**Deceiving For and During Sex**

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**Abstract**

Romantic and sexual relationships form an important part of the social landscape. These relationships are however vulnerable to deception, which may occur prior to intercourse (in order to obtain sex) or during sex (for a range of reasons including enhancement of relationship satisfaction). The current chapter details the use of deception to obtain sex e.g., the use of ‘false advertising’ to attract a partner and the use of deception during sex such as pretending to experience orgasm and infidelity. Throughout the chapter, important differences between men and women are highlighted.

Keywords: False Advertising; Infidelity; Online Dating; Orgasm; Sex Differences; Sexting; Deceptive Self-Presentation

**Deceiving For and During Sex**

Romantic and sexual relationships form an important part of the social landscape. They are however, as with all other social relationships, vulnerable to deception. The current chapter outlines the use of deception to obtain sex (i.e., false advertising) and during sex (i.e., pretending to experience orgasm and infidelity), with particular focus on important differences between men and women.

**Deception to Obtain Sex**

***Parental Investment and Sex Differences***

The selection, attraction, and retention of a suitable partner is of fundamental importance. It is perhaps not surprising then that deception is frequently employed to gain advantage (e.g., to appear more attractive and attract a partner that would normally be unobtainable). The type of partner or relationship sought and the consequences of poor decision making are however markedly different for men and women, which as a result influence the level or type of deception employed. Differences reflect the minimum levels of investment required by each sex to produce a healthy child.

Though only one gamete is required for successful conception, sperm are relatively ‘cheap’ to produce and men produce millions of sperm per ejaculate. After conception, men may choose to support women during pregnancy and care for the child after birth or they may choose to make no further investment in the woman or his child. Hence, the *minimum* investment required of men (energy, time) is relatively low. Furthermore, whilst men’s age may exert some impact on the health of the child (Jenkins, Aston, Pflueger, Cairns, & Carrell, 2014), men are capable of producing children from puberty to late adulthood. Men are therefore, physically capable of producing a large number of children. As men may conceive a child during a sexual encounter and then immediately search for another partner, male reproductive output (i.e., the number of children produced) is to a large degree restricted by his access to willing fertile partners rather than his capacity to conceive them.

In contrast to the aforementioned paternal investment, the minimum maternal investment is much greater. Women produce only one gamete (ovum) per month, and likelihood of conceptualisation varies across the monthly menstrual cycle. If conception does occur, women experience a nine month energy intensive pregnancy, followed by an extended period of lactation. Hence, one sexual encounter may result in substantial investment for a number of years. Furthermore, female fertility is restricted across the lifespan. Though women are able to reproduce after puberty, where women exert control over their own reproduction conception is typically delayed. Such delay reflect the risks posed during childbirth to younger mothers and their children (Hendrie, Brewer, Lewis, & Mills, 2014). Menopause prevents conception in later life though women typically end reproduction at an earlier age, reflecting the complications that arise for older women and her children. Hence, women’s reproductive output is restricted and behavior intended to recruit support from partners and increase the wellbeing of each child is more beneficial than behaviour attempting to increase the number of partners or children.

Together, the biological pressures, minimum investment in each child, and potential reproductive output experienced by men and women suggest that each sex should differ with regard to the relationship and partner they prefer. Consequently, each sex should differ with regard to the deception they use in order to obtain sex. The Theory of Parental Investment (Trivers, 1972), asserts that the sex which invests the least in each offspring (i.e., men) should favor short-term relationships whilst the sex with the greatest investment (i.e., women) should prefer long-term committed relationships. This strategy provides men with access to partners able to raise his children and allows women to secure the investment and support which lessens the burden of childcare. In one seminal study investigating relationship preferences, men and women were approached on a college campus and asked a) Would you go out with me tonight? b) Would you come over to my apartment tonight? or c) Would you go to bed with me tonight? Results indicated that approximately half of those questioned (regardless of sex) would agree to the date. Few women would agree to go to the man’s apartment and no women would agree to sexual intercourse. In contrast, men were more likely to agree to go to a woman’s apartment than to agree to a date and were most likely to agree to sexual intercourse, with approximately three quarters of men willing to accept the offer (Clark & Hatfield, 1989). A similar pattern of results has been reported by subsequent studies, despite lower levels of acceptance. For example, Hald and Høgh-Olesen (2010) report that similar numbers of women and men agreed to go on a date. When asked to visit the prospective partner’s apartment 22% of men and 8% of women agreed whilst when presented with a sexual invitation (“Would you go to bed with me?”) 38% of men and 2% of women agreed. Indeed, there is a substantial amount of research indicating that in general, men are more sexually promiscuous and women are more cautious regarding sexual behavior (Fletcher, Kerr, Li, & Valentine, 2014; Schmitt et al. 2003).

