

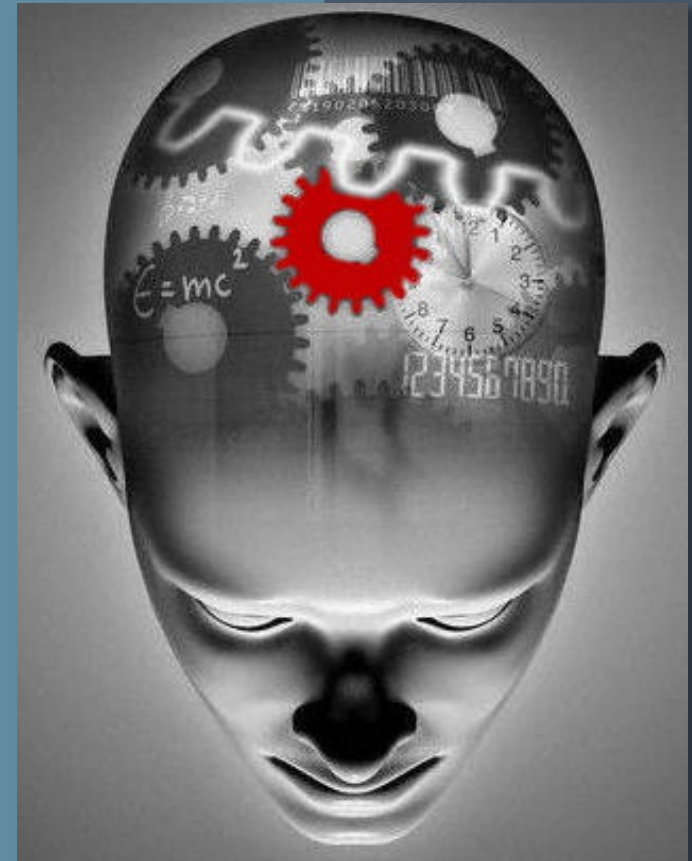
Myths About Male Sexuality
How Misperceptions Feed Misconduct



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What's going on?

- Cognitive biases
 - Attentional bias
 - emotionally dominant stimuli
 - Availability heuristic
 - what is more available in memory
 - Base rate neglect
 - specific details over statistics
 - Confirmation bias
 - seek out info consistent with preconceptions
 - Negativity bias
 - more weight to neg than pos events



Social Norms Theory

- Behavior influenced by perception of how other members of our social group behave (Berkowitz, 2003; Haines, 1997)
 - We misperceive, i.e., exaggerate, negative behaviors of peers
 - If we think problematic behavior is typical, we are more likely to engage in that type of behavior

More on social norms theory

- **Pluralistic ignorance**

- Belief you are in minority when in majority
 - e.g., an adolescent boy who is not sexually active may believe that most boys are, when they are not
- Suppress own attitudes incorrectly assumed are in minority

