is important for a man to have money or nice things
42. It is important for a woman to be athletic or in good shape
43. It is important for a woman to be intelligent
44. It is important for a woman to be cool or stylist
45. It is important for a woman to be daring or to be a risk taker
46. It is important for a woman to be physically attractive or 'fine'
47. It is important for a woman to be nice or polite
48. It is important for a woman to be funny or to have a good sense of humour
49. It is important for a woman to have money or nice things
50. Most women are sly and deceptive when they are out to attract a man, often hiding their flaws, and play it sweet.
51. Women are most attracted by a muscular body and a handsome face.
52. Being with an attractive woman gives a man prestige (e.g., a trophy date).
53. What women find most attractive about a man is his money, job, or car.
54. There is nothing wrong with men whistling at shapely women.
55. Using her body and looks is the best way for a woman to attract a man.
56. Something is wrong with a guy who turns down a chance to score with a woman.
57. Men want sex; women want relationships.
58. Women should not be afraid to wear clothes that show off their figure; after all, if you've got it, flaunt it.
59. It is okay for a woman to pursue a man who is already taken. After all, all is fair in love and war.
60. Women should do whatever they need (e.g., use make-up, buy attractive clothes, work out) to look good enough to attract a man.
61. A man should fight when the woman he's with is insulted by another man.
62. It is acceptable for the woman to pay for the date.
63. A woman should be a virgin when she marries.
64. There is something wrong with a woman who doesn't want to marry and raise a family.
65. A wife should never contradict her husband in public.
66. It is better for a woman to use her feminine charm to get what she wants rather than ask for it outright.
67. It is acceptable for a woman to have a career, but marriage and family should come first.
68. It looks worse for a woman to be drunk than for a man to be drunk.
69. There is nothing wrong with a woman going to a bar alone.
70. A woman will only respect a man who will lay down the law to her.
71. Many women are so demanding sexually that a man just can't satisfy them.
72. A man's got to show the woman who's boss right from the start or he'll end up henpecked.

73. Women are usually sweet until they've caught a man, but then they let their true self show.
74. A lot of men talk big, but when it comes down to it, they can't perform well sexually.
75. In a dating relationship a woman is largely out to take advantage of a man.
76. Men are out for only one thing.
77. Most women are sly and manipulating when they are out to attract a man.
78. A lot of women seem to get pleasure in putting men down.
79. A woman who initiates a sexual encounter will probably have sex with anybody.
80. A woman shouldn't give in sexually to a man too easily or he'll think she's loose.
81. Men have a biologically stronger sex drive than women.
82. A nice woman will be offended or embarrassed by dirty jokes.
83. Masturbation is a normal sexual activity.
84. People should not have oral sex.
85. I would have no respect for a woman who engages in sexual relationships without any emotional involvement.
86. Having sex during the menstrual period is unpleasant.
87. The primary goal of sexual intercourse should be to have children.
88. Women have the same needs for a sexual outlet as men.

## **APPENDIX C: SEXUAL RISK QUESTIONNAIRE**



Instructions: Please read the following statements and record the number that is true for you over the past 3 months for each question. If you do not know for sure how many times a behavior took place, try to estimate the number as close as you can. Thinking about the average number of times the behavior happened per week or per month might make it easier to estimate an accurate number, especially if the behavior happened fairly regularly. If you've had multiple partners, try to think about how long you were with each partner, the number of sexual encounters you had with each, and try to get an accurate estimate of the total number of each behavior. If the question does not apply to you or you have never engaged in the behavior in the question, put a "0" as your answer. Remember that in the following questions "sex" includes oral, anal, and vaginal sex and that "sexual behavior" includes passionate kissing, making out, fondling, petting, oral-to-anal stimulation, and hand-to-genital stimulation. Please consider only the last 3 months when answering and please be honest.