Researchers have also established sex differences are also apparent for the type of partner preferred. In particular, men, whose reproductive output is limited by access to fertile women, place a greater importance on the physical attractiveness of a mate (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Kamble, Shackelford, Pham, & Buss, 2014). Those physical features contributing to assessments of physical attractiveness are not arbitrary and reveal important information about the age and fertility of a woman. For example, body shape (and the ‘hour glass’ figure) is commonly discussed with reference to female attractiveness. Prior to puberty, girls and boys display a similar waist-to-hip ratio. At puberty, estrogen and testosterone stimulate the accumulation of fat in sex-specific areas. Therefore, women typically display a lower waist-to-hip ratio (approximately 0.67-0.80) than men (approximately 0.85-0.95). Female ratios do however increase after childbirth and menopause. Waist-to-hip ratio is also associated with a range of health conditions such as cardiovascular disease and breast cancer, together with likelihood of conception. Hence, waist-to-hip ratio provides important information about women’s age and reproductive status (see Singh, 2002 for a review). Other physical attributes such as levels of body fat (i.e., body mass index) also influence ratings of physical attractiveness and perceived health, although these characteristics may signal different information. For example, body mass index may reveal the ability to endure pregnancy and energy intensive lactation, whilst waist-to-hip ratio indicates youth and fertility.

In contrast, women, whose reproductive output is restricted by the time and energy required to sustain pregnancy, lactation, and child-rearing, place comparatively greater emphasis on the resources held by a mate and their ability to acquire resources (Fales et al. 2016). These resources reduce her vulnerability and increase the likelihood that her children will survive, particularly in harsh environments. Hence, women report a preference for partners that are older, ambitious, and hardworking (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). As men may possess resources but choose not to invest these in a partner or subsequent children, the extent to which he is committed to a woman and her children is also important (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Unsurprisingly, it appears that each sex is aware of the traits and type of relationship preferred by the opposite sex. Furthermore, these preferences influence the manner in which men and women advertise (honestly or otherwise) for romantic and sexual partners.

***Advertisement and False Signalling***

Each sex advertises a range of qualities desired by potential partners, whether consciously or unconsciously. Furthermore, these qualities appear to differ for men and women. For example, dating advertisements posted by men are more likely to describe resources (e.g., possession of a professional job) and seek physical attractiveness (e.g., nice body) in a partner whereas women display the opposite pattern (i.e., describe their own physical attractiveness and seek resources; Alterovitz & Mendelsohn, 2009; Waynforth & Dunbar, 1995). To increase the number of quality of potential mates attracted by the advertisement, men and women may emphasise, exaggerate, or artificially create positive characteristics when advertising themselves to potential partners in order to create a positive impression (Toma & Hancock, 2010). Consistent with the aforementioned differences in partner and relationship preferences, men and women focus on different traits when engaging in deceptive self-presentation. For example, women may conceal or alter their age, which related to female fertility and physical attractiveness, in order increase their access to high quality partners (Pawlowski & Dunbar, 1999). Indeed, women were more likely than men to report that a previous partner had exaggerated their income or ambitions, or had exaggerated their feelings in order to obtain sexual access. In contrast, men were more likely than women to report that they had previously been sexually led on (Haselton, Buss, Oubaid, & Angleitner, 2005).

