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Sexual Coercion within Mixed-Sex Couples: The Roles of Sexual Motives, Revictimization, and Reperpetration

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Research suggests that a history of childhood sexual abuse, and previous experiences of sexual coercion, may predict sexual coercion victimization and perpetration. More recently, sexual motivation has been found to correlate with both consensual and non-consensual sexual activity. However, sexual motivation has not been examined in association with previous experiences of abuse and sexual coercion. The aim of this study was to investigate childhood sexual abuse, previous sexual coercion experiences, and sexual motives of both partners as possible risk factors for current sexual coercion victimization and perpetration within a sample of 209 mixed-sex couples. This study examined whether power, stress relief, partner pressure, and imposition motives contributed unique variance to the prediction of sexual coercion beyond that accounted for by past childhood sexual abuse and sexual coercion events. Using hierarchical logistic regressions, four predictive models were examined for both male and female sexual coercion perpetration and victimization. Results show that childhood sexual abuse was only a significant predictor of female sexual coercion perpetration, whereas male sexual coercion victimization and perpetration were predicted by sexual coercion victimization and perpetration in previous relationships. Power motives were also significant predictors of sexual coercion perpetration, and imposition was a significant predictor of sexual coercion victimization for both genders.

Sexual interactions are generally an integral part of romantic relationships. Partners may choose to engage in sexual activities for a variety of reasons and to fulfill different needs, whether it is for intimacy, pleasure, or to avoid rejection. Unfortunately, sexual negotiation between committed partners may be fraught with conflict. In fact, up to 50% of couples may experience some form of sexual coercion (Brousseau, Bergeron, Hébert, & McDuff, 2011; O'Leary & Williams, 2006). In recent years, sexual coercion has been shown to be associated with many negative physical and psychological consequences for the victims, such as unplanned pregnancies,

posttraumatic stress symptoms, and depression (Arata & Burkhart, 1996; De Visser, Rissel, Richters, & Smith, 2007; Gidycz, Coble, Latham, & Layman, 1993; Zweig, Barber, & Eccles, 1997). Although childhood sexual abuse and previous experiences of sexual coercion have been linked with sexual coercion victimization or perpetration, studies still present conflicting results (e.g., Classen, Palesh, & Aggarwal, 2005; Gidycz, Hanson, & Layman, 1995; Hines, 2007; Testa & Dermen, 1999). The dearth of research examining sexually coercive behaviors and victimization simultaneously, from the perspective of both partners and within the context of sexual intentions, may be responsible for the inconsistent relations found between childhood sexual abuse and past and current sexual coercion experiences. Indeed, studies indicate that sexual motivation, or the reasons people engage in sexual activities, may predict distinct sexual behaviors and their consequences (Cooper, Shapiro, & Powers, 1998; Hill, 2003). More specifically, the study by Hill investigated how sexual motives correlated with

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perpetration of sexual coercion, and found that male perpetrators of sexual coercion reported more motives of power and female perpetrators were more likely to report motives of stress relief. However, this study was limited by the fact that it did not control for known antecedents of sexual coercion—childhood sexual abuse and previous sexual coercion experiences. Consequently, this study aimed to address the aforementioned limitations by investigating current sexual coercion victimization and perpetration from the perspective of both partners within mixed-sex couples. More specifically, childhood sexual abuse, sexual coercion experiences in previous relationships, and sexual motives of both partners were examined as possible risk factors of current sexual coercion. In this study, sexual coercion referred to any occurrence of unwanted sexual activity with a romantic partner since the age of 14.

Sexual Coercion within Couples

Sexual coercion is generally defined as making another person engage in sexual activity, despite his or her unwillingness to do so. The sexual activity may include kissing, fondling, or penetrative sex (oral, vaginal, or anal). Sexually coercive tactics may vary from psychological pressure and manipulation, such as insisting, continual argument, and lying to physical pressure, such as pinning a person down, using physical force, or threatening harm to one's partner (Spitzberg, 1998). They may also include taking advantage of an intoxicated partner who is unable to resist sexual advances. These tactics are used to obtain compliance from the victims. Thus, sexual coercion is not limited to unwanted kissing or forced intercourse, but rather encompasses the spectrum of all coercive sexual behaviors and tactics from unwanted sex play to severe sexual assault.

Sexual coercion by males often seems to be accepted as part of sexual relationships (Spitzberg, 1998) because traditional sexual scripts (Simon & Gagnon, 1986) often present men as sexual predators and women as resisters. In this perspective, men trying to obtain consent or coercing women for sex seems almost acceptable because these behaviors correspond to the man's role in the traditional script. Conversely, these gender stereotypes also allow for women to coerce men, regardless of the degree of violence used (Anderson & Savage, 2005). In this perspective, if men always want sex, then they cannot logically refuse any opportunity to have sex with a woman and, thus, they can never have *unwanted sex* (Anderson & Sorensen, 1999). Based on the traditional sex scripts, it seems logical that sexual coercive behaviors and victimization can be present in sexual negotiation for both men and women in romantic relationships. Indeed, recent studies have demonstrated that sexual coercion may be reciprocal between partners (Brousseau et al., 2011; O'Leary & Williams, 2006). Moreover, sexual

coercion victimization is often predicted by sexual coercion perpetration, and vice versa, for both men and women (Harned, 2002; Muñoz-Rivas, Graña, O'Leary, & González, 2009).

Sexual Motivation

Sexual motivation, or the reasons for having sex (Impett & Peplau, 2003), can be conceptualized as the interest in fulfilling a need or obtaining a goal through sexual behavior (Hill & Preston, 1996). Considering that most romantic relationships involve sexual interactions, it seems important to examine what motivates partners to engage in sexual behaviors. Two theories have been developed to understand motivations for sexual behaviors: approach-avoidance motives (Cooper et al., 1998) and dispositional sexual motives (Hill & Preston, 1996). Within an approach-avoidance theoretical framework, the various sexual motives may be understood in terms of approaching positive, or avoiding negative, consequences that may be internal or external (Impett & Peplau, 2003; Impett, Peplau, & Gable, 2005). For instance, a person having sex without a condom can be motivated by a desire to increase his or her own physical pleasure, whereas another person can engage in the same behavior and be motivated by a need to avoid rejection from a partner. The overt behaviors are identical, but the need fulfilled is different in each case. The dispositional theoretical framework, on the other hand, casts sexual motives as intrinsic, which means sexual behaviors are pursued to obtain psychological gratification or incentives related to their motives (Hill & Preston, 1996). For example, a person sexually motivated by power may experience increased sexual arousal and pleasure when exerting control over a partner in sexual interactions. However, this psychological gratification is not necessarily obtained by exerting control in other general types of interactions; the gratification comes from having the opportunity to express power and dominance during *sexual* interactions with the partner.

