

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Does Attractiveness Influence Condom Use Intentions In Heterosexual Men: An Experimental Study
AUTHORS	Eleftheriou, Anastasia Bullock, Seth; Graham, Cynthia; Stone, Nicole; Ingham, Roger

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Brandon Hill, PhD Center for Interdisciplinary Inquiry and Innovation in Sexual and Reproductive Health, DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, USA
REVIEW RETURNED	19-Jan-2016

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Overall the paper is well-written and very interesting, expanding current understandings of biases in perceptions of STI risk, and adding the factor of condom use intentions among heterosexual men using a social psychological experimental approach. There are a few additional references that would further solidify the literature review and could be added to the Discussion sections with findings that: (1) focus on intuitive risk perception operating via appearance based stereotyping inferences (Schmalzle et al, 2011); (2) indicate that perceived partner attributes such as education, income, number of sexual partners, and partner safety beliefs influenced perceptions of risk (Masaro et al, 2008); and (3) demonstrate that HIV risk assessments of visual stimuli can be made within milliseconds using neurological approach, which would add strength to the current study that participants are capable of making this assessment in a relatively short period of time (Renner et al, 2012).</p> <p>The methods section should include a more detailed "Stimuli selection and procedures" expanding on where the visual stimuli were derived and what their make-up was: Age? Were these younger women's faces? Race/ethnicity of women stimuli? How were they selected (at random)? A table on the overall scores and score of each stimuli may help the reader understand what variability existed within the stimuli (see above-mentioned studies for examples). Also more detail on the Cohn-Kanade database should be included for readers who are unaware of this stimuli bank.</p> <p>The Results tables' layouts are hard to follow and require the reader to constantly look up the symbols assigned, is it possible to include the headers and change the format to landscape so that each column header is described? Also, the "Participant heterogeneity analysis" section is very technical and again relies on finding previously used acronyms "A" and "S". Unless space is an issue each section should remind the reader of the acronym.</p> <p>Subsequent References: Masaro, C.L., Dahinten, V.S., Johnson, J., Ogilvie, G., & Patrick,</p>
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	<p>D.M. (2008). Perceptions of sexual partner safely. <i>Sex Trasm Diseases</i>, 35, 566-571.</p> <p>Renner, B., Schmalzle, R., & Schupp, H.T. (2012). First impressions of HIV risk: It takes only milliseconds to scan a stranger. <i>PLoS One</i>, 7(1), 1-8.</p> <p>Schmalzle, R., Schupp, H.T., Barth, A., & Renner, B. (2011). Implicit and explicit processes in risk perceptions: Neural antecedents of perceived HIV risk. <i>Frontiers in Human Neuroscience</i>, 5(43), 1-10.</p>
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REVIEWER	<p>Robin Milhausen University of Guelph Guelph, Ontario, Canada</p> <p>I have published with one of the co-authors, Cynthia Graham.</p>
REVIEW RETURNED	26-Jan-2016

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>I have reviewed a previous version of this paper for another journal and gave feedback at that time. The authors have made substantial changes to the manuscript in the preparation of this version. My feedback on the current manuscript is as follows:</p> <p>Page 6 - You conduct more analyses than the reader expects given your research questions. I suggest you have a research question about findings related to overall ratings of women and participant heterogeneity to foreshadow these analyses.</p> <p>Page 7 - Sexual history heading – variable seem to include sexual attitudes, experiences, and also history – consider revising heading – “sexuality variables”?</p> <p>Page 9 - N’s rather than percentages reported related to the sexual experience variables. Please include percentages as well.</p> <p>Page 9 – I Appreciated the researchers consideration of whether some men would judge women overall more or less attractive (Ap) - this is a novel inclusion and a strength of the paper.</p> <p>Page 12 - Be explicit – how many variables were included in the mixed linear model at the outset?</p> <p>Page 13 - I’m unclear about the last paragraph before the discussion – the second last sentence says that attraction to risky partners had no influence on condom use intentions –but the last sentence indicates that the extent to which a participant was more willing to have sex with more risky partners was associated with lower condom use intentions – and this sentence is set off with an “In fact,” which leads the reader to think that the second statement will build upon or be similar to the previous. Should another transition clause be used? Or can you be more explicit about how these two findings make sense in relation to eachother?</p> <p>Page 14 – discussion – you indicate that it is somewhat irrational that men who are attracted to riskier women are more likely to intend to use condoms with women they view as safer – perhaps it isn’t irrational but riskier women are considered more exciting, or appealing, and the men are willing to forgo safety for the opportunity to have sex with them. This doesn’t seem entirely irrational to me, but potentially a rational cost and benefit analysis.</p>
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REVIEWER	<p>Devon Hensel IU School of Medicine, USA</p>
REVIEW RETURNED	22-Feb-2016