***False Advertisement Online***

A substantial and increasing number of people advertise online in order to meet social, romantic, or sexual partners (Pew Research Center, 2016). Sites may be focused on the formation of either committed or casual relationships and are often targeted at a particular market (e.g., professionals, single parents, seniors) or shared interests (e.g., sporting activity, political affiliation). Users provide a range of background information (e.g., demographics, personality, physical traits) together with their partner and relationship preferences. Daters typically also display a personal photograph. The nature of online interactions provide ample opportunities for deception. Indeed daters appear aware of this and deception or misrepresentation are perceived disadvantages of online dating (Brym & Lenton, 2001; Rochadiat, Tong, & Novak, 2017). Users may deceive others about the most basic personal information; for example, ‘gender switching’ is one of the most common forms of deception. Whitty (2002) found that 18% of men and 11% of women using online chatrooms reported having lied about their sex. Online users rate this kind of deception as the most distressing, and is particularly of concern for those searching for romantic compared to social chat partners (Stieger, Eichinger, & Honeder, 2009). The distress caused by gender switching may reflect the level of time and other resources that individuals invest into the development of a relationship which ultimately has no future. Alternatively, deceived individuals may experience stigma or a loss of social status if the deception is revealed to other people.

Of course, deception may impact relationship development, as well as its success. For example, if a man or woman meets their online partner in person and find them to be significantly different from their profile, they may terminate the relationship. Hence, online dating based deception may be more subtle. Users may also adopt a strategic approach to deception, altering the information they present (i.e., false advertising) in response to the parameters of the online dating site. For example, users may change their age to ensure that they are not excluded from online searches (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006), and it is difficult for users to identify this form of deception. Research indicates that deception within dating profiles is associated with specific linguistic cues (e.g., singular pronouns, negations), however whilst computer programmes can detect these cues, human judges are unable to (Toma & Hancock, 2012). It is important to note that online daters often report that their own profiles are accurate (Hancock & Toma, 2009), which may reflect the tendency to create online profiles that reflect their ‘ideal self’ rather than their actual self (Ellison, Heino, Gibbs, 2006). Therefore, they may not necessarily view this practice as deceptive.

Individuals who use online dating applications typically present themselves in a manner that appeals to potential partners (Sedgewick, Flath, & Elias, 2017; Ward, 2017). This may include highlighting desirable qualities, concealing undesirable material, or falsely reporting the presence of valued physical or non-physical traits. Men and women appear to enhance different traits, which are targeted at the qualities most sought by potential partners. For example, men are more likely to enhance status whereas women are more likely to emphasise physical appearance (Hitsch, Hortacsu, & Ariely, 2009). This may be an effective strategy for those wishing to increase their online popularity and the number of potential partners available. Indeed, physical appearance and income predict the number of responses women and men receive via online dating sites (Hitsch, Hortacsu, & Ariely, 2009). Appearance-based deception is also influenced by the traits sought by potential partners. For example, when men and women misrepresent their physical appearance, women are more likely to lie about their weight, whereas men are more likely to lie about height (Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008). Indeed, independent raters report that approximately one-third of profile photographs are not accurate, with female photographs viewed as less accurate than male photographs (Hancock & Toma, 2009). Perhaps as a consequence, many online daters believe that people misrepresent their physical appearance (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006) and are most likely to doubt the authenticity of attractive versus unattractive profile photographs (Lo, Hsieh, & Chiu, 2013).

***Detecting Deception***

Both men and women are adapted to both display and detect deception, though important sex differences may occur. In particular, women may be more sensitive than men to the aforementioned dishonest advertising, especially when there are important reproductive consequences (Dimoulas, Wender, Keenan, Gallup, & Goulet, 1998). Consistent with expectations, women report greater distress in response to deception than men (Docan-Morgan & Docan, 2007; Haselton, Buss, Oubaid, & Angleitner, 2005) and expect the opposite sex to engage in deception (Keenan, Gallup, Goulet, & Kularni, 1997). In particular, compared to women in committed romantic relationships, single women are better at detecting men ‘faking good’ i.e., men who use enhanced descriptions of themselves in a manner that might appeal to potential partners (Johnson, Barnacz, Constantino, Triano, Shackelford, & Kennan, 2004).

