**Supplemental Materials**

Table S1

*Sample Characteristics of Couples Coping with Low Desire*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Women | | Partners | |
|  | *M* (range) or *n* | *SD* or % | *M* (range) or *n* | *SD* or % |
| Characteristic |  |  |  |  |
| Age (years) | 31.03 (19.1 – 57.5) | 7.73 | 32.25 (19.1 – 70.34) | 9.27 |
| Ethnicity |  |  |  |  |
| Asian American/Asian | 9 | 9.4% | 9 | 9.3% |
| Caucasian/White | 69 | 71.9% | 75 | 77.3% |
| Other | 18 | 18.7% | 13 | 13.5% |
| Annual income (household) |  |  |  |  |
| $0—19,999 | 13 | 13.6% | - | - |
| $20,000—39,999 | 16 | 16.7% | - | - |
| $40,000—59,999 | 15 | 15.7% | - | - |
| $60,000—79,999 | 20 | 20.8% | - | - |
| $80,000—99,999 | 11 | 11.5% | - | - |
| ≥ $100,000 | 21 | 21.9% | - | - |
| Relationship status |  |  |  |  |
| Dating | 10 | 10.3% | - | - |
| Cohabitating | 26 | 26.8% | - | - |
| Common-law | 13 | 13.4% | - | - |
| Engaged | 7 | 7.2% | - | - |
| Married | 41 | 42.3% | - | - |
| Relationship duration (months) | 92.03 (7.5 – 419) | 85.25 | - | - |
| Problem duration (months) | 54.65 (3 – 372) | 63.14 | - | - |
| Couple sexual frequency | 1.22 (0 – 4) | .89 | - | - |

*Note*: ‘Other’ includes participants who did not identify with one of the presented categories, as well as all ethnicities representing 5% or less of the sample (i.e., African American/Black, East Indian, Hispanic/Latino/Latina, Middle Eastern/Central Asian, Biracial/Multiracial). Variables that were consistent between partners (i.e., annual income, relationship status, relationship duration, and sexual frequency) are reported in the women’s column and denoted with a dash (-) in the partner’s column. Problem duration is only reported in the women’s column because partner’s responses were not assessed. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to a small amount of missing data.

**Comparison of Couples Coping with Low Desire to Community Couples**

To determine whether there were differences in the strength of the associations between couples coping with low sexual desire and community couples, we compared the sample presented in the main paper (couples in which the woman is coping with clinically low sexual desire) to a sample of community couples.

**Method**

**Community Sample of Couples**

We used an existing sample of community couples who were recruited as part of a larger study through online (e.g., Reddit, Kijiji, Facebook, Craigslist) and physical (e.g., Canadian university campuses, public transportation centers) advertisements in Canada and the United States between February 2018 to July 2018. Eligible couples were 18 years of age or older, currently living together, sexually active in their current relationship, residing in Canada or the United States, able to read and understand English, had daily access to a computer with internet, and both partners agreed to participate. The final sample comprised 119 couples (i.e., all couples included a woman, 112 of the partners were men, 5 were women, and 2 identified as “other”) ranging in age from 20–78 years of age (*M*years = 32.63, *SD*years = 10.17). Couples were in relationships lasting 1.5 to 58.25 years (*M*years = 8.59, *SD*years = 8.45). Participants were ethnically and racially diverse: White (65.4%), Black (4.6%), East Asian (8.4%), South Asian (7.6%), Latin American (4.2%), bi- or multi-ethnic or racial (5.5%), or other (4.2%). Finally, couples were dating (1.3%), living together (29.2%), common-law (13.1%), married (47.9%), engaged (8.1%), or other (i.e., did not specify; .4%).

**Procedure**

Couples were pre-screened for eligibility via e-mail and telephone. Eligible participants received an individualized link to the informed consent form, and once consent was provided, they were instructed to begin the online survey. The survey included the current measures, as well as additional measures not relevant to the current study. Using Qualtrics online survey software, partners were required to complete the survey separately without discussing their responses with each other. After the entire study was completed, online resources for sexuality and relationships were provided to participants. Each partner was compensated up to $8 CAD ($7 USD) for completing the background in-take survey which was used in the current analyses.

**Measures**

**Self-expansion.** The same items were used to assess self-expansion as were used for couples coping with low desire. Women reported a mean of 5.48 (*SD* = 1.17), and their partners reported a mean of 5.61 (*SD* = .96).

**Sexual desire**. The same items were used to assess sexual desire as were used for couples coping with low desire. Women reported a mean of 3.55 (*SD* = .89), and their partners reported a mean of 4.03 (*SD* = .85). In both samples, response options were reverse-scored so that higher scores indicated higher sexual desire in both samples.

**Sexual satisfaction.** The same items were used to assess sexual satisfaction as were used for couples coping with low desire. Women reported a mean of 30.14 (*SD* = 7.16), and their partners reported a mean of 29.67 (*SD* = 7.37).

