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College Students and Hookup Behavior

Kara L. Yamasaki

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Abstract: College environments have been expected to provide a time of experimentation. This study focuses on college students' involvement in brief sexual encounters which are considered hookups and compares hookup behaviors of seniors and freshmen and males and females at different stages of their undergraduate education. This survey examines hookup behavior in relation to drug and alcohol use, contraception, self-esteem, regret, emotional reactions, and the Problem Behavior Inventory which is a screening device for depression, anxiety, and symptoms of common psychological distress. 105 students were surveyed, 60 were female and 45 were male. 54 participants were seniors and 51 were freshmen. Analyses revealed that few differences exist between freshmen and seniors and males and females in regards to hookup behavior.

Keywords: *hookup, college, young adults, brief sexual encounters, contraception, emotions*

This study will focus on undergraduate college students and their involvement in brief sexual encounters which are considered hookups. Many students move out of their parent's homes for the first time when they enter into college. Being away from the boundaries set by parents allows students to make independent choices that may not have been pertinent under parental supervision. College environments have been known to provide a time of experimenting and exploring for many individuals and are understood to provide the contact and structure for young adults to engage in romantic relationships. In addition to choices about romantic relationships, college environments also provide the ability for young adults to make other choices such as decisions about drugs, alcohol, extra-curricular activities, living situations, and friendships. When looking at the romantic relationships and behaviors of college students, researchers have speculated that there is a trend amongst college students where there is a preference for or a high prevalence of engaging in brief sexual encounters not involving committed romantic relationships.

The samples that have been studied overwhelmingly represent white, traditional aged, heterosexual, freshmen, and oftentimes female college students. Considering that most of the research that has been conducted on hookups involves a predominantly freshmen sample, this

study will attempt to understand hookup behavior amongst seniors in comparison to freshmen in order to understand the ways in which the college experience affects hookup behavior. This study will also attempt to understand hookup behavior amongst males in comparison to females in order to understand if there are gender differences in relation to hookup behavior. Since few studies compare freshmen to seniors, two studies were compared due to their similarities in research questions. A study that was conducted by Paul, McManus, and Hayes (2000) which surveyed 555, predominantly white, heterosexual juniors and seniors in college was compared to a study that was conducted by Fielder and Carey (2010) which surveyed 118 predominantly white freshmen from a different university. When comparing information found by Fielder and Carey (2010) and Paul et al. (2000), the percentage of participants who reported engaging in hookup behaviors in their lifetime differed between the two studies. Fielder and Carey (2010) found that nearly seventy percent of college freshmen reported engaging in hookup behavior that involved genital contact. Paul et al. (2000) found that nearly eighty percent of college juniors and seniors had engaged in hookup behavior. While this difference is not tremendous or conclusive, there is reason to believe that there may be a difference between college freshmen and seniors in the frequency and possibly even the specific behaviors of hookup encounters.

For the purposes of this study, hookups are defined as sexual encounters involving consensual and direct physical contact of the genitals (regardless of whether one or all partners reached climax), including mutual masturbation, manual stimulation, oral sex, and/or penetrative intercourse between two or more individuals that have not engaged sexually with one another in the past and do not expect or plan on having another sexual encounter together in the future. Using this definition of a hookup, this study investigates whether or not there is a difference in hookup behaviors amongst college freshmen and college seniors and males and females. This research is important because it contributes to the research that has been conducted on hookup behaviors amongst college seniors and helps us to understand the differences and similarities of sexual behavior amongst college students who are at different stages of their undergraduate education. This research also attempts to examine more males because females have been over represented in this sample. This research may also help to provide education to reduce the rate of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand hookup behavior amongst college students, one must observe what has already been studied about hookup behavior. This literature review will explain the research that has been conducted on hookups beginning with the different definitions of a hookup. Next, it will be followed with an explanation of how sexual behavior has been measured; the prevalence of hookup behavior; gender differences and similarities; alcohol use; condom use and contraceptive use; and emotional reactions, self esteem, and depression in relation to hookup behavior. Each group of researchers that have conducted studies on hookup behavior have attempted to understand very different aspects of hookups rather than intensively studying all of the categories listed above. However, all of the research connects and helps to

paint a more precise picture on hookup culture amongst college students.