A study by Impett et al. (2005) examined the role of sexual motives in romantic relationships within a university sample. Students who were in a relationship completed daily surveys on their sexual interactions and sexual motives. The authors found that when participants reported engaging in sex for approach motives (i.e., intimacy, pleasure), they reported feeling positive emotions and more relationship satisfaction. In contrast, if they reported having sex for avoidance motives (i.e., to avoid conflict), they reported more negative feelings and less relationship satisfaction.

Using a sample of 1,666 young adults, Cooper et al. (1998) examined the role of sexual motives in the occurrence of risky behaviors, and postulated that sexual behaviors would be best understood in terms of goals or needs they serve. They found that enhancement of

pleasure, coping, and partner pressure motives were associated with more negative outcomes (e.g., unplanned pregnancies) and greater risk-taking, whereas peer pressure and self-affirmation motives were related to less frequent and a later onset of sexual experiences. Indeed, sexual motives were significant predictors of sexual risk behaviors and accounted for more than double the variance compared to the demographic variables. Moreover, results suggested that partners in relationships may influence each other's sexual behaviors through their individual goals and motives. However, this study did not examine sexual motivation in association with previous experiences of childhood sexual abuse or sexual coercion.

Studies suggest that sexual motivation may also be useful for understanding sexually coercive behaviors (Cooper et al., 1998; Hill, 2003; Impett & Peplau, 2002, 2003). Hill (2003) used the Affective and Motivational Orientation Related to Erotic Arousal Scale (AMORE; Hill & Preston, 1996) to examine intrinsic sexual motives in relation to reported sexual coercion perpetration by men and women. He found that sexual desire and hostile sexual beliefs were not associated with increased sexual coercion, but that sexual motives were significant predictors of sexual coercion perpetration. Although it was hypothesized that power motives would be related to sexual coercion perpetration for both genders, the results indicated that this was only true for men and that sexually coercive women were more likely to report motives of stress relief. Moreover, Hill suggested that for both women and men, proclivity to sexual coercion was not necessarily related to intentions to cause harm or humiliation to a partner, but rather motivated by a need to feel in control or reduce distress in sexual interactions. Nevertheless, this study did not examine sexual motives in relation to sexual coercion victimization.

Childhood Sexual Abuse

Childhood sexual abuse generally refers to unwanted sexual activity occurring in childhood with an adult or older child, which may involve touching, such as molestation, up to and including intercourse (Arata, 2000; Banyard, Arnold, & Smith, 2000). Various studies have examined childhood sexual abuse as a risk factor for revictimization and sexual violence during adulthood (for a review, see Classen et al., 2005; see also Hines, 2007); however, results are not consistent across genders.

The bulk of studies have focused on female childhood sexual abuse and sexual revictimization in adulthood. Recent reviews suggest that childhood sexual abuse is generally associated with sexual revictimization for women (Classen et al., 2005), but some exceptions have been found. In a study of 219 female university students, Banyard et al. (2000) found no significant link between

childhood sexual abuse and sexual coercion victimization in the past year. The conflicting data may be due to the timeline used for measuring sexual coercion, as some studies used lifetime sexual coercion rates, whereas Banyard et al. measured sexual coercion within the previous year. Indeed, childhood sexual abuse may be associated with more proximal sexual coercion victimization, such as in earlier romantic relationships, whereas current sexual coercion victimization may be better predicted by previous sexual coercion.

Few studies have examined childhood sexual abuse as a risk factor for male victimization. King and Woollett (1997) found that more than one half (60%) of the male respondents who reported experiencing sexual coercion as adults had also been sexually victimized during childhood. In another study of males in the general population, King, Coxell, and Mezey (2000) found that 3% of the men in their sample had experienced sexual assault as an adult, and almost one half of the perpetrators were women. Results also indicated that childhood sexual abuse increased by four times the men's likelihood of being sexually assaulted as adults, and that younger rather than older men were more likely to report being victims of sexual assault (King et al., 2000). Socially and empirically, male victims of childhood sexual abuse have often been considered to be at greater risk for perpetrating sexual coercion (Thomas & Fremouw, 2009). A study by Senn, Desmarais, Verberg, and Wood (2000) found that men with a history of sexual victimization had a greater chance of being sexually coercive as adults. However, in another study of risk factors for male sexual coercion, a history of childhood sexual abuse did not predict perpetration of coercion as an adult (Carr & VanDeusen, 2004).

Sexual Coercion in Previous Relationships

Numerous theories have been proposed to explain the phenomenon of sexual coercion, and more specifically to predict revictimization and perpetration. The social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) posits that people may learn how to behave in various situations by observing the behaviors of others and the associated consequences. Learning can also be achieved through direct experiences. For instance, a victim of sexual coercion may learn that using coercive tactics will help in obtaining sexual activities from others, or that coercion victimization is part of the "normal" sexual script. Likewise, perpetrators of sexual coercion may learn that sexual coercion tactics help them obtain sexual activities and, thus, continue such behaviors and become more vulnerable to being victimized through normalization of sexual coercion (Enosh, 2007). Victimization, thus, may teach perpetration, whereas perpetration may desensitize people to sexual coercion and reduce their own personal boundaries.

Previous studies examining sexual coercion revictimization and perpetration have generally focused on female victims and male perpetrators only. In an empirical review, Vézina and Hébert (2007) reported that previous sexual coercion victimization was an important risk factor for subsequent sexual coercion victimization for women. This conclusion was further corroborated by two prospective studies examining female sexual coercion victimization (Rich, Gidycz, Warkentin, Loh, & Weiland, 2005; Turchik, Probst, Irvin, Chau, & Gidycz, 2009). Both studies found that prior sexual coercion victimization in adolescence significantly predicted sexual coercion victimization at follow up. Furthermore, Rich et al. (2005) found that the severity and type of previous sexual coercion tended to be similar to the sexual coercion severity at a two-month follow up. Thus, verbal sexual coercion predicted verbal sexual coercion, and physical sexual coercion predicted physical sexual coercion.