**Sexual distress.** To have a comparable assessment of sexual distress across samples, in the community sample, we used the following item: “In the past 4 weeks, how often did you feel distressed about your sex life?” Response options range from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). Women reported a mean of 1.17 (*SD* = 1.04), and their partners reported a mean of 1.19 (*SD* = 1.07). In the sample of couples coping with low desire, we used a similar item from the Female Sexual Distress Scale-Revised (Derogatis, Clayton, Lewis-D’Agostino, Wunderlich, & Fu, 2008): “In the past 30 days, how often did you feel distressed about your sex life?” Again, response options range from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). Higher scores for both items indicate higher sexual distress. For couples coping with low desire, women reported a mean of 2.45 (*SD* = .85), and their partners reported a mean of 1.99 (*SD* = 1.00).

**Relationship satisfaction.** To have a comparable assessment of relationship satisfaction across samples, in the community sample, we used one item from the Perceived Relationship Quality Component (“How satisfied are you with your relationship?”; Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000). Response options range from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*). Higher scores indicate higher relationship satisfaction (women: *M* = 6.04, *SD* = 1.00; partners: *M* = 6.10, *SD* = .93). In the sample of couples coping with low desire, we used a similar item from the Couple Satisfaction Index (“In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?”; Funk & Rogge, 2007). Response options range from 0 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*). Higher scores also indicate higher relationship satisfaction (women: *M* = 3.52, *SD* = 1.06; partners: *M* = 3.79, *SD* = .94). Because items were on different scales, items were standardized to enable comparisons of effects between samples.

**Dyadic** **Conflict.** To have a comparable assessment of conflict across samples, in the community sample, we used the following item: “How often do you and your partner argue with each other?” Response options range from 1 (*not very often*) to 9 (*very often*; women: *M* = 3.55, *SD* = 2.20; partners: *M* = 3.60, *SD* = 2.11). In the sample of couples coping with low desire, we used a similar item from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (“How often do you and your partner quarrel [i.e., argue, disagree, conflict]?”; women: *M* = 1.90, *SD* = .78; partners: *M* = 1.78, *SD* = .70; Busby, Christensen, Crane, & Larson, 1995). Response options range from 0 (*all the time*) to 5 (*never*), but they were reverse scored so that higher values indicated more frequent conflict in both samples. Because items were on different scales, we standardized the items to compare effects between samples.

**Affection Frequency.** To have a comparable assessment of affection frequency across samples, in the community sample, we calculated the average of partners’ scores on two items assessing the frequency in which couples kissed and caressed/touched in the past 30 days. Response options range from 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*more than once a day*; couples: *M* = 5.15, *SD* = 1.18). We did not modify the original measure in the sample of couple coping with low desire (Light, Grewen, & Amico, 2005; adapted from Diamond, 2000). However, given that items were on different scales, we standardized the scales to compare effects between samples.

**Analyses**

Statistical analyses were conducted with SPSS version 23.0. “Sample” differentiated the low desire couple vs. the community sample, whereas “Role” differentiated women with low desire/women in the control sample vs. their partner. In the case of same-sex female couples, Role = 1 was assigned to the woman who completed the eligibility screening questions first; Role = 2 was assigned to their partner. Same-sex male couples from the community sample (*N* = 2) were not included in the analyses, and one couple was excluded due to an unreported response for gender (the gender that was reported for one participant was male; thus, we could not code their partner as Role = 1). Data between samples were combined prior to analyses and measures were modified (e.g., we selected the most similar items across studies) in each sample to ensure samples were compared as accurately as possible.

Given that our control sample was not specifically screened for the absence of desire issues, we wanted to first assess whether women in the low desire sample were, in fact, lower in sexual desire than women in the control sample. To test this, we conducted independent-samples t-tests to compare mean scores of sexual desire for women and partners across samples. We repeated these analyses for reports of self-expansion. Then, using multilevel modeling guided by the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006) with mixed models in SPSS where partners were nested within couples, we tested the associations between self-expansion and sexual and relationship well-being outcomes in the combined dataset. We ran distinguishable dyads with separate intercepts for women and partners. Our key goal was to test whether any of the effects were moderated by sample (*couples with low sexual desire* = 1, *community couples* = 0). We probed significant interactions by calculating simple slope effects using dummy codes for each sample (Holmbeck, 2002).

**Results**

**Mean Comparison of Sexual Desire Between Samples**

The means and standard deviations for all study variables are reported separately by role and sample (see Measures section above). Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare sexual desire and self-expansion between couples coping with low sexual desire and the community sample of couples. As expected, women in the low desire sample (*M* = 1.79, *SD* = .70) reported significantly lower sexual desire compared to women in the community sample (*M* = 3.55, *SD* = .89 =, *t*[213.76] = 16.23, *p* < .001). Women with low desire also reported lower self-expansion (*M* = 4.79, *SD* = 1.33) than women in the community sample (*M* = 5.48, *SD* = 1.17, *t*[214] = 4.03, *p* < .001). Compared to partners in the community sample, there were no significant differences in the sexual desire (*M*lowdesire = 3.95; *SD*lowdesire = .89; *M*control = 4.03; *SD*control = .85; *t*[214] = .60, *p* = n.s.) or self-expansion (*M*lowdesire = 5.36; *SD*lowdesire = 1.31; *M*control = 5.61; *SD*control .96 = ; *t*[170.86] = 1.55, *p* = n.s.) for partners of women coping with low desire.