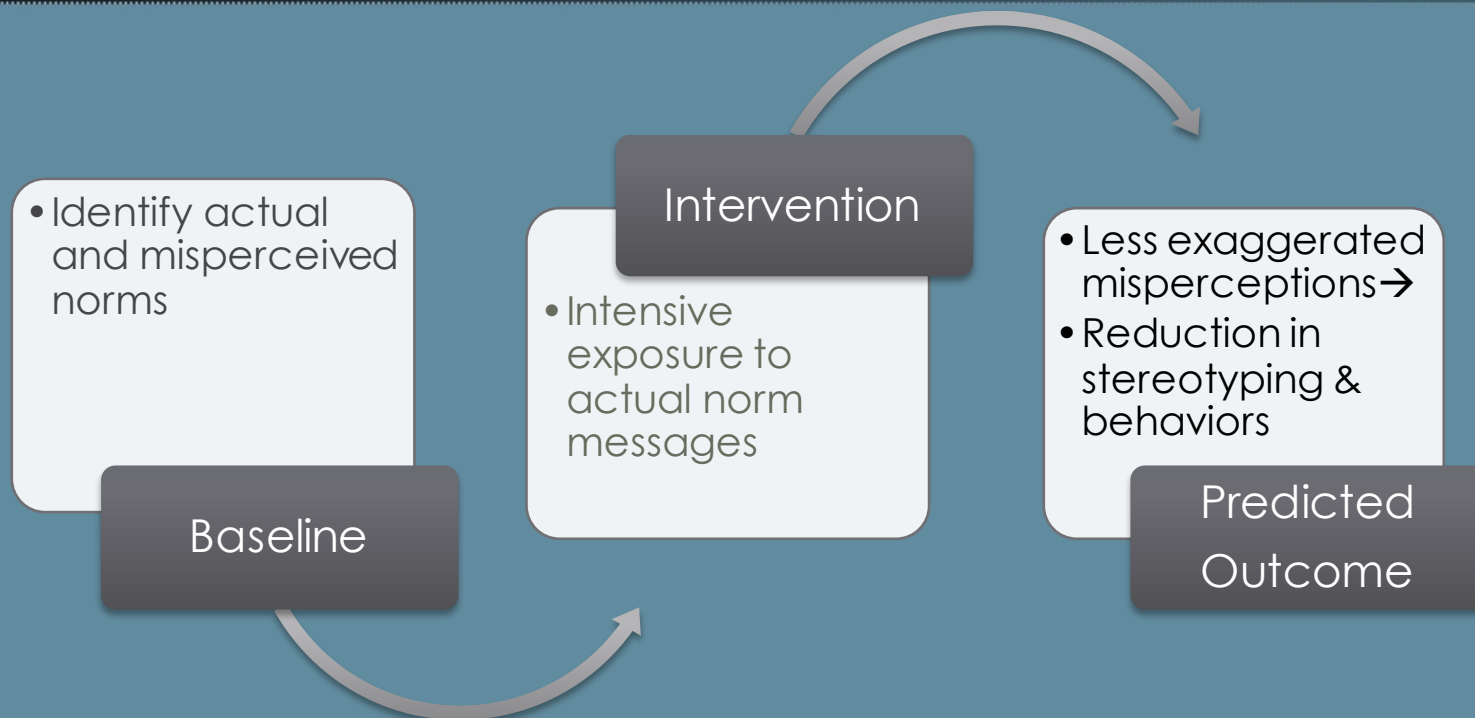
- **False consensus**

- Belief you are in majority when in minority
 - e.g., college high-risk drinkers may believe that most other college students engage in similar drinking patterns, when they do not
- Engage in behavior unaware it is non-normative and maybe dangerous for self and/or others



Source: Kilmartin, C., Smith, T., Green, A., Heinzen, H., Kuchler, M., & Kolar, D. (2008). A real time social norms intervention to reduce male sexism. *Sex Roles*, 59(3-4), 264-273.

Can we change it?



- Two studies of undergraduate men
 - Others in room much higher on sexism than self
 - Others more comfortable with it than they reported
- But...social norming intervention group eliminated that difference at three-week follow-up

Source: Kilmartin, C., Smith, T., Green, A., Heinzen, H., Kuchler, M., & Kolar, D. (2008). A real time social norms intervention to reduce male sexism. *Sex Roles*, 59(3-4), 264-273.

The Mars-Venus Problem

- Three studies tested notion of gender differences for behaviors women and men want and receive from romantic partners in a sample of 375 university students
- Across three studies, only one stable and robust gender difference emerged
 - Gender-role identity significantly accounted for half of variance for one stable gender difference



Source: Perrin et al., (2011). Aligning Mars and Venus: The Social Construction and Instability of Gender Differences in Romantic Relationships. *Sex Roles*, 64(9-10), 612-628.

Measure

- Desired Loving Behaviors Scale
 1. Scripting subscale (“I enjoy spending time with you” and “You mean so much to me”)
 2. Relationship-Support subscale (“Create a feeling of security between us” and “Remember my birthday”)
 3. Sex subscale (“Telling me what he/she likes in bed” and “Oral sex”)
 4. Caring-Actions subscale (“Leave a rose on my pillow” and “Do my laundry every once in a while”)

Source: Perrin et al., (2011). Aligning Mars and Venus: The Social Construction and Instability of Gender Differences in Romantic Relationships. *Sex Roles*, 64(9-10), 612-628.