In a longitudinal study examining college men, White and Smith (2004) found that childhood sexual abuse doubled the risk of perpetrating sexual coercion, and that adolescent sexual coercion perpetration increased the men's risk of perpetrating sexual coercion in college by up to four times. Moreover, adolescent sexual coercion perpetration was a significantly better predictor for college sexual coercion in both childhood sexual abuse survivors and non-childhood sexual abuse victims. This suggests that previous sexual coercion experiences may be important risk factors for current sexual coercion experiences independent of childhood sexual abuse histories, thus providing a possible explanation for the inconsistent associations to date. Furthermore, examining prior sexual coercion may also provide an opportunity to investigate the course of sexual coercion and whether it is specific to certain partners or whether it develops into a consistent behavior pattern within all romantic relationships.

This Study

In summary, although some studies have established relations between childhood sexual abuse and sexual coercion victimization or perpetration, inconsistencies remain. This can be attributed in part to the diversity in definitions of childhood sexual abuse used, as well as the varying time frames for measuring sexual coercion. Moreover, the lack of studies examining both women and men as victims and perpetrators of sexual coercion in relationships precludes gaining a broader understanding of sexual abuse as a risk factor for sexual coercion within relationships.

The goal of this study was to examine the roles of childhood sexual abuse, sexual coercion experiences in previous relationships, and sexual motivation in the occurrence of sexual coercion within intact mixed-sex

couples. It was hypothesized that childhood sexual abuse and previous experiences of sexual coercion would increase the likelihood of sexual coercion in current relationships. Furthermore, considering the explanatory value of sexual motives in sexual interactions, we examined whether sexual motives of each participant contributed to the prediction of sexual coercion perpetration and victimization, above and beyond the possible contributions of childhood sexual abuse and previous sexual coercion experiences. More specifically, based on previous studies, it was anticipated that the partner pressure motive would predict sexual coercion victimization, whereas power and stress relief motives would predict sexual coercion perpetration.

Method

Participants and Procedures

Participants were both members of 209 heterosexual couples recruited within a larger study on sexual negotiation. At least one member was a university student, 35 years old or younger. Questionnaire booklets were distributed to undergraduate and graduate students during classes. They were told that the study examined sexual negotiation within couples, and were asked to read and sign a consent form if they chose to participate. Student participants who were currently in a romantic relationship were also encouraged to invite their partners to participate, and were given identical booklets and consent forms for their partners to complete and return by mail. The mean age of our sample was 22.6 years ($SD = 3.52$; range = 18–37) for women and 24.6 years ($SD = 4.46$; range = 18–42) for men. The mean relationship duration was 28 months ($SD = 22.8$; range = 3–108), and 98% of the couples described their relationships as exclusive.

Measures

Demographic data. The demographic questionnaire included general questions on gender of respondent, sexual orientation, age, relationship status, duration of current relationship, age at first sexual intercourse, current and desired frequency of sexual activities, and total number of sexual partners.

Childhood sexual abuse. Two items measured whether participants had ever been victims of unwanted sexual touching or intercourse by an adult or older child, before the age of 14. For the purpose of analyses, the responses were dichotomized to reflect the presence of at least one incident of childhood sexual abuse or its absence.

Sexual motivation. Various dimensions of sexual motives were measured using adaptations of two

measures: the AMORE (Hill & Preston, 1996) and the Sex Motives Scale (SMS; Cooper et al., 1998). Select subscales from both questionnaires were administered to measure different aspects of sexual motivation.

The AMORE is a 62-item self-report questionnaire that was developed within the theoretical framework of dispositional motives. This theory posits that different types of psychological gratification are obtained from sexual interactions with a partner. The AMORE measures eight categories of intrinsic sexual motives: (a) feeling valued by the partner, (b) showing value for one's partner, (c) stress relief, (d) nurturing the partner, (e) feeling powerful, (f) feeling the partner's power, (g) experiencing pleasure, and (h) procreating (Hill & Preston, 1996). Respondents must indicate how true each statement is for them, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*completely true*). The questionnaire is scored using the mean score for each subscale. These subscales have demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity, as well as good reliability (Hill & Preston, 1996; Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

The SMS is a 29-item survey that loads on six types of motives, divided into approach (AP) and avoidance (AV) motives, as well as categorized as self-focused (S) or other-focused (O): (a) intimacy (OAP), (b) pleasure (SAP), (c) self-affirmation (SAV), (d) coping (SAV), (e) peer pressure (OAV), and (f) partner pressure (OAV). Respondents must indicate how often they engage in sexual activities because of each of the motives. Possible answers are on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never or almost never*) to 5 (*always or almost always*). The SMS has demonstrated good reliability and validity (Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

The AMORE and SMS subscales have a number of similar and highly correlated subscales (Schachner & Shaver, 2004). For this reason, redundant subscales between the AMORE and the SMS were eliminated. The final measure of motives included only the self-power, partner power, and stress relief subscales from the AMORE ($\alpha = .80-.93$), as well as the SMS approach motives subscale of pleasure and the avoidance motives subscales of self-affirmation and partner pressure ($\alpha = .70-.87$). The AMORE procreation motive was not administered because it was not deemed pertinent to the research goals, and the SMS peer pressure subscale was removed after pilot testing because items were rarely endorsed within this university sample.

One dimension that seemed to be missing from both surveys was imposition, such as having sexual relations out of obligation (Impett & Peplau, 2002; Zweig, Crockett, Sayer, & Vicary, 1999) or because one feels that it is one's duty as a partner in a couple. Because guilt and imposition may be used in sexual coercion, a five-item subscale was created to reflect such avoidant motives. An example of this imposition subscale is, "How often do you have sex because you feel guilty if

you refuse your partner's request?" Factor analysis demonstrated that the five items loaded well on this new imposition subscale and had a Cronbach's alpha of .70.

