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Gender Prescriptions and Stereotypes Surrounding Consensually Non-Monogamous Relationships

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Introduction

- Sexuality is a domain in which stereotypes and expectations are particularly pronounced for women and men (Alexander & Fisher, 2003).
- We examined people's perceptions of whether women or men are more "biologically wired" for and likely to suggest engaging in CNM, such as polyamory, swinging, and open relationships.
- In line with the sexual double standard, we hypothesized that people—especially those who have never engaged in CNM—will view men as "best suited" for CNM relative to women.

Methods

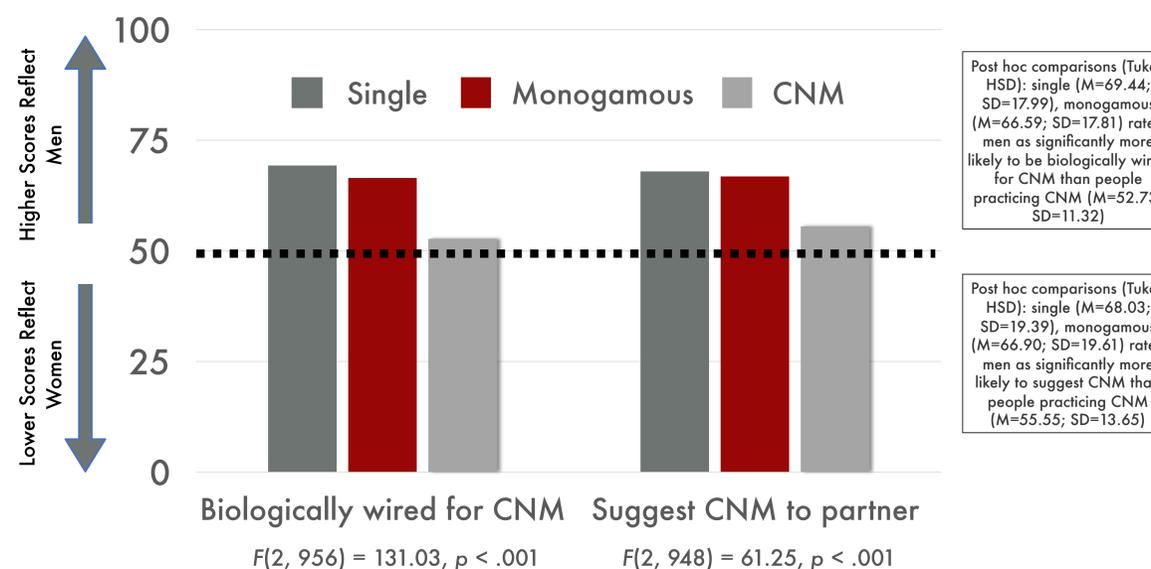
1. 959 participants; 65% women; M = 34 yrs
2. Assessed gendered perceptions of CNM relationships among participants who were single (n=193), in a monogamous relationship (n=217), and in a CNM relationship (n=549).
3. Participants rated the extent to which they believed women or men were naturally inclined to engage in and likely to suggest CNM, including swinging, open relationships, and polyamory.



Take a picture to download the full paper.

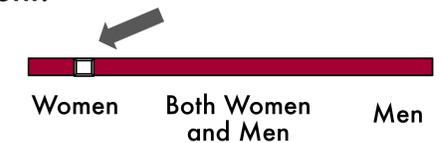
Are women or men stereotyped as "best suited" for consensual non-monogamy? Do attitudes differ based on current relationship status?

"People who are single or monogamous stereotype men as biologically wired for and proactive in suggesting consensual non-monogamy more than women. People in consensually non-monogamous relationships do not hold these stereotypes."



Example Questions

- Who do you think is more likely to suggest or bring up the idea of starting a CNM relationship?
- Who do you think is more naturally inclined (such as biologically wired or has a genetic predisposition) to engage in CNM?
- *Instructions:* The closer you slide the bar toward one group indicates greater agreement.



Results

- Men were perceived as biologically wired for and proactive in suggesting CNM by participants who have never engaged in CNM themselves.
- Participants currently engaging in CNM reported no gender differences.
- Relationship style was the main factor that affected gendered perceptions of CNM.
- This pattern of results was consistent across perceptions of swinging, open, and polyamorous relationships.

Discussion

- This research extends previous findings on gender differences in expectations of sexual behavior (Conley, Moors, Matsick, Ziegler, & Valentine, 2011) in the new context of multi-partnered sexual and romantic relationships.