Definition of Hookup

The most immediate concern when comparing the studies that have been conducted on hookup behavior is the differing operational definitions of a hookup used in each study. Paul, McManus, and Hayes (2000) defined hookups as interactions in which people who do not know one another well get together for a brief and physical sexual encounter without hopes of doing so again. Gute and Eshbaugh (2008b) and Bradshaw, Kahn, and Saville (2010) used Paul et al.'s definition of a hookup in their studies. Owen and Fincham (2010) defined a hookup in their study as people engaging physically with one another without the expectation of another physical engagement between one another. Grello, Welsh, and Harper (2006) defined hookups as relationships that people are involved in that are sexual in nature, non-exclusive, and are not labeled romantic. Fielder and Carey (2010) prefer to use the term "casual partner," which they defined as a person that one engages with sexually without the expectation of the interaction developing into an exclusive romantic relationship. Owen, Fincham, and Moore (2010) defined hookups similarly to Fielder and Carey (2010). Although these definitions all differ in wording, they all represent similar sexually charged behaviors. Despite the specific definitions that the authors used, the mentioning of a term such as hookup or casual sex has the potential to bring personal opinions about what a hookup is that could possibly skew participant's responses to questions while they respond to surveys.

Measuring Sexual Behavior

Another aspect of hookups that has been studied is the type of intimacy that occurs during the encounter. Some researchers conducted their studies on specific sexual behaviors such as genital contact (Grello et al., 2006). Fielder and Carey (2010) measured specific sexual behaviors such as oral sex and vaginal sex as well as more generalized behavior such as penetrative sex and non-penetrative sex. Owen et al. (2010) used the

broader categories of penetrative and non-penetrative sex. Similar categorization was used in other studies (Gute & Eshbaugh, 2008b; Paul et al., 2000) where they used the terms sexual intercourse and no sexual intercourse instead. Another synonymous set of terms used by Owen and Fincham (2010) and Gute and Eshbaugh (2008a) were coital and non-coital. Gute and Eshbaugh (2008a) categorized oral sex as being coital behavior while the studies that use the term sexual intercourse do not. These distinctions and sub categories have proven themselves valuable in what has revealed significant findings.

Prevalence of Hookups

In order to understand whether or not college students have engaged in hookups, the prevalence of hookup behavior must be considered. Bradshaw et al. (2010) found that their respondents reported having twice as many hookups as dates in their lifetime. Fielder and Carey (2010) found that over half of their respondents reported having oral sex, nearly half reported having vaginal sex, and five percent reported having anal sex during a hookup. When these types of sexual behavior were grouped into the category of penetrative sex, over half of the respondents reported engaging in a penetrative sex hookup in their lifetime, nearly forty percent during their first semester, and sixty percent by the time their first semester in college was over. Fielder and Carey (2010) also found that almost half of those who had engaged in a hookup had hooked up with a friend, almost a quarter had hooked up with an acquaintance, and the rest hooked up with strangers, ex-partners, and others. Dodge, Reece, Cole, and Sandfort (2004) who surveyed 899 undergraduate students in the Midwestern United States, found that over twenty percent of their participants were involved in nonexclusive sexual situations. The research makes it clear that a sizable number of college students have engaged in hookup behavior.

Gender

Many studies (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Gute & Eshbaugh, 2008b; Owen & Fincham, 2010; Owen et al., 2010; Paul et al., 2000; Smith and Wessel

2011) had many more female participants than male participants. Bradshaw et al. (2010) surveyed 221 undergraduate students, 150 of whom were female and 71 were men. Gute and Eshbaugh (2008b) surveyed 193 females and 54 males. Owen and Fincham (2010) surveyed 500 undergraduates who were an average of 19 years old, 172 of whom were men and 328 of whom were women. Owen et al. (2010) surveyed 394 participants, 301 of whom were female and 93 of whom were male. Paul et al. (2000) surveyed 555 students, 347 of whom were female and 208 of whom were male. Smith and Wessel (2011) surveyed undergraduate students, 715 of whom were female and 502 of whom were male. Gute and Eshbaugh (2008a), who surveyed 152 sexually active college women, did not include male participants. They were only interested in females' reactions to hookups because they believed that women would have more negative reactions to hookup experiences than men would.