Sexual coercion victimization and perpetration. The experience of sexual coercion victimization and perpetration was measured using a 16-item gender-neutral version of the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; see Brousseau et al., 2011; Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Poitras & Lavoie, 1995). The SES has been widely used and has demonstrated good psychometric properties (Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Koss et al., 1987; Testa, VanZile-Tamsen, Livingston, & Koss, 2004). The SES measures four types of sexual coercion: (a) unwanted sexual contact, (b) verbal sexual coercion, (c) attempted rape, and (d) rape. The tactics assessed include the use of physical pressure and verbal pressure, as well as taking advantage of the victim's intoxication, to obtain sexual activities or intercourse with an unwilling partner. The SES also includes two items that assess the use of a position of authority as a coercive tactic. For this study, the measure was modified to encompass taking advantage of the victim's dependence on the perpetrator to reflect possible relationship imbalances (i.e., financial dependence) in couples. Examples of items include the following: (a) "Have you ever given in to sex play (fondling, kissing, or petting, but not intercourse) when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by the other person's arguments and pressure?," (b) "Have you ever had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because the other person threatened to leave?," (c) "Have you ever had the other person attempt sexual intercourse (get on top of you, attempt penetration) when you didn't want to by taking advantage of your intoxication, or giving you alcohol or drugs, but intercourse did not occur?," and (d) "Have you ever had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because the other person threatened you or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc.) to make you?" For this study, women and men separately reported whether they had ever experienced or perpetrated behaviors of sexual coercion within past relationships since the age of 14 years old, and within their current relationship. Women and men's victimization and perpetration scores were dichotomized to reflect whether sexual coercion was reported.

Data Analyses

For the purpose of this study, women and men's self-reports were used to assess their sexual coercion victimization and perpetration rates. Frequency analyses were conducted to examine rates of childhood sexual abuse and sexual coercion experiences. Bivariate correlations

were performed to examine the degree of association between variables and to verify for multicollinearity. Finally, hierarchical logistic regressions¹ were performed to investigate the value of sexual motives, childhood sexual abuse, and previous experiences of sexual coercion, as well as reciprocal sexual coercion within a predictive model of sexual coercion victimization and perpetration within current relationships.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

On average, the couples engaged in sexual intercourse once per week (range = once per day–never). The mean age for the men and women's first sexual intercourse experience was 17 years old (*SDs* = 2.36 and 2.19, respectively). Over one third of women and men (33.9 and 37.8%, respectively) reported having had four to 10 sexual partners, whereas almost one fourth of them (24.9% and 23.0%, respectively) reported two to three partners in their lifetime.

Childhood Sexual Abuse and Sexual Coercion Experiences

Analyses of frequencies showed that 18% (37) of the women reported experiencing childhood sexual abuse, as opposed to 9.6% (20) of the men. When examining sexual coercion experiences in previous relationships, 62.0% of women and 35.0% of men reported being victims, whereas 20.9% of women and 40.5% of men reported perpetrating sexual coercion. In contrast, 31.1% of women and 19.6% of men reported sexual coercion victimization within their current relationship. Reported perpetration rates in their current relationships were 16.7% and 27.8%, respectively.

In general, victims and perpetrators reported less severe sexual coercion within their current relationship, such as unwanted sexual contact and intercourse due to arguments and verbal pressure, rather than attempted or completed sexual intercourse due to threat or use of physical force (for a detailed description, see Brousseau et al., 2011). Indeed, 30.6% of women and 19.6% of men reported mild sexual coercion victimization, whereas 15.8% of women and 27.8% of men reported mild sexual coercion perpetration. In contrast, <5% of participants reported severe sexual coercion victimization and perpetration (0.5%–4.3%) in their current relationship. Within previous relationships, 57.9% of women and 34.0% of men reported being victims of mild sexual coercion, whereas 23.4% of

women and 4.8% of men reported severe sexually coercive experiences. Past mild and severe sexual coercion perpetration rates were 19.1% and 4.8% for women and 39.7% and 6.2% for men, respectively.

Correlations

Bivariate correlations among the motives, childhood sexual abuse, and the measures of sexual coercion in previous relationships and within the current relationship are presented in Table 1. Self-power and partner power were highly correlated (.64, $p < .000$) with each other, and both correlated positively with perpetration of coercion for both genders. To prevent multicollinearity problems, scores for both power motives were combined into a single power motive score before performing logistic regressions for both men and women. Intercorrelations between demographic variables and the dependent variables were also calculated, but no significant associations were found.

Predictive Models of Sexual Coercion

Hierarchical logistic regressions were performed to investigate whether childhood sexual abuse, previous sexual coercion, and sexual motives would contribute to the prediction of sexual coercion victimization and perpetration in current relationships (Tables 2–5). The regressions were conducted separately for women and men. In each model, four blocks of variables were entered. The first block included childhood sexual abuse, and the second block included sexual coercion victimization and perpetration in previous relationships since the age of 14. Childhood sexual abuse was entered separately from sexual coercion history to identify the possible influence of each different experience. The third block consisted of coexisting sexual coercion within the current relationship; when predicting sexual coercion victimization, perpetration was included as a predictor, and vice versa. This block was added to control for the fact that sexual coercion within relationships can sometimes be reciprocal between partners (Brousseau et al., 2011), and that recent studies have found that perpetration of sexual coercion is predicted by victimization from the partner, and vice versa, for both genders (Enosh, 2007; Harned, 2002; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2009). The fourth block included the sexual motives—stress relief, pleasure, self-affirmation, imposition, partner pressure, and the combined power motives—to examine their predictive value and whether they explained a unique portion of the variance over and above that explained by previous abusive experiences.

Female sexual coercion victimization. A hierarchical logistic regression demonstrated that the first two blocks (childhood sexual abuse and previous sexual coercion) did not significantly contribute to the predictive model

¹Mediation models were tested for both female and male sexual coercion victimization and perpetration to examine whether early coercion experiences mediated the relationship between motives and current coercion experiences. No significant mediation effects were found; therefore, the mediation models are not presented.