This form of self-enhancing deception may be more frequently employed by men seeking short-term relationships (Keenan, Gallup, & Falk, 2003). Women detecting this deception may reduce the likelihood that they are left ‘holding the baby’ without the support of a suitable long-term partner. Women may also avoid the reputational damage associated with short-term relationships. Of course the likelihood that women will conceive varies across the menstrual cycle. Therefore the consequences of deception also vary. Women who do not detect false promises of commitment at low levels of fertility may suffer distress or reputational damage; at high levels of fertility women may conceive a child and unwillingly face energy intensive pregnancy and child rearing alone. In consequence, it is not just women’s preferences and sexual behavior which varies across the menstrual cycle; it is also her responses to deception. Commitment scepticism is higher amongst naturally cycling women (i.e., those who do not use hormonal contraceptives) during fertile phases of the menstrual cycle (Peterson, Carmen, & Gehr, 2013)

Sex differences in response to the nature of the deception also reflect sex specific evolutionary pressures and partner preference. Haselton, Buss, Oubaid, and Angleitner (2005) report that women, more so than men, believe that they would be distressed to learn that a romantic partner had exaggerated their income or status, that they had exaggerated their feelings in order to obtain sex, or that a romantic interest had concealed a current relationship with another person. Women are also more likely than men to be distressed by a partner’s lack of interest in a committed romantic relationship following sexual activity (Haselton, et al. 2005). In contrast, men are more likely than women to be distressed if a partner falsely suggests that they are willing to engage in sexual intercourse (Haselton, et al. 2005). Reactions to deception are of course influenced by the type of relationship people wish to develop. For example, men and women who oriented towards short-term relationships are less distressed by commitment deception (i.e., pretending to be more committed that he or she is) than those focused on long-term relationships (Haselton, et al. 2005).

***Sexual History Based Deception***

Those attempting to persuade a person to engage in sexual activity, whether part of an established relationship or not, may attempt to conceal their sexual history. Full disclosure of previous sexual history may threaten the attractiveness of a person and the development of the relationship if their sexual history is perceived negatively. In particular, disclosure may lead to rejection, social stigma, or embarrassment. Hence, many men and women avoid revealing this information. For example, Lucchetti (1999) reports that one third of sexually active students have avoided disclosing their sexual history to at least one partner prior to sexual involvement, whilst Stebleton and Rothenberger (1993) reveal that all men participating in their research had failed to disclose their sexual history to at least one partner. In addition to deceiving partners about the number of previous partners, deception may also occur in relation to the identity of previous partners or previous incidence of infidelity (Williams, 2001). Those who have been unfaithful in previous relationships are more likely to be unfaithful in their current relationship (Adamopoulou, 2013), hence concealing prior infidelity may reduce the suspicion of the current partner. In a similar manner, concealing the identity of previous partners may reduce the likelihood that partners would seek to limit contact with previous mates.

Partners who fail to discuss their prior sexual relationships may experience less intimacy and emotional closeness with current partners. Avoiding the subject may, therefore, be problematic. Hence, men and women may choose to actively lie about their sexual history rather than refuse to discuss the subject (i.e., lie by omission). Approximately one third of those questioned by researchers confess to deceiving partners by lowering the number of previous sexual relationships (Knox, Schacht, Holt, & Turner, 1993), whilst approximately half of those questioned plan to lower the number of previous partners disclosed to future relationship partners (Cochran & Mays, 1990). The impact of these deception may extend beyond the quality of the relationship itself to important health consequences. Desiderato and Crawford (1995) report that 42% of those who had currently or previously had an STD did not tell partners before sexual involvement, and 17% of those who were diagnosed as HIV positive did not inform partners about their status. Therefore, those engaging in unprotected sexual activity may be at substantial risk of infection from deceptive partners.

**Deception During Sexual Activity**

***Pretending Orgasm***

Researchers often focus on the use of deception by men and women wishing to attract a partner. Of course, deception may also occur during the sexual act itself. In particular, though 75-90% of women do not consistently orgasm during sexual activity (Bancroft, Loftus, & Long, 2003) and a substantial minority (5-10%) do not experience orgasm at all (Lloyd, 2005), women often pretend to have experienced orgasm during sexual intercourse. A range of cues (e.g., vocalisations, breathing rate, body movements) may be used to falsely indicate that orgasm has occurred. This form of deception is relatively common. Indeed, Brewer and Hendrie (2011) report that 56% of women vocalise (e.g., scream, moan) when they are not going to orgasm over 70% of the time, and 70% of women do so over 50% of the time.