There is a trend of more women than men reporting being involved in romantic and exclusive relationships and more men than women reporting casual sex/hookup partners (Dodge et al., 2004; Owen & Fincham, 2008). Men reported having engaged in oral sex and intercourse more than women did (Gute & Eshbaugh, 2008b; Paul et al., 2000). Bradshaw et al. (2010) found that women were most likely to want a relationship out of the hookup and fear that the hookup would not evolve into a relationship when compared with male participants. More men tended to fear that women would want a relationship after hooking up than women. Grello et al. (2006) found that although more women than men hoped for a romance to evolve out of the hookup, majority of females and males thought that the hookup was just a hookup and nothing more.

Owen and Fincham (2010) found that men and women both tend to show more positive emotions and less negative emotions after engaging in hookup behavior. While both sexes reported overwhelmingly more positive emotions following a hookup, men tended to show more positive emotions than women did, and women

tended to show more negative emotions than men did.

Alcohol

Many significant findings in the various studies on hookups measure the influence of alcohol and other drugs in college students' hookup experiences. Alcohol use was measured in a number of ways, and was grouped with general drug use in some of the studies. Alcohol tended to be a significant variable that was correlated with hookups. Paul et al. (2000) found that alcohol intoxication was most common in hookups involving sex, followed by hookups involving no sex, and was least common in those that did not report having had a hookup. Owen et al. (2010) found similar significant results that more alcohol use was reported in hookups involving penetration compared with hookups that did not involve penetration. Smith and Wessel (2011) found that almost one third of their participants reported drinking alcohol or using drugs before their last time of sexual intercourse. About a quarter of their participants reported never having had sexual intercourse before. Gute and Eshbaugh (2008b) found that alcohol use was reported more in those that reported having had sex once and only once, having had intercourse with someone known for less than 24 hours, and oral sex with someone that was known for less than 24 hours. Grello et al. (2006) found that over half of their participants that had hooked up had consumed alcohol before hooking up. Additionally, over one third of the participants who had hooked up met at a bar or a party. Bradshaw et al. (2010) reported that nearly three quarters of their participants preferred consuming alcohol when hooking up compared to traditional dating. Fielder and Carey (2010) reported more alcohol use in hookups when compared to romances. They also found that alcohol was mentioned more often as a reported motive for hookups and less often for romances. Additionally, they found an average of three drinks consumed before a hookup, with sixty three percent of hookups involving drinking at least one drink before the hookup occurred. Owen and Fincham (2010) mentioned some emotional correlates to people who drink. Those who

reported alcohol use during hooking up had more negative and fewer positive emotional reactions than those who did not use alcohol while hooking up. The research suggests that those who decide to consume alcohol, or perhaps that alcohol alone, influences young adult's choices about their sexual behavior and the reactions they have to it.

Condom usage and other forms of contraception

Condom use is a variable that was discussed in some of the studies. Fielder and Carey (2010) found that condoms were not used in oral sex acts. They also found that condoms were used in sixty seven percent of hookups and seventy four percent of romantic relationships that involved sexual intercourse. Paul et al. (2000) found that condoms were used in over eighty percent of hookups and that other forms of contraception were used in about one quarter of hookups. Dodge et al. (2004) found that those that scored higher in sexual compulsivity were more likely to engage in unprotected sexual behaviors. They found that those that scored high in sexual compulsivity were commonly involved in non-exclusive sexual relationships. Hookups can be synonymous with those who engage in non-exclusive sexual relationships as it was operationalized in the studies conducted by Fielder and Carey (2010) and Grello et al. (2006). Owen and Fincham (2010) noted that condom use tended to be associated with more positive emotions for men than for women in their study. They also noted that condom use tended to be associated with more negative emotions amongst women than men.

Emotional reactions, self esteem, and depression

A number of different emotional reactions can be connected to one's experience of a hookup. Grello et al. (2006) found that men who had hooked up had the fewest depressive symptoms out of their participants. They also found that women who had hooked up experienced the most depressive symptoms out of their participants. Women who had a larger number of total sex partners expressed more depressive symptoms

than women who had a smaller number of total sex partners.