Table 1. Correlations between Sexual Motives, Childhood Sexual Abuse, Sexual Coercion Victimization and Perpetration within Past and Current Relationships By Gender

Measure	1. Self Power	2. Partner Power	3. Stress Relief	4. Imposition	5. Partner Pressure	6. Self-Affirmation	7. Pleasure	8. CSA	9. Past SC Victim	10. Past SC Perpetrator	11. Current SC Victim	12. Current SC Perpetrator
1. Self power	—	.58***	.30***	.20**	.11	.41***	.02	.07	.06	.20**	.03	.21**
2. Partner power	.64***	—	.30***	.28***	.17**	.28***	-.04	.02	.05	.16*	.09	.24***
3. Stress relief	.32***	.32***	—	.16*	.14*	.29***	.03	.05	.01	.13	-.02	.13
4. Imposition	.16*	.09	.03	—	.60***	.34***	-.49***	-.02	.03	.13	.35***	.17*
5. Partner pressure	.08	.11	.02	.57***	—	.36***	-.46***	-.02	-.01	.09	.37***	.10
6. Self-affirmation	.42***	.25***	.25***	.44***	.39***	—	.04	.07	.02	.11	.06	.08
7. Pleasure	-.08	-.10	.12	-.19**	-.27***	.01	—	.01	.01	-.10	-.26***	-.23***
8. CSA	.11	.11	.11	.10	.09	.02	-.13	—	.15*	.13	.07	.20**
9. Past SC victim	.09	.18*	.16*	.04	.04	-.02	-.12	.03	—	.35***	-.01	.08
10. Past SC perpetrator	.15*	.18**	.14	.02	.03	.04	.01	-.04	.47**	—	.15*	.24***
11. Current SC victim	.17**	.15*	.13	.29***	.25***	.25***	-.07	-.04	.40***	.12	—	.31***
12. Current SC perpetrator	.21**	.27***	.19**	.20**	.16*	.28***	-.04	.09	.10	.16*	.26***	—

Note. Intercorrelations for female participants are presented above the diagonal, and intercorrelations for male participants are presented below the diagonal. Items 1 to 3 are sexual motivation subscales from the Affective and Motivational Orientation Related to Erotic Arousal Scale, and Items 5 to 7 are from the Sex Motives Scale. Self-power = having sex to feel powerful or in control; partner power = feeling the partner's power; stress relief = coping with distress; imposition = having sex because you feel that it is your duty or obligation; partner pressure = to avoid rejection; self-affirmation = to prove one's self; pleasure = enhancement of pleasure; CSA = childhood sexual abuse; past SC victim = reported sexual coercion victimization in previous relationships since the age of 14; past SC perpetrator = reported perpetration of sexual coercion in previous relationships since the age of 14; current SC victim = reported sexual coercion victimization in the current relationship; current SC perpetrator = reported perpetration of sexual coercion in the current relationship.

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

Table 2. Hierarchical Logistic Regression Predicting Female Sexual Coercion Victimization by Partner

Predictor	β	SE	Odds Ratio	Block			Model			Model Variance
				χ^2	df	Significance	χ^2	df	Significance	
Block 1—Sexual abuse history				0.70	1	.41	0.70	1	.41	.01
CSA	0.33	.39	1.38							
Block 2—Previous SC				4.46	2	.11	5.16	3	.16	.04
CSA	0.29	.40	1.34							
Past SC victimization	-0.34	.35	0.71							
Past SC perpetration	0.83*	.39	2.28							
Block 3—Reciprocal SC				12.31	1	.00	17.47	4	.00	.12
CSA	0.03	.43	1.03							
Past SC victimization	-0.33	.36	0.72							
Past SC perpetration	0.58	.42	1.78							
Current SC perpetration	1.48***	.43	4.38							
Block 4—Sexual motives				38.99	6	.00	56.45	10	.00	.34
CSA	0.30	.50	1.35							
Past SC victimization	-0.41	.40	0.67							
Past SC perpetration	0.69	.49	1.99							
Current SC perpetration	1.76***	.51	5.79							
Stress relief	-0.49*	.24	0.62							
Pleasure	0.41	.36	1.51							
Self-affirmation	-0.56	.33	0.57							
Partner pressure	2.13***	.67	8.40							
Imposition	1.29**	.48	3.62							
Power	-0.22	.26	0.80							

Note. $N = 205$. CSA = childhood sexual abuse; past SC victimization = reported sexual coercion victimization in previous relationships since the age of 14; past SC perpetration = reported perpetration of sexual coercion in previous relationships since the age of 14; current SC perpetration = reported perpetration of sexual coercion in the current relationship; stress relief = coping with distress; pleasure = enhancement of pleasure; self-affirmation = to prove one's self; partner pressure = to avoid rejection; imposition = having sex because you feel that it is your duty or obligation; power = the combined Affective and Motivational Orientation Related to Erotic Arousal Scale subscales of self-power and partner power.

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

of female sexual coercion victimization (see Table 2). Women's perpetration of sexual coercion in their relationship (Block 3) was associated with an increased risk of victimization and accounted for 8% of the variance. At the final step, current perpetration, as well as the motives of partner pressure, imposition, and stress relief independently contributed to the prediction of female sexual coercion victimization. The odds ratios suggest that women's perpetration of sexual coercion in their relationship is associated with an increased risk of female victimization by almost six times. Moreover, imposition and partner pressure motives are associated with an increased risk of victimization, whereas stress relief motives decreased the risk of victimization. Furthermore, adding the sexual motives variables in the block represented a significant contribution and explained an additional 22% of the variance in the predictive models, over and above the other factors.

Female sexual coercion perpetration. The hierarchical logistic regression for female perpetration of sexual coercion demonstrated that all four blocks significantly contributed to the predictive model. Block 1 (childhood sexual abuse) accounted for 6% of the variance, whereas variables relating to sexual coercion in previous relationships (added in Block 2) accounted for 6% of the

variance. Variables regarding coexisting sexual coercion added in Block 3 accounted for 9% of the variance, whereas the final block (sexual motives) accounted for an additional 12% of the variance in female perpetration of sexual coercion (see Table 3). At the final step, childhood sexual abuse and current sexual coercion victimization were significant risk factors for women being sexually coercive. Furthermore, motives of power were associated with an increased risk of perpetration, whereas pleasure motives decreased perpetration.