In the past three months:

1. How many partners have you engaged in sexual behavior with but not had sex with?
2. How many times have you left a social event with someone you just met?
3. How many times have you "hooked up" but not had sex with someone you didn't know or didn't know well?
4. How many times have you gone out to bars/parties/social events with the intent of "hooking up" and engaging in sexual behavior but not having sex with someone?
5. How many times have you gone out to bars/parties/social events with the intent of "hooking up" and having sex with someone?
6. How many times have you had an unexpected and unanticipated sexual experience?
7. How many times have you had a sexual encounter you engaged in willingly but later regretted?
8. How many partners have you had sex with?
9. How many times have you had vaginal intercourse without using a condom (latex/polyurethane or lambskin/membrane)?
10. How many times have you had vaginal intercourse without protection against pregnancy?
11. How many times have you given or received fellatio (oral sex on a man) without a condom?
12. How many times have you given or received cunnilingus (oral sex on a woman) without a dental dam or "adequate protection"?
13. How many times have you had anal sex without a condom?
14. How many times have you or your partner engaged in anal penetration by a hand ("fisting") or other object without a latex glove or condom followed by unprotected anal sex?
15. How many times have you given or received anilingus (oral stimulation of the anal region, "rimming") without a dental dam or "adequate protection"?
16. How many people have you had sex with that you know but are not involved in any sort of relationship with (i.e., "friends with benefits", "fuck buddies")?
17. How many times have you had sex with someone you don't know well or just met?
18. How many times have you or your partner used alcohol or drugs before or during sex?
19. How many times have you had sex with a new partner before discussing sexual history, IV drug use, disease status and other current sexual partners?

20. How many times (that you know of) have you had sex with someone who has had many sexual partners?
21. How many partners (that you know of) have you had sex with who had been sexually active before you were with them but had not been tested for STIs/HIV?
22. How many partners have you had sex with that you didn't trust?
23. How many times (that you know of) have you had sex with someone who was also engaging in sex with others during the same time period?

## **APPENDIX D: TABLES & FIGURES**

Figure 1. *Mediational Model*

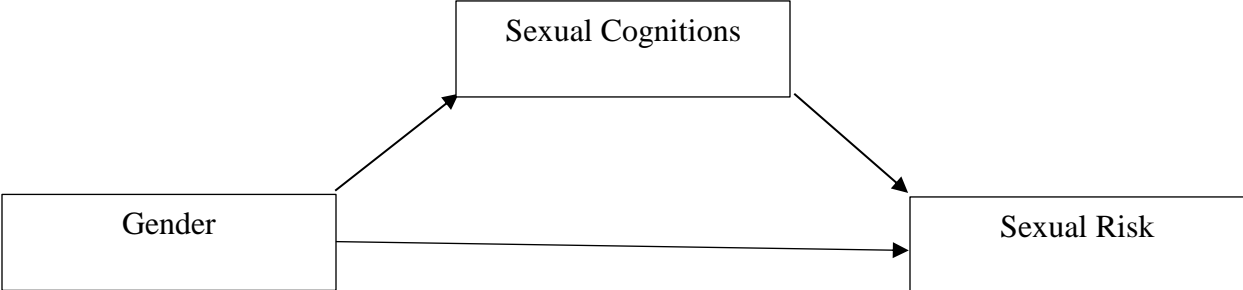


Table 1. *Correlations*

<i>Sexual Cognition</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>
1 Sexual Risk		.23*	.17*	.13*	.06** *	-.15*	.07** *	.08***	.12*	.07***	.10**
2 Dating as a Sport			.43*	.44*	.29*	-.25*	.18*	.16*	.46*	.12*	.38*
3 Men as Sex Driven				.62*	.49*	.25*	.38*	.34*	.63*	.36*	.56*
4 Women as Sex Objects					.63*	.23*	.46*	.44*	.78*	.49*	.62*
5 Men as Tough						.26*	.47*	.42*	.65*	.41*	.51*
6 Sexual Conservatism							.32*	.30*	.29*	.49*	.39*
7 Masculine Ideals								.87*	.51*	.39*	.35*
8 Feminine Ideals									.50*	.36*	.33*
9 Sexual Stereotypes										.51*	.71*
10 Sexual Roles											.51*
11 Adversarial Sexual Beliefs											