On the other hand, Owen and Fincham (2010) found that women and men both expressed more positive reactions to hookups than negative reactions. Fielder and Carey (2010) found that there was a high level of enjoyment and low level of regret in both hookups and romantic relationships. Even though participants reported high levels of enjoyment for both hookups and romantic relationships, the levels of enjoyment were higher in romantic relationships than in hookups. Similarly, even though participants also reported low levels of regret in both hookups and romantic relationships, the levels of regret were higher in hookups than romantic relationships. Only two percent of those who reported regret in hookup experiences experienced many regrets, while seventy percent reported having few or some regrets. Eshbaugh and Gute (2008a), who surveyed only women, found a significantly higher amount of regret amongst those that had engaged in intercourse with someone once and only once, those that had engaged in intercourse with someone known for less than twenty four hours, and those that had received oral sex from someone known for less than twenty four hours when compared to those that had not engaged in such behaviors. Eshbaugh and Gute (2008a) also found that those who had been with a higher amount of sexual intercourse partners in the last year experienced more regret than those who had had a lower amount of sexual intercourse partners.

In a study conducted by Owen et al. (2010), students were surveyed at two points during a school year. They found that those who reported having more depressive symptoms and loneliness at the first survey time, and then engaged in a hookup before the second survey time reported feeling less depressed and less lonely.

Paul et al. (2000) found that self esteem was higher in participants that had not engaged in hookups than those that had engaged in hookups. There was not a significant difference in self esteem for participants that had engaged in sexual

intercourse during the hookup and those that did not engage in sexual intercourse during hookups.

METHOD

Participants

Only students that were at least 18 years old, were either freshmen or first year students, or were seniors or students that had been in college for over 3 years were allowed to participate. Some freshmen elected to participate based on their involvement in the introductory psychology course at the university which requires students to participate in ongoing research as part of their grade for the introduction to psychology course. Some freshmen and all of the seniors voluntarily took the survey when they were approached on campus.

Materials

This study examines the ways that freshmen and seniors differ in their hookup experiences and behaviors in the form of a survey. Two instruments were used. One survey was a survey that tests a variety of ways that freshmen and seniors differ in their hookup experiences and behaviors. The second was the "Problem Behavior Inventory," or "PBI" that is a screening device for depression, anxiety, and other symptoms of common psychological distress. It is standardized and commercially available through Western Psychological Association. Both surveys took no longer than half an hour for most participants and included questions that involve a range of sample responses such as yes or no questions and checklists of behaviors that one has engaged in. There were Likert-type scale questions to measure emotional and physical reactions to hookup encounters.

Procedure

Participants were given the definition of a hookup at the beginning of the survey. For the purposes of this study, hookups were defined as sexual encounters involving consensual and direct physical contact of the genitals (regardless of whether one or all partners reached climax), including mutual masturbation, manual

stimulation, oral sex, and/or penetrative intercourse between two or more individuals that have not engaged sexually with one another in the past and do not expect or plan on having another sexual encounter together in the future. This definition was visible and accessible throughout the duration of the survey. Some of the differences that were measured were the number of hookups that one engaged in during the previous semester and over the duration of their life, the types of sexual acts that were present during the latest hookup encounter, whether or not a condom or other contraception was used, the emotional and physical reactions to the hookup encounter, whether or not drugs or alcohol were used prior to the hookup, whether or not they had been tested for STIs, whether or not they regretted hooking up, and a measure of self-esteem. There were also questions about relationship status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Data Analysis

After the data were collected, appropriate statistical analyses were conducted to understand the differences and similarities between and amongst freshmen and seniors and between males and females. The analyses were conducted with t-tests when comparing two different groups with one answer responses. The analyses were chi squares when comparing two groups and the checklists that allow for multiple answers. Subgroups formed from the two original groups of freshmen and seniors and males and females. Subgroups include those who have not engaged in a hookup and those who have engaged in a hookup. The group that has engaged in a hookup experience was split into groups as well depending on the type of behavior that was involved in the hookup experience. For example, out of those who have engaged in a hookup, groups formed based on the presence of or lack of penetrative acts during the hookup encounter. Penetrative acts included oral sex acts, vaginal intercourse, and anal intercourse. Of those that have engaged in penetrative acts during the hookup encounter, groups were formed based on the presence of or lack of intercourse. Based on the results of previous studies, distinguishing

between these subgroups may reveal important information. No statistical analyses have been done on any of the subgroups at this point. The groups that have been compared are freshmen to seniors and males to females.