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This paper explores the relationship between attractive perceived attractiveness, perceived sexual health status and condom use intentions in a heterosexual male population. In general, the manuscript is well written and easy to follow - a number of comments below may further improve the accessibility of this paper to BMJ readership.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The background section would be enhanced with some sentences elucidating the mechanism by which it is hypothesized attractiveness links to behavior. Many studies are cited reinforcing this link, but it is unclear (particularly for those outside this area) why these relationships exist. Further, how might these associations differ by gender? 2. The Pub Med citation provided in the Methods section does not link to anything. 3. Tables would be improved using the actual names - I realize the short hand names are detailed in the manuscript, but it is confusing to have to shift back and forth to understand what is being analyzed. 4. Please provide a lay-friendly description of linear mixed models (e.g. why this approach was chosen, what advantages it provides over other methods, etc.) for readers who may not have a statistical background.
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1 Reviewer Name Brandon Hill, PhD

Overall the paper is well-written and very interesting, expanding current understandings of biases in perceptions of STI risk, and adding the factor of condom use intentions among heterosexual men using a social psychological experimental approach.

- There are a few additional references that would further solidify the literature review and could be added to the Discussion sections with findings that: (1) focus on intuitive risk perception operating via appearance based stereotyping inferences (Schmalzle et al, 2011); (2) indicate that perceived partner attributes such as education, income, number of sexual partners, and partner safety beliefs influenced perceptions of risk (Masaro et al, 2008); and (3) demonstrate that HIV risk assessments of visual stimuli can be made within milliseconds using neurological approach, which would add strength to the current study that participants are capable of making this assessment in a relatively short period of time (Renner et al, 2012).

Response: Thank you for suggesting these relevant papers. We have included discussion of all three studies in the Discussion section.

- The methods section should include a more detailed “Stimuli selection and procedures” expanding on where the visual stimuli were derived and what their make-up was: Age? Were these younger women’s faces? Race/ethnicity of women stimuli? How were they selected (at random)? A table on the overall scores and score of each stimuli may help the reader understand what variability existed within the stimuli (see above-mentioned studies for examples). Also more detail on the Cohn-Kanade database should be included for readers who are unaware of this stimuli bank.

Response: As requested, we have added a new section on ‘Stimuli selection and procedures’ in the Method section that provides additional detail on the Cohn-Kanade database. We have also added a new table (Table 2) containing the mean participant ratings for each of the stimuli.

- The Results tables’ layouts are hard to follow and require the reader to constantly look up the symbols assigned, is it possible to include the headers and change the format to landscape so that each column header is described?

Response: The formatting of all of the tables has been improved and the abbreviations spelled out.

• Also, the “Participant heterogeneity analysis” section is very technical and again relies on finding previously used acronyms “A” and “S”. Unless space is an issue each section should remind the reader of the acronym.

Response: The acronyms in this section are now spelled out.

Subsequent References:

Masaro, C.L., Dahinten, V.S., Johnson, J., Ogilvie, G., & Patrick, D.M. (2008). Perceptions of sexual partner safety. *Sex Transm Diseases*, 35, 566-571.

Renner, B., Schmalzle, R., & Schupp, H.T. (2012). First impressions of HIV risk: It takes only milliseconds to scan a stranger. *PLoS One*, 7(1), 1-8.

