

POSTER

SEX DIFFERENCES IN JEALOUSY: A NOVEL APPROACH USING CONTROL SCENARIOS

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ABSTRACT

Evolutionary Psychology posits that sex differences in jealousy stem from distinct adaptive challenges: male's sensitivity to sexual infidelity (paternity uncertainty) and female's sensitivity to emotional infidelity (resource diversion). While studies using Buss et al.'s (1992) scenarios support this theory and have deepened our understanding of these sex differences (e.g., the discovery of important moderators), methodological limitations persist. Specifically, directly comparing sexual and emotional infidelity scenarios conflates both sex-specific evolved mechanisms, preventing their independent evaluation. Therefore, current literature confirms sex differences but cannot assess whether both sexes contribute uniquely to the observed effects. We address this issue by introducing control scenarios targeting cognitive mechanisms linked to welfare tradeoff ratio violations to a quasi-experimental design. Validated hypothetical scenarios of sexual and emotional infidelity plus control scenarios will be rated regarding hypothetical distress alongside sociocultural measures (e.g., attitude towards traditional gender roles). Data analysis focuses on Sex x Scenario-Type interactions, testing whether the differences typically found in literature replicate across comparisons. This study pioneers the use of control scenarios to independently assess the theorized evolved jealousy mechanisms, offering a methodological advance over traditional designs that only directly compare sexual and emotional infidelity. Results might help clarifying whether observed sex differences indeed reflect evolved adaptations in both sexes, while also enabling an assessment of sociocultural influences, refining theoretical debates. By comparing evolutionary and sociocultural predictions, this study aims to explore the interactive dynamics of adaptive and cultural factors in jealousy, contributing to a deeper understanding of human mating psychology.