RESULTS

A total of 105 students from a university in the mountain region in the United States participated in this study. Out of the participants, 60 were female and 45 were male. 54 participants were seniors in college and 51 were freshmen in college. Students who qualified as a freshman in credits or were a first year student at a university were considered freshmen for the purposes of this study. Students who qualified as a senior in credits or had attended the university for over three years were considered a senior for this study. The average age reported was 20.5 years old with the freshmen at an average of 18.8 years old and seniors at an average of 22.1 years old. A majority of the participants reported their sexual orientation to be heterosexual (88.6%), 2.9% reported being homosexual, 5.7% report being bisexual, and 2.9% reported other sexual orientations. Participants were not asked to report ethnicity or race in order to further protect their anonymity. A majority (72.4%) of participants reported engaging in a hookup behavior at some point during their life.

Comparisons between Freshmen and Seniors

The first analysis that was conducted was to see what percentage of people had hooked up and whether or not there was a difference between freshmen and seniors in who had hooked up (see Table 1). There were minor differences between Freshmen and Seniors with who had experienced a hookup encounter in that more seniors than freshmen had experienced a hookup. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

Once this information had been collected a subgroup formed so that the rest of the statistical analyses compare only the freshmen that had hooked up to seniors who had hooked up. The next analyses that were conducted were to examine some of the differences between

freshmen who had hooked up and seniors who had hooked up in relation to average number of hookups and the percentage that had been tested for STI's/STD's. The first analysis compared freshmen who had hooked up and seniors who had hooked up to see who had been tested for STI's/STD's (see Table 2). There were major differences between freshmen and seniors. More seniors reported being tested for STI's/STD's than freshmen did. This difference was statistically significant with $p < .05$. The next comparison was made between freshmen who had hooked up and seniors who had hooked up to determine the

average number of hookups that have occurred over the participants' lifetime (see Table 2). Although there were minor differences in average number of lifetime hookups, this difference was not significant. The next analysis compared freshmen and seniors in the average number of hookups that they engaged in during the previous semester (see Table 2). When freshmen who had hooked up were compared to seniors who had also hooked up, freshmen reported engaging in more hookup encounters during the previous semester. This was a significant difference with $p < .05$.

Table 1
Percent of Freshmen and Seniors who Have Engaged in a Hookup

Behavior	Freshmen (n=51)	Seniors (n=54)	Significance Test	p
Hookup	69%	76%	$X^2(1) = .699$	.403

Table 2
Freshmen and Senior Hookup Behaviors

Freshmen and Seniors Who Have Hooked Up and their Behaviors in Relation to Mean Number of Hookups, Mean PBI scores, and Percentage who Have Been Tested for STI's.

Behavior	Freshmen (n=35)	Seniors (n=41)	Significance Test	p
Have Been Tested for STIs	34%	71%	$X^2(2) = 10.095$	.001*
Mean Number of Lifetime Hookups	11.66	8.90	$t(74) = .768$	.445
Mean number of Hookups During Previous Semester	2.83	1.12	$t(74) = 2.234$	.028*
Total Score on PBI	16.31	16.85	$t(74) = -.20$	.84

Analyses were conducted to understand the differences between the specific sexual acts between freshmen who had hooked up and seniors who had hooked up. The first analysis that compared specific sexual behaviors was to see the

difference between freshmen who had hooked up and seniors who had hooked up in relation to the presence of penetrative acts during their most recent hookup (see Table 3). For this study, penetrative acts included oral sex, vaginal

intercourse, and anal intercourse. No significant differences were found. The next statistical analysis that was conducted to compare freshmen and seniors in specific sexual behaviors looked at the presence of vaginal intercourse in their most recent hookup experience (see Table 3). While there were minor differences between freshmen and seniors in that more seniors than freshmen engaged in vaginal intercourse during their most recent hookup, these differences did not reach a significant level. The next analysis that compared freshmen and seniors was conducted to understand whether freshmen or seniors reported experiencing an orgasm during their most recent hookup experience (see Table 3). While minor differences existed between freshmen and seniors in that more seniors experienced an orgasm during their most recent hookup than freshmen, these differences did not approach significance.