Results

- Study 1: Desired behaviors
 - Women reported greater desire on Relationship Support scale
 - No difference for caring actions, scripting, or sex
- Study 2: Actual behaviors
 - No significant gender differences for any subscale (i.e., women and men were similarly effective in providing what their romantic partners wanted, in order to feel loved)
- Study 3: Gender role identity, relationship satisfaction, and desired vs. received behaviors
 - Men reported largest discrepancy between amount of sex desired vs. received...but...so did women
 - Stronger scores on feminine gender role measure → more they desired relationship support

Source: Perrin et al., (2011). Aligning Mars and Venus: The Social Construction and Instability of Gender Differences in Romantic Relationships. *Sex Roles*, 64(9-10), 612-628.

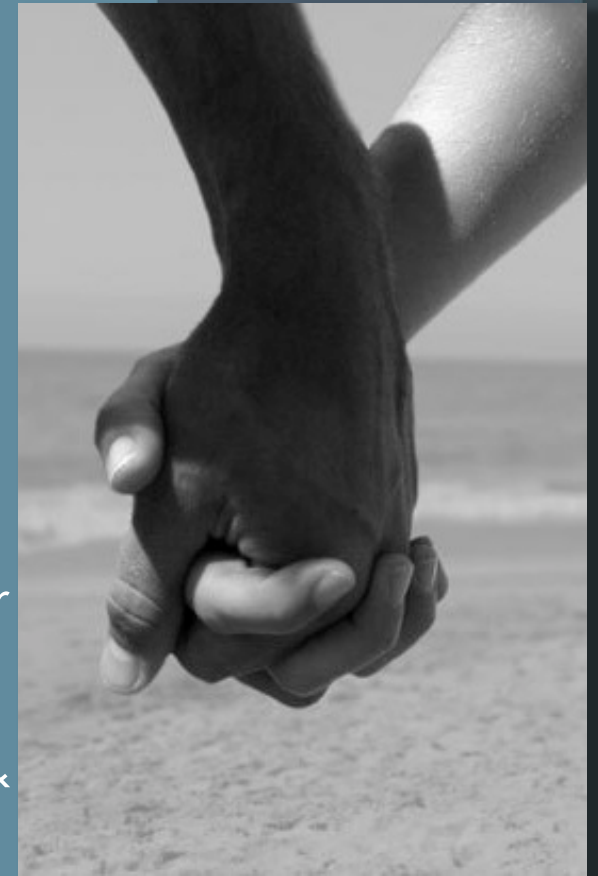
Sexual Strategies Theory (SST)

- Based on research by Buss and Schmitt (1993), SST posits that men desire more short-term partners than women
 - Based on International Sexuality Description Project from 100 (mostly undergraduate) men and 100 women in each of 52 different countries (Schmitt & the ISDP team, 2003; Schmitt et al., 2004)

Source: Smiler, A. P. (2011). Sexual Strategies Theory: Built for the short term or the long term. *Sex Roles*, 64, 603-612.

Challenges to the data

- Minority of global sample (25% of males and 5% of females), desired more than one partner in next 30 days (Schmitt et al., 2003)
 - What about the median and mode?
 - One partner for both men and women
- Using similar questions w/ American undergraduates, median and mode = one partner across all intervals for both men and women (McBurney et al., 2005; Miller & Fishkin, 1997)
- Pattern holds for actual (or reported) number of partners
 - Regardless of age group, most men have few partners (e.g., Kinsey et al., 1948, 1953; Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Offer et al., 2004; Smiler, 2008)



Source: Smiler, A. P. (2011). Sexual Strategies Theory: Built for the short term or the long term. *Sex Roles*, 64, 603-612.

More challenges?

- Alexander and Fisher (2003) used “bogus pipeline” technique to facilitate more truthful responses
 - Some connected to (nonfunctional) polygraph machine and informed that untruthful responses would be detected
- As expected, participants not attached to polygraph displayed typical gender differences—men reported more sexual partners
- What about the polygraph condition?
 - Gender differences in reported sexual partners disappeared!