**Moderation by Sample**

In the combined data set (i.e., all participants across samples), all effects that were significant in the original data only consisting of couples with low desire remained significant in the combined data (see Table S2 and Table S3). However, of the original effects found for couples coping with low desire, one effect was moderated by sample (i.e., low desire couples versus community couples). The association between partner’s self-expansion and their conflict was significantly moderated by sample, *b* = -.25, *SE* = .12, *t*(209.43) = -2.11, *p* = .04. For partners of women in the low desire sample, higher self-expansion was associated with lower conflict (*b* = -.28, *SE* = .07, *t*[209.74] = -3.83, *p* < .001). This effect was not significant for partners in the community sample (*b* = -.03, *SE* = .09, *t*[209.24] = -.27, *p* = .79).

Two additional effects that were not originally significant in the sample of couples coping with low desire were moderated by sample. First, the association between women’s self-expansion and their partner’s relationship satisfaction was significantly moderated by sample, *b* = -.21, *SE* = .09, *t*(209.50) = -2.30, *p* = .02. The simple effects revealed that women’s higher self-expansion was significantly associated with a partner’s higher relationship satisfaction for couples in the community sample (*b* = .14, *SE* = .07, *t*[209.18] = 2.05, *p* = .04), but the association was not significant for couples coping with low desire. Second, the association between women’s self-expansion and their partner’s report of conflict was significantly moderated by sample, *b* = .22, *SE* = .11, *t*(210.17) = 2.11, *p* = .04. The simple effects revealed that women’s higher self-expansion was significantly associated with a partner’s report of lower conflict for couples in the community sample (*b* = -.22, *SE* = .08, *t*[209.24] = -2.80, *p* = .01), but this association was not significant for people coping with low desire.

**Discussion and Limitations**

In sum, the results suggest that when couples coping with low desire report higher self-expansion in their relationship, the associations with greater relationship and sexual well-being are similar in magnitude to those reported by community couples. However, the association between partner’s self-expansion and their own conflict was only significant for partners in the low desire sample. This result suggests that self-expansion is as beneficial for couples coping with low sexual desire as for community couples, and if anything, it might help mitigate conflict reported by partners of women coping with low desire.

We would like to point out that the community sample used here was collected as part of another study and not as a specific comparison sample. Therefore, the community sample was not specifically screened for the absence of a sexual dysfunction. Given the high prevalence of sexual dysfunctions in the general population (e.g., Mitchell et al., 2013), this is a limitation for the control sample: it is possible that we might see even larger differences in the associations if we screened for and excluded people with a sexual dysfunction.

Table S2

*Associations Between Self-Expansion and Sexual Well-Being Across Couple Coping with Low Desire and Community Couples (Combined Dataset)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Women’s  sexual  desire | | Partner’s  sexual  desire | | Women’s  sexual  satisfaction | | Partner’s  sexual  satisfaction | | Women’s  sexual  distress | | Partner’s  sexual  distress | |
|  | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* |
| Women’s S-E | .37(.06) | 6.35\*\*\* | .03(.05) | .62 | 2.14(.39) | 5.44\*\*\* | 1.37(.37) | 3.72\*\*\* | -.21(.06) | -3.44\*\* | -.09(.06) | -1.57 |
| Partner’s S-E | .10(.07) | 1.53 | .11(.05) | 2.00\* | 1.08(.45) | 2.39\* | 2.01(.42) | 4.79\*\*\* | -.05(.07) | -.75 | -.30(.06) | -4.70\*\*\* |

*Note*: \**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001. Beta values are unstandardized coefficients. Degrees of freedom ranged from 208.44 to 213.00. S-E = self-expansion.

Table S3

*Associations Between Self-Expansion and Relationship Well-Being Across Couples Coping with Low Desire and Community Couples (Combined Dataset)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Women’s  relationship satisfaction | | Partner’s  relationship satisfaction | | Couple  affection  frequency | | Women’s  conflict | | Partner’s  conflict | |
|  | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* | *b*(SE) | *t* |
| Women’s S-E | .32(.05) | 6.28\*\*\* | .004(.04) | .10 | .22(.05) | 4.39\*\*\* | -.11(.06) | -1.95\* | -.06(.05) | -1.23 |
| Partner’s S-E | .16(.06) | 2.79\*\* | .45(.05) | 9.02\*\*\* | .25(.06) | 4.45\*\*\* | -.09(.06) | -1.40 | -.19(.06) | -3.28\*\* |

*Note*: \**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001. Beta values are unstandardized coefficients. Degrees of freedom ranged from 212.27 to 213.01. S-E = self-expansion.