The next analysis compared freshmen to seniors in relation to their most recent hookup experience was to see if alcohol intoxication was involved in the hookup (see Table 3). Alcohol intoxication was measured by asking participants if they drank to the point that they were drunk during their most recent hookup. The minor difference between freshmen and seniors and their alcohol use was not significant. A comparison was made between freshmen and seniors regarding the amount of regret that they had in relation to their most recent hookup encounter (see Table 3). The difference was not significant. The mean scores show that freshmen and seniors, on average, do not show much regret in regards to their most recent hookup.

Table 3

Freshmen and Senior Hookup Behaviors: Most Recent Hookup Encounters

Freshmen and Seniors Who Have Hooked Up and their Behaviors During and Reactions to Most Recent Hookup Encounter

Behavior/Reaction	Freshmen (n=35)	Seniors (n=41)	Significance Test	p
Intoxicated During Hookup	40%	39%	$X^2(1) = .008$	.931
Engaged in Penetrative Acts During Hookup	86%	85%	$X^2(1) = .002$	.966
Engaged in Vaginal Intercourse During Hookup	63%	78%	$X^2(1) = 2.11$	.205
Experienced an Orgasm During Hookup	37%	54%	$X^2(1) = 2.073$	.150
Mean Score of Regret In Reaction to Hookup	1.66	1.71	$t(74) = .26$	.79

Differences Between Males and Females

The first analysis that was done to compare males to females was to see if there was a difference when looking at the percentage that had hooked up out of the entire sample (see Table 4).

The percent of males that had hooked up was slightly higher than the percent of females that had hooked up. However, this difference was not significant.

Once this information had been collected a subgroup formed so that the rest of the statistical analyses compare only the males that had hooked up to females who had hooked up. The next analyses that were conducted were to examine some of the differences between males who had hooked up and females who had hooked up in relation to average number of hookups and the percentage that had been tested for STI's/STD's. The next comparison was made between males and females regarding the average number of lifetime hookups that they had engaged in (see Table 5). When comparing the average number of lifetime hookups between males and females that had hooked up there were slight differences in that on average, males had hooked up more times than females. The differences between males and females were not significant. The next comparison was between males and females regarding the average number of Hookups that occurred during the previous semester (see Table 5). This comparison only compared the subgroup of those

that had hooked up. When comparing the average number of hookups during the previous semester between males and females that had hooked up there were some differences in that males had hooked up more times over the previous semester than females. The difference between males and females in regards to the average number of hookups during the previous semester was significant with $p < .05$.

The next comparison that was done between males who have hooked up and females who have hooked up was to see whether there was a difference in who had been tested for STI's/STD's (see Table 5). Females were more likely to have been tested for STI's/STD's than males although this difference was not statistically significant. The next comparison between males and females was in relation to the PBI score (see Table 5). On average, females reported having more problem behaviors than males; however this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 4
Percent of Males and Females who Have Engaged in a Hookup

Behavior	Male (n=45)	Female (n=60)	X ² df=1	p
Hookup	80%	67%	2.287	.130

Table 5 (continued on next page)
Male and Female Hookup Behaviors

Males and Females Who Have Hooked Up and their Behaviors in Relation to Mean Number of Hookups, Mean PBI scores, and Percentage who Have Been Tested for STI's.

Behavior	Male (n=36)	Female (n=40)	Significance Test	p
Have Been Tested for STIs	44%	63%	X ² (1) = 2.486	.115
Mean Number of Lifetime Hookups	11.69	8.80	t(74) = .809	.421
Mean Number of Hookups During Previous Semester	2.72	1.18	t(74) = 74	.047*

Mean Score on PBI	14.36	18.63	$t(74) = -1.66$.11
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The next few comparisons that were made between males and females were to compare specific sexual behavior that occurred during their most recent hookup encounter. The first comparison that was made was to compare males that had hooked up and females that had hooked up to see if there was a difference in who had engaged in penetrative acts during their most recent hookup encounter (Table 6). Penetrative acts included oral sex acts, vaginal intercourse, and anal intercourse. There were minor differences between males and females in that more females reported engaging in penetrative acts during their most recent hookup encounter than males. This difference was not statistically significant. The next comparison that was done was to compare males that had hooked up and females that had hooked up to see whether there was a difference in the percent of people that had had engaged in vaginal intercourse during their most recent hookup encounter (Table 6). More females reported engaging in vaginal intercourse than males did, however this difference was not statistically significant. The last comparison between males and females that was conducted in regards to specific sexual behaviors that occurred during the most recent hookup encounter was to see whether or not there was a difference in the percent of people that had experienced an orgasm (Table 6). More males reported experiencing an orgasm than females did. This difference was statistically significant with $p < .05$.