Source: Conley, T. D., Moors, A. C., Matsick, J. L., Ziegler, A., & Valentine, B. A. (2011). Women, men, and the bedroom: Methodological and conceptual insights that narrow, reframe, and eliminate gender differences in sexuality. *Current Directions In Psychological Science*, 20(5), 296-300.

SST & Desirable Mates

- Men expected to prefer female partners who are fertile and attractive; women predicted to prefer resources and high status (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Buss et al., 2001; Meston & Buss, 2007)
 - Differences supported in survey data from six cohorts of American undergraduates (1939, 1956, 1967, 1977, 1984–85, 1996) (Buss et al., 2001)
 - In set of 18 characteristics desired in a long-term mate
 - Men placed more value on physical attractiveness and less value on good financial prospects than did women
 - Men also tended to favor female chastity and women tended to favor male sociability



Source: Smiler, A. P. (2011). Sexual Strategies Theory: Built for the short term or the long term. *Sex Roles*, 64, 603-612.

SST Revisited

- In 1977, men's desire for physically attractive women ranked in bottom half of characteristics (still in 7th to 9th place in recent samples)
 - Women's desire for a man with good financial prospects ranked 11th–13th for any period
- But...data indicated substantial similarity
- Top four criteria for MEN and WOMEN across time, place, and gender?
 1. Dependable character
 2. Emotional stability/maturity
 3. Pleasing disposition
 4. Mutual attraction/love



Source: Smiler, A. P. (2011). Sexual Strategies Theory: Built for the short term or the long term. *Sex Roles*, 64, 603-612.

More on Attractiveness & Earning Potential

- When you change question from *ideal* to *actual*, gender differences disappear
 - Attractiveness and status equally important to men and women when considering actual dating partners (in initial speed-dating encounters and one month after those encounters (Eastwick & Finkel, 2008)
 - Although physical attractiveness, good earning prospects, and personable characteristics were all positively and significantly associated with romantic interest, data revealed no evidence of differences
- Gender differences in preferences also absent in judgments of *current* romantic partners (Eastwick, Finkel, & Eagly, 2011)

Source: Eastwick, P. W., & Finkel, E. J. (2008). Sex differences in mate preferences revisited: Do people know what they initially desire in a romantic partner?. *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, 94(2), 245-264.

Gay & Lesbian Relationships

- More similar to heterosexual relationships than they are different (Kurdek, 2004; Peplau, Veniegas, & Campbell, 1996; Ridge & Feeney, 1998)
 - When differences occur, they align with traditional gender socialization (e.g., desire for sex higher in men)
 - Engage in more harmonious conflict interactions, a finding attributable to similar gender roles (Gottman et al., 2003)

Cheating...not the test kind

- Robust findings that males commit more acts of infidelity (intercourse)
 - Differences appear regardless of type of relationship and whether measured in terms of what individuals “want to” do or “have” done (Blow & Hartnett, 2005; Schmitt, 2003)
- But...when definitions of cheating include non-intercourse behaviors such as kissing or dating, gender differences attenuated or disappear (Drigotas et al., 1999; Glass & Wright, 1985; Wiederman & Hurd, 1999)



Source: Brand, R. J., Markey, C. M., Mills, A., & Hodges, S. D. (2007). Sex differences in self-reported infidelity and its correlates. *Sex Roles*, 57(1-2), 101-109.

Cheating on Campus

- Study 1: 561 undergrads in Pacific Northwest
 - Cheating defined as “any form of romantic and/or sexual involvement, short or long-term, including kissing, while the individual is in a relationship with another person.”
 - 28% reported cheating
 - No differences b/w men (24%) and women (31%)
- Study 2: 546 undergrads in Midwest
 - 43% reported cheating (50% of women and 39% of men)
 - 19% of women and 21% of men reporting intercourse cheating
 - Men averaged more episodes of cheating (6.6 vs. 2.7)

Source: Brand, R. J., Markey, C. M., Mills, A., & Hodges, S. D. (2007). Sex differences in self-reported infidelity and its correlates. *Sex Roles*, 57(1-2), 101-109.