With regards to the motivation for this deception, research suggests that women frequently pretend to experience orgasm in order to enhance the relationship or reassure their partner. For example, 87% of women report using vocalisations to boost their partner’s self-esteem (Brewer & Hendrie, 2011), whilst 70% report pretending in order to avoid partner distress (Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010). Hence, pretending to experience orgasm may provide the impression of sexual and overall relationship satisfaction. This appears to be a successful strategy as men whose partners appear to frequently orgasm report higher relationship satisfaction (Kaighobadi, Shackelford, & Weekes-Shackelford, 2012). In this manner, falsely pretending to experience orgasm—if the deception is undetected—may strengthen the relationship.

Furthermore, women may pretend to experience orgasm in order to reduce the likelihood that the partner will be unfaithful or end the relationship (Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010). Hence, those pretending to orgasm are also more likely to engage in behaviors intended to enhance the relationship. McCoy, Welling, and Shackelford (2014) found that those who pretend to experience orgasm in order to improve their partner’s sexual experience are more likely to engage in a range of mate retention behaviors (i.e., actions intended to maintain the existing relationship). These include direct mate guarding such as keeping a partner under surveillance (e.g., “Insisted that my partner spend all their free time with me”); intrasexual negative inducements such as acts intended to threaten or manipulate potential rivals (e.g., “Yelled at other men who looked at her”); positive inducements such as providing gifts, favors, or affection (e.g., “Went out of my way to be kind, nice, and caring”); public signals of possession including acts intended to signal ‘possession’ of a partner (e.g., “Bragged about him to other women”); and intersexual negative inducements, referring to acts intended to threaten or manipulate a partner to remain faithful (e.g., “Became jealous when he went out without her”). Furthermore, McCoy, Welling, and Shackelford (2014) discovered that pretending to experience orgasm in order to hide one’s sexual disinterest is related to all forms of mate retention except the public signals of possession. While women often intend to strengthen their romantic relationships (Kaighobadi, Shackelford, & Weekes-Shackelford, 2012), if their partner detects a faked orgasm, relational trust and intimacy may decline, producing negative outcomes for the relationship itself.

Though women are more likely than men to pretend to experience orgasm during sexual intercourse (Thornhill, Gangestad, & Comer, 1995), men also engage in this form of deception. Specifically, 25% of heterosexual men report having pretended to experience orgasm on at least one occasion (Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010). This may involve a range of verbal signals (e.g., moaning, saying that they were close to orgasm) or changing body movement (e.g., increasing strength or speed of thrusting prior to ‘finishing’). Compared to women, men are more likely to change body movements (e.g., thrusts) and less likely to moan or alter their breathing rate (Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010). Similar to women, men may pretend to experience orgasm because they feel that orgasm has taken too long and want the sex to end or wish to avoid hurting their partner’s feelings. They are also more likely to pretend whilst intoxicated or after experiencing orgasm earlier the same day (Muehlenhard & Shippee, 2010). For example, Muehlenhard and Shippee (2010) report that one man explained “One night after a couple hours of heavy drinking I was talking to this girl on my floor and apparently I was hitting on her. One thing led to another and I started sobering up during sex so I faked to make her go away… She is unattractive / annoying [and I] wanted to get her off me…when my senses came about and I took my drunk goggles off” (p. 558). Men may also choose to pretend when they do not want the partner to know that they have not experienced orgasm, which may reflect societal expectations that men should always be prepared for intercourse (Zilbergeld, 1999). For a minority of men, pretending may be used to conceal incidence of premature ejaculation (Steiner, 1981). However, relatively few studies have investigated the use of pretending to experience orgasm by men, and additional research in this area is required.