\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .05$

*Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Sexual Cognitions & Sexual Risk*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 Sexual Risk	34.13	35.51
2 Dating as a Sport	18.53	6.13
3 Men as Sex Driven	22.21	6.62
4 Women as Sex Objects	32.83	9.69
5 Men as Tough	12.01	3.91
6 Sexual Conservatism	40.44	7.23
7 Masculine Ideals	33.6	5.78
8 Feminine Ideals	33.59	5.88
9 Sexual Stereotypes	31.37	8.40
10 Sexual Roles	26.74	5.64
11 Adversarial Sexual Beliefs	23.01	7.60

Table 3. *Sexual Cognitions Based on Gender*

<i>Sexual Cognition</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Dating as a Sport	21.9	6.36	17.2	5.51
Men as Sex Driven	23.74	7.43	21.61	6.17
Adversarial Sexual Beliefs	25.59	8.07	21.1	7.17
Sexual Stereotypes	27.98	7.68	26.11	6.51

Table 4. *Regression Coefficients for Dating as a Sport*

	Dating as a Sport		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	-4.70	.43	-.35*
$R^2$		.12	
$F$		121.60*	

\* $p < .001$



Table 5. *Regression Coefficients for Men are Sex Driven*

	Men are Sex Driven		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	-2.12	.49	-.15*
$R^2$		.02	
$F$		19.21*	

\* $p < .001$

Table 6. *Regression Coefficients for Women are Sex Objects*

	Women are Sex Objects		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	-5.62	.69	-.26*
$R^2$		.07	
$F$		65.82*	

\* $p < .001$

Table 7. *Regression Coefficients for Men are Tough*

	Men are Tough		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	-1.05	.29	-.12
$R^2$		.02	
$F$		13.39*	

\* $p < .001$

Table 8. *Regression Coefficients for Sexual Conservatism*

	Sexual Conservatism		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	.42	.54	.03
$R^2$		.00	
$F$		.61	

\* $p < .001$

Table 9. *Regression Coefficients for Masculine Ideals*

	Masculine Ideals		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	-.31	.43	-.02
$R^2$		.00	
$F$		.54	

\* $p < .001$

Table 10. *Regression Coefficients for Feminine Ideals*

	Feminine Ideals		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	.11	.44	.01
$R^2$		.00	
$F$		.06	

\* $p < .001$

Table 11. *Regression Coefficients for Sexual Stereotypes*

	Sexual Stereotypes		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	-3.05	.61	-.16
$R^2$		.03	
$F$		24.66*	

\* $p < .001$

Table 12. *Regression Coefficients for Sex Roles*

	Sex Roles		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	-1.14	.42	-.09*
$R^2$		.01	
$F$		7.50*	

\* $p < .001$



Table 13. *Regression Coefficients for Adversarial Sexual Beliefs*

	Adversarial Sexual Beliefs		
	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	-3.60	.55	-.21*
$R^2$		.05	
$F$		42.83*	

\* $p < .001$

Table 14. *Predicting Sexual Risk in Regards to Sexual Cognitions*

Sexual Risk			
Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Dating as a Sport	.63	.25	.11*
Men as Sex Driven	.78	.24	.15**
Women as Sex Objects	.05	.20	.01
Men as Tough	-.40	.41	-.04
Sexual Conservatism	-1.10	.21	-
			.22**
Masculine Ideals	-.14	.41	-.02
Feminine Ideals	.52	.39	.09
Sexual Stereotypes	-.25	.27	-.06
Sexual Roles	.70	.27	.11*
Adversarial Sexual Beliefs	.18	.23	.04
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>		.09	
<i>F</i>		9.07**	

*p* < \*.01, *p* < \*\*.001

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