The next comparison that was done was to compare males and females to see if there was a difference between the two groups in drinking behaviors during their most recent hookup encounter (Table 6). There were slight differences between males and females in that a higher percentage of males tended to drink till they were drunk during their most recent hookup encounter than females. This difference was not statistically significant. The next analysis examined males and females comparing the average amount of regret

that was felt in regards to their most recent hookup encounter (Table 6). The mean scores show that on average, both males and females who have engaged in a hookup encounter do not show regret in regards to their most recent hookup. A comparison was done in order to compare males and females to see if there was a difference between the two groups in regards to emotional reactions to their most recent hookup (Table 6). The mean emotional reaction scores show that on average, more people have positive emotional reactions to hookups compared to negative emotional reactions. The mean scores also show that on average, females reported slightly more positive emotions in relation to their most recent hookup than males do. This difference is not statistically significant. Next, a comparison was done between males and females in relation to physical sensation of their most recent hookup encounter (Table 6). The means show that on average, both males and females enjoy more positive physical sensations than they do negative. The means also show that males tend to experience more positive physical sensations than females. This difference is not significant.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences between freshmen and seniors, and males and females in relation to hookup behavior. Since the research tends to over represent freshmen, this study represents college seniors and compares them to freshmen. This study also represents males and compares them to females. The number of males in this study was very close to the number of females. Many of the studies that have compared males and females have a much larger sample of females in comparison to the males (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Gute & Eshbaugh, 2008b; Owen & Fincham, 2010; Owen et al., 2010; Paul et al., 2000).

Freshmen and Seniors

For the most part, there were very few differences between freshmen and seniors in this study. The differences that were statistically significant were that more seniors than freshmen had been tested for STIs/STDs and that freshmen

had engaged in more hookups during the previous semester than seniors. Even though freshmen had hooked up more during the previous semester than seniors did, the number of lifetime hookups was not statistically different.

Table 6

Male and Female Hookup Behaviors: Most Recent Hookup Encounter

Males and Females Who Have Hooked Up and their Behaviors During and Reactions to Most Recent Hookup Encounter

Behavior/Reaction	Male (n=36)	Female (n=40)	Significance Test	p
Intoxicated During Hookup	47%	32%	X ² (1) = 1.719	.190
Engaged in Penetrative Acts During Hookup	83%	88%	X ² (1) = .266	.747
Engaged in Vaginal Intercourse During Hookup	69%	72%	X ² (1) = .086	.769
Experienced an Orgasm During Hookup	58%	35%	X ² (1) = 4.152	.042*
Mean Regret Score In Reaction To Hookup	1.66	1.7	t(72) = .21	.84
Mean Emotional Reaction to Hookup	2.50	2.35	t(74) = .513	.61
Mean Physical Sensation to Hookup	4.11	3.95	t(74) = .63	.53

There are some possible explanations for why more seniors had been tested for STIs/STDs. One reason could be that cohort differences exist in sex education. Perhaps freshmen had been taught a different type of sex education than seniors and do not know the importance of getting tested for STIs/STDs. Another possible explanation for the reason that more seniors have been tested for

STIs/STDs could be that seniors have gained more knowledge through friends, family, or their own experiences that have shown that STIs/STDs can and do happen.

There are some possible explanations for why freshmen engaged in more hookups during the previous semester than seniors. One reason could

be that the semester that the participants reported on was first semester. This means that this would be the first semester of college that the freshmen had attended. Many universities have a policy that freshmen have to stay on campus during their first year. Perhaps the novelty of the freedom from parental supervision inspired the freshmen to engage in more hookup behavior. If this was the case, the seniors would have been living free from parental supervision for at least three years, and perhaps the novelty and excitement from the freedom had already worn off, possibly resulting in a decrease in the amount of hookups that they engaged in. Another possible explanation to why freshmen reported more hookups during the previous semester than seniors could be that the dorms create an environment which promotes meeting new people, and being able to make connections with a larger amount of people than living off campus does. Since more freshmen live in the dorms than seniors, and more seniors live off campus than freshmen, this environmental difference could possibly support the difference that exists between freshmen and seniors in the number of hookups during the previous semester. Another explanation to why more freshmen reported more hookups during the previous semester than seniors could be that more seniors were involved in serious committed relationships during the previous semester than freshmen. If more seniors were involved in a committed relationship during the previous semester, then there it would be less likely that they engaged in a hookup during the previous semester as well.