Men and masturbation

- 80-100% of college men and 45-90% of women have masturbated (Davidson & Moore, 1994; Kimmel, 2012; Leiblum, Rosen, Platt, Cross, & Black, 1993; Miller & Lief, 1976; Smith, Rosenthal, & Reichler, 1996)
- College men reported masturbating an average of 12 times per month, while women reported an average of 4.7 times per month (Pinkerton et al., 2002)
 - Normative attitudes about masturbation strongest predictor of freq for both men and women



Source: Pinkerton, S. D., Bogart, L. M., Cecil, H., & Abramson, P. R. (2002). Factors associated with masturbation in collegiate sample. *Journal Of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, 14(2-3), 103-121.

Sex on the brain

- Undergraduates used counters to record # of times they thought about sex, food, or sleep in 7-day period
- Results
 - Yes, men thought about sex *modestly* more frequently than women did (median of 19 vs 10 times per day, ranging from 1 to 388 for men and 1 to 140 for women)
 - However, men also thought about both food (18 vs 15) and sleep (11 vs 8) significantly more often than women
 - Best predictor was comfort with sexuality—not gender
- Explanation?
 - Researchers suggested that men are more attentive to their own needs than women are
 - Consistent with objectification theory, which suggests that women's focus on others' perceptions reduces women's attention to their own physical needs (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Prentice & Carranza, 2002)



Sexual Contact

- Nearly half (46%) of all high school students report ever having had sexual intercourse in 2009, a decline from 54% in 1991. Males are no more likely than females to report having had sex (46%).
- Among 18- and 19-year-olds, about one-quarter of men and women said they hadn't had sexual contact with another person, up from 17% of women and 22% of men in 2002 (NCHS, 2009)

Frequency

- Among couples in first two years of relationships, 67% of gay couples, 45% of heterosexual couples, and 33% of lesbian couples had sex three times a week or more
- Drops off with time
 - For couples who had been together 10 years or longer, 11% of gay couples, 18% of heterosexual couples, and 1% of lesbian couples were having sex that often (Baumeister, 2001)

Orgasm

- 85% of straight and gay men, and 78% of bisexual men; 62% of straight women, 75% of lesbian women, and 58% of bisexual women (study of 2,850 non-married adults by Kinsey Institute in August 2014)
- Kimmel's study of college students

Sexual Assault & Rape Culture

- “Rape-supportive cultural messages”
 1. Femiphobia and misogyny
 - E.g., apparel, music, magazines, etc.
 2. Rape myths
 - e.g., false accusations; men can't be victims, etc.
 3. Performance and quantification over experience
 - e.g., locker room lies and bogus pipeline research; the term “hookup”
 4. Poor relational and sexual communication
 - e.g., sex is everywhere but in conversation (Axe Effect)
 5. Two exceptions of traditional masculinity and emotional control
 - Anger and sexual feelings considered to be out of the man's control
 - Expectation/encouragement for men to act out

Pornography: Buyer Beware

- Those who watch highest amounts of porn:
 - Lower self-esteem, higher depression, more controlling
 - Bored with partner
 - Higher sexism and belief in rape myths
 - More erectile dysfunction
- Reinforces lies/stereotypes
 - Women = don't say no; don't get pregnant; live to please men
 - Men = soulless; entitled to use women; no empathy, respect, or love for their partner



But...it's complicated

- Recent research on gender differences in porn use and impact for hetero couples
- User statistics from pornhub.com
 - <https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2016-year-in-review>

Audience Discussion

- What can men do?
 - Stop accepting that being “a nice guy” is enough
 - Reflect on how some of your activities support problematic views
 - Challenge (or opt out of) hurtful humor
- What can women do?
 - Expect and ASK more of men in your life (with compassion for barriers)
 - Reflect on how some of your activities support problematic views
- What can we all do?
 - Learn/teach the language of consent
 - Watch our own language
 - Work with children (your own or others’)
 - Work with your tribe before strangers
 - Practice compassionate social media use
 - Give your time or money to the cause

Contact Info

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