Schmalzle, R., Schupp, H.T., Barth, A., & Renner, B. (2011). Implicit and explicit processes in risk perceptions: Neural antecedents of perceived HIV risk. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 5(43), 1-10.

Reviewer: 2 - Robin Milhausen

I have reviewed a previous version of this paper for another journal and gave feedback at that time. The authors have made substantial changes to the manuscript in the preparation of this version. My feedback on the current manuscript is as follows:

Page 6 - You conduct more analyses than the reader expects given your research questions. I suggest you have a research question about findings related to overall ratings of women and participant heterogeneity to foreshadow these analyses.

Response: We have revised the wording of the research questions. Research questions 1 and 3 foreshadow the findings related to overall ratings of women and participant heterogeneity, respectively: “1. Does the perceived attractiveness of a potential sexual partner affect sex and/or condom use intentions?”; “3. Does heterogeneity in the association between perceived sexual health status and perceived attractiveness influence condom use intentions?”

Page 7 - Sexual history heading – variable seem to include sexual attitudes, experiences, and also history – consider revising heading – “sexuality variables”?

Response: Done.

Page 9 - N’s rather than percentages reported related to the sexual experience variables. Please include percentages as well.

Response: Done.

Page 9 – I Appreciated the researchers consideration of whether some men would judge women overall more or less attractive (Ap) - this is a novel inclusion and a strength of the paper.

Response: Thank you.

Page 12 - Be explicit – how many variables were included in the mixed linear model at the outset?

Response: The full list of variables that were included in the mixed linear model is now provided in a footnote on p. 12. If the Editor prefers that this information be added to the main text, we would be happy to do this.

Page 13 - I’m unclear about the last paragraph before the discussion – the second last sentence says that attraction to risky partners had no influence on condom use intentions –but the last sentence indicates that the extent to which a participant was more willing to have sex with more risky partners was associated with lower condom use intentions – and this sentence is set off with an “In fact,” which leads the reader to think that the second statement will build upon or be similar to the previous.

Should another transition clause be used? Or can you be more explicit about how these two findings make sense in relation to each other?

Response: We can see how the previous wording of this paragraph was unclear. We have substantially revised this paragraph (p. 13) and hope that these findings are now clear.

Page 14 – discussion – you indicate that it is somewhat irrational that men who are attracted to riskier women are more likely to intend to use condoms with women they view as safer – perhaps it isn't irrational but riskier women are considered more exciting, or appealing, and the men are willing to forgo safety for the opportunity to have sex with them. This doesn't seem entirely irrational to me, but potentially a rational cost and benefit analysis.

Response: We revised this sentence on p. 14 to read: "This leads to behaviour that appears irrational from the perspective of avoiding infection:..."

Reviewer: 3 - Devon Hensel

This paper explores the relationship between attractive perceived attractiveness, perceived sexual health status and condom use intentions in a heterosexual male population. In general, the manuscript is well written and easy to follow - a number of comments below may further improve the accessibility of this paper to BMJ readership.

1. The background section would be enhanced with some sentences elucidating the mechanism by which it is hypothesized attractiveness links to behavior. Many studies are cited reinforcing this link, but it is unclear (particularly for those outside this area) why these relationships exist. Further, how might these associations differ by gender?

Response: We revised the introduction to include a paragraph about this.

2. The Pub Med citation provided in the Methods section does not link to anything.

Response: We think that this was due to an error that we made with one citation in the Method section. This has now been corrected.

3. Tables would be improved using the actual names - I realize the short hand names are detailed in the manuscript, but it is confusing to have to shift back and forth to understand what is being analyzed.

Response: The formatting of all of the tables has been improved and the abbreviations spelled out.

4. Please provide a lay-friendly description of linear mixed models (e.g. why this approach was chosen, what advantages it provides over other methods, etc.) for readers who may not have a statistical background.

Response: An expanded description of linear mixed models and the advantages these provide has been added to p. 12.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Robin Milhausen University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada I have published with one of the Co-Authors, Cynthia Graham.
REVIEW RETURNED	03-Mar-2016

GENERAL COMMENTS	The authors have addressed my comments, and the comments of the other reviewers, sufficiently from my perspective.
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