Males and Females

There were not many differences between males and females in regards to hookup behavior in this study. The differences that were statistically significant were that more males experienced an orgasm during their most recent hookup than females and that males had hooked up more times during the previous semester than females. Although males had hooked up more times during the previous semester than females, the number of lifetime hookups did not differ between males and females.

There are some possible explanations for why more males experienced an orgasm during their most recent hookup than females. One possible explanation could be that, in general, females have a more difficult time reaching climax than males do. This possible explanation can be partially supported by the lack of differences between males and females in physical enjoyment of their most recent hookup because on average both males and females reported enjoying the physical sensation and emotional reaction to the hookup more than disliking the physical sensation or emotional reaction. This might suggest that the girls that did not achieve orgasm during the hookup were not expecting to experience an orgasm when they engaged in sexual acts and were still able to enjoy themselves. Another possible explanation could be that more females than males could have been performing sexual acts without receiving sexual acts in return.

There are some possible explanations for why males had hooked up more often than females during the previous semester. One possible explanation could be that more females could have been involved in a committed relationship during the previous semester than males which could have made it less likely that they would engage in hookup behaviors. Another possible explanation is that, during the time of the study, more females than males attended the university which the participants attended, meaning that straight females might not have had the potential to run into as many male partners when compared to the males who could have had an abundance of potential female partners.

Similarities rather than Differences

The original purpose of this study was to examine the differences between freshmen and seniors and males and females in relation to hookup behavior. However, very few differences exist within this sample in relation to hookup behavior. This finding is important because it helps us to begin to understand that freshmen and seniors do not differ much when examining their hookup behavior. This helps support the idea that college environments do not necessarily cause

young adults to get wild and experiment with hookups because if this were true, the more time spent in a college environment should result in more hookups. Even though seniors have spent more time in the college environment than freshmen, they have not engaged in more hookups. Another similarity between freshmen and seniors that helps support the idea that college does not cause people to get wild and experiment is that the amount of freshmen that were intoxicated during their most recent hookup was very similar to the amount of seniors that were intoxicated. So if the college environment was responsible for wild experimentation, the seniors should have shown more wild drinking behaviors than freshmen because they have been in the college environment for longer. This was not the case, and helps promote the idea that freshmen and seniors are very similar in their hookup behaviors.

The lack of differences between males and females is important because it goes against the social norms that we expect about specific genders. Our society tends to think that men, more so than women, want to sleep around without being attached to their sexual partners. Since the number of males and females that had hooked up and the number of lifetime hookups that they had engaged in did not statistically differ, this sample goes against the social norms and expectations that are in place for the genders in this society. This research helps to support the idea that males and females might not differ as much as we expect them to in regards to their sexual behaviors, especially casual sexual behaviors such as hookups.

Future Directions for Research

This study prompts the need for further investigation of hookup behavior. Since this study is one of the few that have attempted to look at how hookup behavior changes across the college years, more studies could be done in order to understand this change. Perhaps examining students across all four years of college is necessary to observe the differences and similarities that occur between the different stages

of undergraduate education. Further representing groups that are not only freshmen would contribute to this knowledge. Since almost all of the research on hookups involve a college sample, more studies could be done in order to compare young adults who are in college to those who are not in college. This would help further the knowledge that we have about how the college environment plays a role in hookup behavior.

Since there have been various findings in regards to differences between males and females in hookup behavior, this study helps support the idea that few differences do exist between males and females in regards to hookup behavior. However, the research on these differences is conflicting and therefore requires further investigation.

More research must be done in order to understand people from diverse backgrounds because the current research tends to represent white and heterosexual students. Research on minority groups, and non heterosexual people could help to contribute to the knowledge that is lacking about these particular samples. Since almost all of the research represents a student sample, more research must be done in order to represent all young adults rather than just those who are attending a university.

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