Male sexual coercion victimization. The hierarchical logistic regression demonstrated that the first block (childhood sexual abuse) did not significantly contribute to the predictive model of male sexual coercion victimization (see Table 4). Previous sexual coercion (Block 2) accounted for 23% of the variance, whereas variables relating to coexisting sexual coercion entered in Block 3 accounted for 9% of the variance. Moreover, the sexual motives (Block 4) explained an additional 14% of the variance in this model, over and above that explained by the other variables. At the final step, previous sexual coercion, current perpetration, as well as the motive of imposition independently contributed to the prediction of male sexual coercion victimization. The odds ratios suggest that sexual coercion victimization in previous

Table 3. Hierarchical Logistic Regression Predicting Female Sexual Coercion Perpetration with Partner

Predictor	β	SE	Odds Ratio	Block			Model			Model Variance
				χ^2	df	Significance	χ^2	df	Significance	
Block 1—Sexual abuse history				6.96	1	.01	6.96	1	.01	.06
CSA	1.19**	.43	3.28							
Block 2—Previous SC				7.53	2	.02	14.48	3	.00	.12
CSA	1.10*	.45	3.00							
Past SC victimization	−0.15	.49	0.86							
Past SC perpetration	1.26**	.47	3.51							
Block 3—Reciprocal SC				12.16	1	.00	26.64	4	.00	.21
CSA	1.08*	.48	2.95							
Past SC victimization	−0.05	.51	0.95							
Past SC perpetration	1.05*	.50	2.87							
Current SC victimization	1.47***	.43	4.35							
Block 4—Sexual motives				16.11	6	.01	42.75	10	.00	.33
CSA	1.14*	.52	3.14							
Past SC victimization	0.04	.54	1.04							
Past SC perpetration	0.72	.55	2.05							
Current SC victimization	1.73***	.52	5.62							
Stress relief	0.34	.28	1.40							
Pleasure	−1.10**	.40	0.33							
Self-affirmation	0.18	.41	1.20							
Partner pressure	−1.03	.75	0.36							
Imposition	−0.35	.54	0.71							
Power	0.69*	.31	2.00							

Note. $N = 205$. CSA = childhood sexual abuse; past SC victimization = reported sexual coercion victimization in previous relationships since the age of 14; past SC perpetration = reported perpetration of sexual coercion in previous relationships since the age of 14; current SC victimization = reported victimization of sexual coercion in the current relationship; stress relief = coping with distress; pleasure = enhancement of pleasure; self-affirmation = to prove one's self; partner pressure = to avoid rejection; imposition = having sex because you feel that it is your duty or obligation; power = the combined Affective and Motivational Orientation Related to Erotic Arousal Scale subscales of self-power and partner power.

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

relationships increased the risk of current male victimization by 20, whereas current perpetration increased it by a factor of three. Perpetration within previous relationships, however, was linked to a reduced risk. Moreover, the imposition sexual motive increased the risk of male sexual coercion victimization, whereas the partner pressure motive was not a significant predictor.

Male sexual coercion perpetration. The predictive model for male perpetration of sexual coercion was significant and accounted for 28% of the variance, with 11% of it explained by the sexual motives (see Table 5). The hierarchical logistic regression demonstrated that childhood sexual abuse in the first block did not significantly contribute to the predictive model of male sexual coercion perpetration. Previous sexual coercion (Block 2) accounted for 6% of the variance, whereas the variable related to coexisting sexual coercion in Block 3 accounted for 10% of the variance. At the final step, previous sexual coercion perpetration, current sexual coercion victimization, and the motive of power independently contributed to the prediction of male sexual coercion perpetration. The odds ratios suggest that perpetration of sexual coercion in previous relationships and current victimization were associated with a greater risk of perpetrating in the current relationship. The

sexual motive of power increased men's risk of behaving coercively, whereas the stress relief motive was not a significant predictor.

Discussion

This study examined four predictive models of sexual coercion within current relationships—namely, female and male victimization and perpetration. The aim of the study was to investigate the role of childhood sexual abuse, sexual coercion histories, and sexual motivation in predicting the occurrence of sexual coercion within mixed-sex relationships. The study provides an important contribution as it focused on individual, as well as relational, risk factors associated with current sexual coercion. Results suggest that, contrary to our hypotheses, childhood sexual abuse was only a significant predictor of female sexual coercion perpetration, whereas previous sexual coercion experiences predicted current sexual coercion for men only. Indeed, current male victimization and perpetration were predicted by similar experiences in previous relationships. Results from this study also suggest that sexual motives are significant predictors of sexual coercion victimization and perpetration for both women and men, and explain a unique portion

Table 4. Hierarchical Logistic Regression Predicting Male Sexual Coercion Victimization by Partner

Predictor	β	SE	Odds Ratio	Block			Model			Model Variance
				χ^2	df	Significance	χ^2	df	Significance	
Block 1—Sexual abuse history				0.20	1	.65	0.20	1	.65	.00
CSA	−0.29	.65	0.75							
Block 2—Previous SC				31.50	2	.00	31.70	3	.00	.23
CSA	−0.48	.70	0.62							
Past SC victimization	2.35***	.48	10.50							
Past SC perpetration	−0.51	.46	0.60							
Block 3—Reciprocal SC				13.80	1	.00	45.50	4	.00	.32
CSA	−0.89	.77	0.41							
Past SC victimization	2.52***	.50	12.37							
Past SC perpetration	−0.81	.49	0.44							
Current SC perpetration	1.59***	.44	4.93							
Block 4—Sexual motives				21.74	6	.00	67.24	10	.00	.46
CSA	−1.60	.94	0.20							
Past SC victimization	2.99***	.61	19.90							
Past SC perpetration	−1.12*	.55	0.33							
Current SC perpetration	1.19*	.51	3.30							
Stress relief	0.17	.27	1.18							
Pleasure	−0.03	.40	0.97							
Self-affirmation	0.47	.35	1.60							
Partner pressure	0.64	.67	1.89							
Imposition	1.02*	.48	2.78							
Power	0.10	.34	1.11							

Note. $N = 204$. CSA = childhood sexual abuse; past SC victimization = reported sexual coercion victimization in previous relationships since the age of 14; past SC perpetration = reported perpetration of sexual coercion in previous relationships since the age of 14; current SC perpetration = reported perpetration of sexual coercion in the current relationship; stress relief = coping with distress; pleasure = enhancement of pleasure; self-affirmation = to prove one's self; partner pressure = to avoid rejection; imposition = having sex because you feel that it is your duty or obligation; power = the combined Affective and Motivational Orientation Related to Erotic Arousal Scale subscales of self-power and partner power.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

of the variance over and above childhood sexual abuse and antecedents of sexual coercion factors. Indeed, the power motives were significant predictors of perpetration, and imposition was a significant predictor of sexual coercion victimization for both genders. Partner pressure, however, was only a significant predictor for female sexual coercion victimization, and stress relief was not a significant predictor of sexual coercion perpetration.

