

Annotated bibliography – sex differences in jealousy



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The evolutionary model of jealousy implies that jealousy responses between men and women evolved to aid them with the different reproductive challenges faced by the two sexes. It states that, when it comes to infidelity, men are concerned with their female partner becoming pregnant by another man and are therefore more likely to feel jealous in response to sexual infidelity cues. Women are more concerned with their male partner diverting emotional and material resources required for raising her children to another woman, making them more likely to feel jealous in response to emotional infidelity cues.

Men's concern with sexual infidelity stems from the fact that a woman's sexual infidelity can result in their raising and devoting resources to another man's child instead of investing their efforts in the future of their own offspring for future generations to carry on their genes. Women can be certain of their maternity, which accounts for the decreased concern with sexual infidelity. They are however, threatened by the thought of having their partner direct resources and attention towards another woman and her offspring, this accounts for the increased concern with respect to emotional infidelity.

Burchell, J. L. , & Ward, J. (2011). Sex drive, attachment style, relationship status and previous infidelity as predictors of sex differences in romantic jealousy. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 51, 657-661. doi: 10. 1016/j. paid. 2011. 06. 002 Men and women have very different views when it comes to infidelity. Men typically rate sexual infidelity as more distressing while women rate emotional infidelity as more distressing. The level of

distress varies depending on level of sex drive, attachment status and previous exposure to sexual infidelity.

This study not only demonstrated that men are more concerned with sexual infidelity and women are more concerned with emotional infidelity, it also showed that relationship status is related to higher emotional jealousy for women. Sex drive, attachment avoidance and being the victim of a past sexual infidelity was shown to be a significant predictor of higher sexual jealousy in both sexes, but with men in particular. Past experience with emotional infidelity was not explored. Harris, C. R, (2000).

Psychophysiological responses to imagined infidelity: The specific innate modular view of jealousy reconsidered. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, (6), 1082-1091. doi: 10. 1037//0022-3514. 78. 6. 1082
Christine Harris investigated physiological evidence for jealousy as a specific innate module (JSIM). The JSIM claims that different adaptive problems in our ancestral history caused men and women to possess different specific innate jealousy mechanisms. Men were shown to show significantly more reactivity while imagining sexual infidelity than while imagining emotional infidelity.

It was also revealed that men are more successful at imagining sexual infidelity than emotional or romantic infidelity. One possibility for this is that the greater response to sexual scenarios is reflective of sexual arousal or sexual interest as opposed to distress. The finding that women who have had a sexual relationship also show greater reactivity to sexual infidelity than they do to emotional infidelity also supports this finding. In sum, the

physiological evidence for the JSIM theory is weak at best. Kuhle, B. X. (2011). Did you have sex with him?

Do you love her? An in vivo test of sex differences in jealous interrogations. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 51, 1044-1047. doi: 10. 1016/j. paid. 2011. 07. 034 The majority of studies exploring sex differences in jealousy with respect to infidelity are completed in a lab setting where participants either recall past experiences with infidelity or imagine they were in a situation where their partner was unfaithful. This study was the first to demonstrate sex differences in actual jealous behavior and the reactions of partners to omissions of infidelity.

The discoveries coincided with previous findings that men are more concerned with sexual infidelity while women are more concerned with emotional infidelity. Upon discovery of infidelity, men were more likely to inquire more about the sexual nature of the relationship while women inquired more about the emotional nature of the relationship. Miller, S. L. & Maner, J. K. (2009). Sex differences in response to sexual versus emotional infidelity: The moderating role of individual differences. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46, 287-291. oi: 10. 1016/j. paid. 2008. 10. 013 Previous studies have shown that men are more upset with sexual infidelity and women are more upset with emotional infidelity, this study examined whether those high in chronic jealousy were more concerned with the occurrence than those low in chronic jealousy. Results of the study coincided with this hypothesis, they showed that sex differences in distress responses to sexual versus emotional infidelity are greater among individuals with high levels of chronic jealousy than those low in chronic jealousy.

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They also indicated that the size of the sex difference depends on the extent to which individuals perceive the threat to be a valid concern. Pietrzak, R. H. , Laird, J. D. , Stevens, D. A. & Thompson, N. S. (2002). Sex differences in human jealousy: A coordinated study of forced-choice, continuous rating-scale, and physiological responses on the same subjects. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 23, 83-94 The majority of studies relating to sex differences in jealousy with respect to infidelity have focused on either written or verbal indications from the participants.

While basing results on these types of responses, this study also focused on the participants' physiological responses while imagining situations of sexual and emotional infidelity. The results of the questionnaire as well as the physiological responses coincided with previous findings that males report greater instances of jealousy towards incidences of sexual infidelity while females are more distressed by incidences of emotional infidelity. Men and women both reported feelings of anger toward infidelity.

Men also reported feelings of rage and betrayal, more so towards instances of sexual infidelity. Women reported feelings of anxiety and fear when exposed to instances of emotional infidelity. Sabini, J. & Silver, M. (2005). Gender and jealousy: Stories of infidelity. *Cognition and Emotion*, 19 (5), 713-727. doi: 10. 1080/02699930441000490 Sabini and Silver chose to examine the evolutionary model of infidelity by exploring reactions to instances of sexual and emotional infidelity in situations where there was a chance of reproduction and also in situations where there was no chance of reproduction.

Further to this, they wanted to address the notion that when a man believes his partner is sexually involved with a partner, he assumes she is also emotionally involved. They separated the emotional component from the sexual component by asking participants to imagine their partner visiting a brothel. Surprisingly the data found little support for the evolutionary model. Results for the imagined emotionless sexual encounter revealed that the use or non-use of birth control had no real effect on either sex.

Perhaps the most surprising result was that females were more distraught than males were at the idea of their partner visiting a brothel. Sagarin, B. J. , Becker, D. V. , Guadagno, R. E. , Nicastle, L. D. & Millevoi, A. (2003). Sex differences (and similarities) in jealousy: The moderating influence of infidelity experience and sexual orientation of the infidelity. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 24, 17-23. While the majority of research on sex differences in jealousy with respect to infidelity has focused on heterosexual relationships, few have explored homosexual relationships.

This study found that when men and women face the possibility of their partner becoming involved with a member of the opposite sex, significant sex differences are displayed. In contrast, when their partners become involved in a same sex relationship, where conception is not a possibility, both men and women report significantly lower levels of jealousy and sex differences virtually disappear. These results support the evolutionary model.