



Hormonal Birth Control and Women's Short-Term Mating Behaviors

MiMi Farr, Melissa Brillhart, & Sarah E. Hill
Texas Christian University



Background

- The cost of sex is greater for women than men due to their sex cells (Hill, 2019)
- Historically, women have been more restrictive about sexual access and likelihood of engaging in short-term mating than men (Schmitt, 2003)
- However, surveys find women who use hormonal birth control exhibit short-term mating behaviors similar to men (Welling, 2013)
- This suggests that hormonal birth control acts as an environmental intervention that impacts the reproductive costs associated with short-term mating

Hypotheses

- Women who use hormonal birth control will be more likely to say yes to engaging in short-term mating behaviors (e.g., agreeing to have sex with someone they just met, going back to the apartment of someone they just met) than women who are naturally cycling
- Women who use hormonal contraceptives will be statistically similar to men in terms of their willingness to engage in short-term mating behaviors
- Women will be more likely than men to agree to go on a date with someone they just met

Research Question

Does taking hormonal birth control alter women's real-life short-term mating behaviors?



Funding



Method

- 300 participants (150 men, 150 women) will engage in a video call with a confederate
- Participants will engage in friendly conversation with the confederate (e.g., share information about their hobbies, goals after graduation, etc.)
- Participants will then be randomly assigned to being asked if they would go on a date with, go back to an apartment with, or have sex with the confederate
- Participants will then provide demographic (including birth control status) information, mating experience information, and their attractiveness rating of the confederate

Planned Analyses

- Data collection is still ongoing
- Gender as well as hormonal birth control status differences will be analyzed to see their impact on saying yes or no to engaging in short-term mating behaviors

References

- Hill, S. E. (2019). *This is your brain on birth control: The surprising science of women, hormones, and the law of unintended consequences*. Avery, imprint of Penguin Random House, LLC.
- Schmitt, D. P. (2003). Universal sex differences in the desire for sexual variety: Tests from 52 nations, 6 continents, and 13 islands. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(1), 85–104. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.1.85>
- Welling, L. L. M. (2013). Psychobehavioral effects of hormonal contraceptive use. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 11(3), 147470491301100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147470491301100315>