Predictive Models of Sexual Coercion within Current Relationships

All predictive models in this study were significant, explaining an average of 28% to 46% of the variance in sexual coercion outcomes, which suggests that these variables can be considered as risk factors for current sexual coercion victimization and perpetration within mixed-sex couples. Moreover, sexual motives provided a unique contribution, explaining between 11% to 23% of the variance, over and above childhood sexual abuse and sexual coercion experiences.

The female sexual coercion models presented interesting results regarding victimization, perpetration, and sexual motives. The reported rate of childhood sexual abuse for women (18%) was similar to that found in other studies (Hébert, Tourigny, Cyr, McDuff, & Joly,

2009; Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gómez-Benito, 2009). For women, childhood sexual abuse was associated with an increased risk of perpetrating sexual coercion within current relationships. These findings are consistent with social learning theory in that women victims may come to learn to use sexually coercive behaviors and they may react to experiences of childhood sexual abuse by viewing sexual relationships as adversarial (Anderson, 1996; Krahe, Waizenhöfer, & Möller, 2003). Moreover, consistent with the results of Banyard et al. (2000), childhood sexual abuse was not associated with an increased likelihood of current sexual coercion victimization. Nevertheless, previous studies have found an association (Classen et al., 2005). A possible explanation for the inconsistencies is that more severe childhood sexual abuse may be more predictive of revictimization; however, our limited sample size prevented us from performing analyses based on severity of abuse. In contrast to Banyard et al., previous sexual coercion did not predict sexual coercion experiences in the current relationship. Considering the high prevalence of previous sexual coercion victimization (62.0%) for women, the experience may be too frequent to be of predictive value for current sexual coercion. Indeed, sexual coercion victimization may be less predictable and more “random” for women (Harned, 2002). Nevertheless, current sexual coercion experiences were predicted by coexisting sexual

Table 5. Hierarchical Logistic Regression Predicting Male Sexual Coercion Perpetration with Partner

Variable	β	SE	Odds Ratio	Block			Model			Model Variance
				χ^2	df	Significance	χ^2	df	Significance	
Block 1—Sexual abuse history				1.97	1	.16	1.97	1	.16	0.01
CSA	0.70	.49	2.02							
Block 2—Previous SC				7.59	2	.02	9.56	3	.02	0.07
CSA	0.78	.50	2.18							
Past SC victimization	0.19	.38	1.21							
Past SC perpetration	0.80*	.37	2.22							
Block 3—Reciprocal SC				15.14	1	.00	24.70	4	.00	0.17
CSA	1.00	.52	2.72							
Past SC victimization	−0.53	.45	0.59							
Past SC perpetration	1.04**	.40	2.83							
Current SC victimization	1.70***	.44	5.45							
Block 4—Sexual motives				17.67	6	.01	42.38	10	.00	.28
CSA	0.71	.55	2.03							
Past SC victimization	−0.37	.47	0.69							
Past SC perpetration	0.92*	.42	2.51							
Current SC victimization	1.22*	.49	3.39							
Stress relief	0.28	.22	1.32							
Pleasure	−0.07	.34	0.93							
Self-affirmation	0.48	.28	1.61							
Partner pressure	0.29	.62	1.34							
Imposition	0.04	.42	1.04							
Power	0.53*	.27	1.69							

Note. $N = 201$. CSA = childhood sexual abuse; past SC victimization = reported sexual coercion victimization in previous relationships since the age of 14; past SC perpetration = reported perpetration of sexual coercion in previous relationships since the age of 14; current SC victimization = reported victimization of sexual coercion in the current relationship; stress relief = coping with distress; pleasure = enhancement of pleasure; self-affirmation = to prove one's self; partner pressure = to avoid rejection; imposition = having sex because you feel that it is your duty or obligation; power = the combined Affective and Motivational Orientation Related to Erotic Arousal Scale subscales of self-power and partner power.

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

coercion in the relationship, such that current victimization predicted perpetration, and vice versa. This could imply that sexual coercion may be reciprocal in coercive couples (Brousseau et al., 2011).

Sexual motives, for their part, were significant predictors of current sexual coercion experiences. Having sexual relations because of partner pressure and imposition was associated with an increased risk of sexual coercion victimization for women. In relationships in which the man frequently pressures the woman to have sex, she may be more likely to be motivated to frequently agree to sex in order to reduce the pressure; when she does refuse sex, the man may go further in his attempts to convince her and engage in sexual coercion. Consequently, women may fear greater repercussions or more severe sexual coercion if they refuse sexual advances from their partner. Therefore, avoidant sexual motives are associated with sexual coercion victimization for women. Women experiencing sexual coercion may tend to feel obligated to engage in sexual activities with their partner to avoid conflict or negative consequences. However, their need to please their partner and fulfill their perceived "duty" may put them at greater risk of unwanted sex. This is further reflected in the finding that stress relief motives decreased the risk of sexual coercion victimization. Thus, self-focused and intrinsic motives may

put women in a less submissive role. As for female perpetrators, they were likely to endorse more power and less pleasure motives. These results are contrary to Hill (2003), who found coercive women reported more stress relief motives. However, they are in line with previous findings obtained for men which support the notion that their proclivity to sexual coercion may be related to a drive to fulfill their need for control in sexual interactions (Hill, 2003).

Although the rate of childhood sexual abuse for men was also similar to that found in other studies (Hébert et al., 2009; Pereda et al., 2009), male childhood sexual abuse was not a significant predictor for sexual coercion victimization or perpetration within the couple. This result is contrary to the findings for women and to findings from other studies (King et al., 2000; King & Woollett, 1997; Schatzel-Murphy, Harris, Knight, & Milburn, 2009; Senn et al., 2000). This may be due to the fact that the rate of reported childhood sexual abuse was too low in this sample. Previous studies have also found that childhood sexual abuse alone is not directly predictive, but rather that the childhood sexual abuse–sexual coercion perpetration and victimization link may be moderated by other variables such as family factors and other types of abuse, as well as the developmental stage of the men (Daigneault, Hébert, & McDuff,

2009; Schatzel-Murphy et al., 2009; Thomas & Fremouw, 2009). Moreover, as with the findings for women, the predictive value of childhood sexual abuse may be more pronounced in cases of more severe childhood sexual abuse.