***Factors Influencing the Likelihood of Pretending to Experience Orgasm***

There is considerable variation with regard to the frequency of pretending to experience orgasms and motivations for this behavior. The status and quality of the sexual relationship itself is particularly important. For example, pretending to experience orgasm is most common amongst single compared to married women (Darling & Davidson, 1986), and more frequent amongst lesbian and bisexual women compared to heterosexual women (Cooper, Conner, & Fauber, 2010). Furthermore, women whose partners are less tolerant and agreeable are most likely to pretend to experience orgasm (Ellsworth & Bailey, 2013). Numerous studies have highlighted the relationship between pretending to experience orgasm and the risk of infidelity. For example, Kaighobadi, Shackelford, and Weekes-Shackelford (2012) report that women at greater perceived risk of a partner’s infidelity are most likely to pretend to experience orgasm. Furthermore, women with a greater number of lifetime sexual partners (Wiederman, 1997) or those who have been or are likely to be unfaithful (Ellsworth & Bailey, 2013) are more likely to engage in this behavior.

Attitudes towards sexual behavior or romantic relationships (not necessarily limited to the current partner) also influence this form of deception. For example, those engaging in sexual behavior for reasons associated with insecurity, or attainment of a goal and emotional or physical reasons are most likely to pretend to experience orgasm (McCoy, Welling, & Shackelford, 2014). Furthermore, reasons for engaging in sexual behavior also influence specific motivations for pretending to experience orgasm. Those pretending to experience orgasm in order to improve their partner’s sexual experience are most likely to be sexually active for insecurity, physical, or emotional reasons, whilst pretending to experience orgasm in order to hide sexual disinterest is associated with sexual activity for insecurity, physical reasons, and goal attainment. Pretending for deception and manipulation is associated with insecurity, emotional, physical reasons, and goal attainment motivations for sexual behavior (McCoy, Welling, & Shackelford, 2014).

In addition, a range of individual differences that are relatively constant over time influence the frequency with which women pretend to experience orgasm or their motivation for doing so. For example, Machiavellianism, characterised by a manipulative interpersonal style and willingness to exploit others, is associated with a range of sexual and relationship behaviors. Previous research reports that women with high levels of Machiavellianism are more likely to pretend to experience orgasm in order to deceive and manipulate their partner (Brewer, Abell, & Lyons, 2016). Highlighting the complexity of the subject and the manner in which the characteristics of a relationship may interact with individual differences, the association between Machiavellianism and pretending orgasm was moderated by relationship length; hence Machiavellianism demonstrated a greater influence on the incidence of pretending orgasm behavior of women in long-term relationships.

***Detection and Consequences***

Previous research indicates that men place considerable importance on their partner’s orgasm (McKibben, Bates, Shackelford, Hafen, & LaMunyon, 2010) and may therefore question partners about their experience or attend to likely orgasm cues (e.g., vocalisations, breathing rate). Despite men’s interest in their partner’s orgasm, detection rates (i.e., the ability to detect when a woman is pretending) appear to be low. Indeed only 55% of men report that they can recognise when their partner is pretending to experience orgasm (Mialon, 2012). Furthermore, men report that their partner pretends to experience orgasm less frequently than their partners report engaging in this behavior (Ellsworth & Bailey, 2013). Though this form of deception is often successful, the consequences can be substantial. Indeed, the reactions of men who become aware that their partners have pretended to experience orgasm are similar to men responding to a partner’s infidelity (e.g., anger, betrayal, Shackelford, Leblanc, & Drass, 2000). Hence, though pretending to experience orgasm is a form of deception frequently performed by women, there is an inherent risk that it may threaten the stability and integrity of the relationship. At present there is a paucity of information assessing women’s responses to a male partner pretending to experience orgasm or responses to this deception in casual relationships.

***Infidelity***

In some circumstances, the sexual act itself may constitute deception. Romantic relationships are typically formed with the expectation of romantic and sexual exclusivity. Infidelity is however widespread. It is most likely to occur when the primary partner does not meet important needs such as sex, intimacy, or companionship (Lewandowski & Ackerman, 2006), and may have a range of negative consequences including anger or violence, feelings of distress and betrayal, and termination of the relationship. Men and women are of course sensitive to this form of deception and though often conceptualised as a ‘dark’ emotion, jealousy serves an important adaptive function. Jealousy is experienced in response to a real or imagined threat to a valued relationship and prompts men and women to respond to that threat. In sexual or romantic relationships, it may promote men and women to engage in mate retention behaviors which may strengthen the existing relationship, deter rivals, or encourage the partner to remain faithful. Factors influencing the type of mate retention behavior selected (e.g., enhancing the relationship or threatening a rival) include the quality or length of the relationship and attractiveness of the self, partner, or rival (e.g., Brewer & Riley, 2009).

