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Spring 5-3-2023

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Recommended Citation

Simon, Valentyna; Kraft, Alex; Moors, Amy; Gesselman, Amanda; and Garcia, Justin, "Reconnecting with Exes and Having Sex with Platonic Roommates During the First Five Months of the COVID - 19 Pandemic" (2023). *Student Scholar Symposium Abstracts and Posters*. 576.

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Reconnecting with Exes and Having Sex with Platonic Roommates During the First Five Months of the COVID-19 Pandemic



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Introduction

- The first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic limited people's interactions as a result of social distancing and stay-at-home orders. This affected people's intimate lives, including declines in sex during this time (Hensel et al., 2020).
- Given these unique circumstances we were interested in if single people were engaging in sex through reaching out to ex partners or roommates during the pandemic.

Hypotheses

- LGBTQ people report higher levels of post-breakup connectedness than heterosexuals; thus, we hypothesized that LGBTQ individuals would report a higher frequency of initiating contact with ex-partners and roommates (Harkless & Fowers, 2005).
- Given that men are expected to be agentic when dating (sexual scripts), we expected that men will reach out to exes more frequently than women (DeLecce & Weisfeld, 2016).

Methods

- We analyzed data from a national sample of single Americans ($N = 4,264$; Mean age = 45.67) as part of The Kinsey Institute's annual Singles in America study. Data was collected in June-August of 2020 when most states issued social distancing guidelines.
- 57.3% identified as women and 42.5% identified as men
 - Women ($N = 2,043$): 92% heterosexual, 3% gay & 5.5% bisexual
 - Men ($N = 1,537$): 83% heterosexual, 14% gay, and 3% bisexual
- Conducted binary logistic regressions to examine the relationships between gender, sexual orientation, re-engagement with ex partners, and engagement in sex with platonic roommates.

Conclusion and Impact

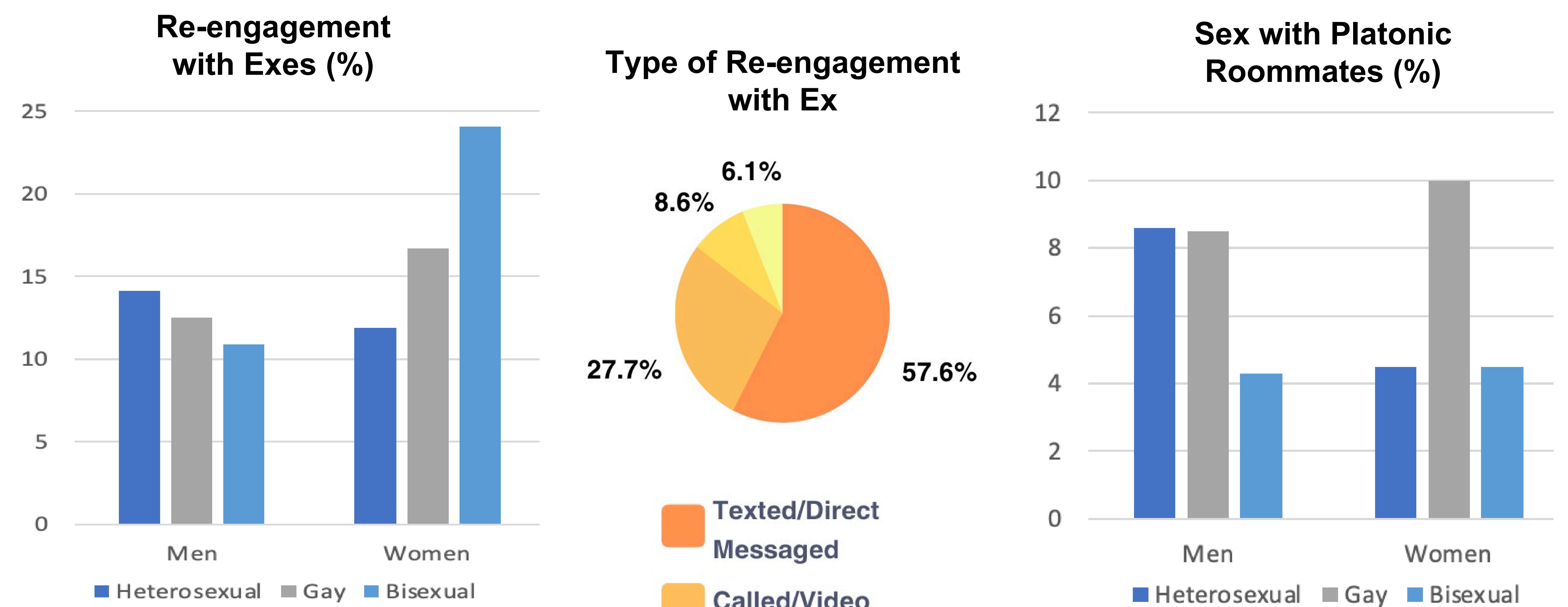
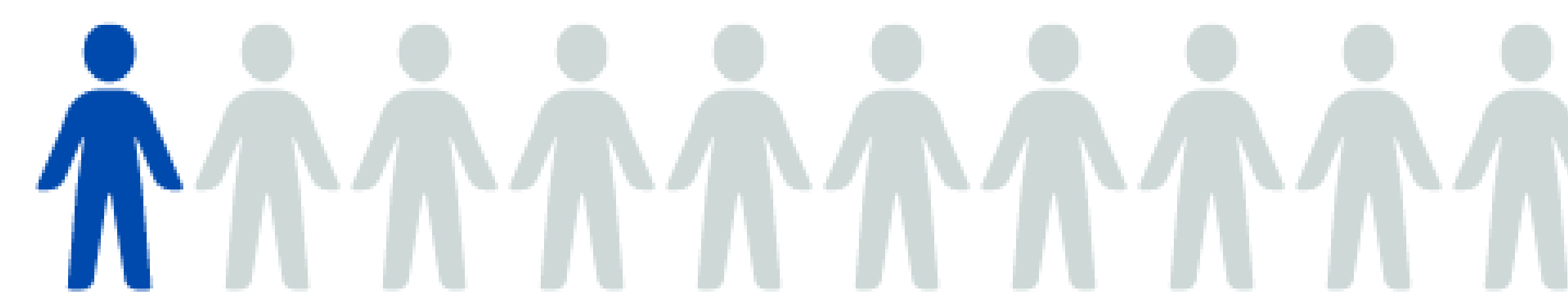
- These findings provide researchers a better understanding of human behavior in a time of mass social isolation.
- This study was able to highlight the connection of LGBTQ individuals with their past partners (specifically bisexual people); future research should examine post-break up experiences among bisexual people.
- To address a limitation of the present study, future research should examine whether various roommate pairings were more likely to have sex compared to others (e.g., same-sex experiences).

During the first 5 months of the COVID-19 pandemic...

1 in 7 single people reached out to their ex to reconnect



1 in 10 single people had sex with their platonic roommate for the first time



Results show that bisexual people were more likely than both heterosexual and gay/lesbian people to initiate re-engagement with an ex during the pandemic, $B = -.87, p < .001$ and $B = -.67, p < .001$, respectively. We did not find any differences in reaching out to an ex based on gender, nor were interaction terms significant.

*Only two people who re-engaged with their ex had sex in-person with their ex.

These results show that men, regardless of sexual orientation, were more likely to report that they had sex with their platonic roommate for the first time compared to women, $B = -.58, p < .001$. We did not find any differences in having sex with a roommate based on people's sexual orientation, nor were interactions terms significant.

Take a picture to download the abstract.