When examining sexual coercion in previous relationships, men's victimization and perpetration of sexual coercion were associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing the same type of sexual coercion within their current relationship. This finding suggests that men's coercive behavior or victimization tends to repeat itself throughout their relationships. Thus, in line with the theories of social learning and sexual scripts, their sexual coercion experiences may strengthen their sexual scripts, which encourage male sexual experiences and reinforce their sexual behaviors. This is further supported by the finding that male sexual coercion victims were more likely than male non-victims to report having sex because of imposition, or self-imposed obligation, rather than partner pressure, which partly supports our hypotheses for sexual victimization. This seems to substantiate the traditional sexual script theory that men should always be ready and willing to have sex; therefore, being sexually victimized would decrease their perceived self-value as a sexual partner and increase the pressure they place on themselves to prove their masculinity in a sexual manner. Likewise, when examining male perpetration, the full model was similar to the results of Hill (2003) and Zurbriggen (2000) in that the coercive men endorsed more power motives. Thus, coercive men may intrinsically be aroused by controlling their partner during sexual interactions. Within the context of traditional sexual scripts, this behavior may be perceived as congruent with a masculine self-identity. However, similar to results found by Gidycz, Warkentin, and Orchowski (2007), the risk of sexual coercion perpetration was also increased in men who reported sexual coercion perpetration in previous relationships. Within the current relationships, male victimization was also predicted by current perpetration, and vice versa, which suggests that sexual coercion tends to be reciprocal within couples.

In summary, the results suggest that the operation of avoidant motives (i.e., imposition and partner pressure) is associated with an increased risk of victimization for men and women. Previous studies have demonstrated that engaging in sexual activities due to avoidant motives may reduce relationship well-being (Impett et al., 2005), which may further reduce the resisting partners' desire for sexual interactions and possibly increase the initiating partners' use of coercive tactics, thus creating a vicious cycle of sexual coercion. Nevertheless, due to the correlational nature of these data, we cannot infer whether experiences of sexual coercion influenced the avoidant sexual motives or whether avoidant motives possibly create a vulnerability to sexual coercion.

Limitations and Implications

This study involves some limitations that must be taken into account when interpreting the results. First, women and men were not directly compared in the analyses; therefore, no clear conclusions can be drawn about gender differences. Second, the frequency analyses suggest that the women and men tended to experience mild non-physical sexual coercion in their current relationship, rather than severe physical sexual coercion. This is consistent with other studies that have found that the majority of participants report more verbal sexual coercion than physical sexual coercion (Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, & Anderson, 2003; VanderLaan & Vasey, 2009). Findings must be interpreted within this context, bearing in mind that research on intimate partner violence has found that minor coercion can lead to more severe abuse. Therefore, mild sexual coercion needs to be examined not only as a problematic phenomenon *per se*, but also as a possible precursor to more severe intimate partner violence. Likewise, considering that participants were in ongoing relationships, the partners may have more expectations of sexual interactions than newly dating partners (Enosh, 2007), and partners who resist sexual overtures may have been less direct in refusing sexual advances to maintain the integrity of the relationship. Consequently, sexual negotiation in established relationships may be prone to miscommunication.

Another limitation of this study is that the measure of past sexual coercion examined sexual coercion in previous relationships, rather than consider all sexual coercion experiences since the age of 14. As such, participants may not have reported all significant sexually coercive experiences that they may have experienced or perpetrated with strangers or acquaintances.

Moreover, considering the number of factors included in the models, the sample size was relatively small. Ideally, these models should be retested with a larger sample size and possibly using strategies such as structural equation modeling, which can better identify the associations between the factors. We chose to include couples in which at least one partner was 35 years old or younger to obtain a more diverse sample. Consequently, recruiting partners enabled us to have access to respondents who were not university students. This may be a limitation for comparison purposes, but it was also a strength in that it allowed for more generalization to a broader span of younger couples.

Nevertheless, our findings suggest that sexual coercion is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a number of factors such as childhood sexual abuse, sexual coercion in previous relationships, and sexual motivation. Moreover, the results lend support to the theory of traditional sexual scripts, for both male and female participants. The women experiencing sexual coercion reported more partner pressure and imposition

as their sexual motives than female non-victims. Female sexual coercion perpetrators, on the other hand, reported more sexual motives of power and less motives of pleasure, again demonstrating that female perpetrators may be drawn to sexual interactions with a partner as an opportunity to express power sexually, rather than physical sexual pleasure. Within the sexual script theory, these coercive women may even view their sexual coercion behaviors as a “favor” to their partners (Hill, 2003), regardless of their partners’ willingness. Alternatively, women may behave sexually coercively as a way of trying to connect emotionally with their partners (Schatzel-Murphy et al., 2009). The victimized men, on the other hand, were more motivated by self-imposed sexual obligation, and the male perpetrators reported more motives of power, thus reflecting the stereotypes of females as gatekeepers and males as sexual predators.

Finally, above and beyond previously investigated factors, sexual motivation was a significant predictor of sexual coercion victimization and perpetration within current relationships for both women and men. For the men, only imposition was a significant predictor for sexual coercion victimization, whereas imposition and partner pressure were associated with sexual coercion victimization for the women. This study suggests that male victims may impose sexual pressure on themselves, whereas women victims may tend to have sex because of partner pressure and because of a sense of duty. Indeed, men and women may interpret sexual interactions and experiences differently; thus, a single model for victimization and perpetration of coercion is not sufficient to account for gender specificities. Moreover, these models suggest that previous sexual coercion victimization and perpetration experiences for men are predictive of future sexual coercion victimization and perpetration. Therefore, it seems crucial to develop early intervention initiatives designed for adolescents engaging in their very first romantic relationship. Intervention and prevention programs focusing on sexual motivation and on dismantling sexual stereotypes could help young women and men understand what drives them to have sex and to explore other outlets to fulfill their needs in order to reduce the risk of sexual coercion in their romantic relationships.

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