Men and women do not differ with regard to the frequency or intensity of jealousy experienced and both men and women respond jealously to emotional (e.g., sharing personal feelings) and sexual (e.g., sexual intercourse with another person) infidelity. Men and women do differ with regards to the threats that elicit jealous behavior, and these differences reflect the specific evolutionary pressures experienced by each sex. Female infidelity places their male partners at risk of cuckoldry (i.e., unknowingly raising another man’s child) resulting in a loss of important time and resources and potentially a loss in social status. Hence, men display greater distress in response to sexual infidelity than to emotional infidelity. Women, as the sex which experiences pregnancy and childbirth, do not face the risk of cuckoldry. The greater threat is posed by dissolution of the romantic relationship and diversion of resources to another woman. Therefore women report greater distress in response to emotional infidelity (e.g., Buss, Larsen, Westen, & Semelroth, 1992; Edlund & Sagarin, 2017).

It is important to note that research in this area has been criticised on both methodological and theoretical grounds. Most commonly, it is criticised for employing hypothetical forced choice scenarios in which participants are asked to imagine that their partner has been emotionally (but not sexually) unfaithful or sexually (but not emotionally) unfaithful and then report the scenario which is most upsetting. It is argued that women assume that men engaging in emotional infidelity would not do so without also being sexually unfaithful. Similarly, it is suggested that men assume women that are sexually unfaithful would not do so without emotional infidelity. Hence, critics of forced choice scenario research argue that men and women report sexual and emotional infidelity to be the most distressing respectively because they believe that the other form of infidelity must also be present. Despite these criticisms, sex differences have been identified using other methodological approaches. For example, Sagarin, Becker, Guadagno, Nicastle, and Millevoi (2003) report similar sex differences in response to sexual and emotional infidelity when using the aforementioned forced choice scenarios and when utilising a continuous response scale (e.g., rating the likely distress on a scale of 1-7). Furthermore, sex differences have been identified in response to actual infidelity. For example, when faced with an unfaithful partner, men are more likely to interrogate their partner about sexual aspects of the relationship whereas women are more likely to ask questions about emotional elements of the relationship. When confronted about their own infidelity men are more likely to deny emotional aspects of the relationship whilst women are more likely to deny a sexual relationship (Kuhle, Smedley, & Schmitt, 2009).

***Sexting***

In other circumstances, it is not the sexual act which constitutes deception but the lack of a sexual act. Sexting, which may be defined as sending sexually explicit text messages, photographs, or videos to another person, is relatively common. For example Delevi and Weisskirch (2013) report that 89% of college students had engaged in sexting. The use of deception within sexting is relatively widespread, with 48% of active sexters reporting having deceived their partner during sexting (Drouin, Tobin, & Wygant, 2014). For example, partners may lie about what they are wearing or doing. Research suggests that deception during sexting is more common amongst women than men (i.e., similar to pretending to experience orgasm during sexual intercourse), with 45% of women and 24% of men reporting that they had lied whilst sexting their partner (Drouin, Tobin, & Wygant, 2014). Consistent with the pretending orgasm research, individuals often deceive in order to improve the partner’s experience though self-serving deception also occurred.

***Conclusion***

To conclude, deception is frequently employed by men and women when trying to obtain sex or during sexual activity. When deceiving to obtain sex, men and women appeal to the type of partner and relationship preferred by potential partners. For example, men may feign relationship commitment. Deception during sex is commonly characterised by pretending to experience orgasm, for example through the use of vocalisations, body movements, or an altered breathing rate. This is most frequent amongst women and is often performed in order to reassure the partner and strengthen the relationship. Though deception for and during sex is relatively common and performed by both men and women, it can lead to conflict, distress, and relationship dissolution.

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