

Week 1.1: Intro to Relationships Science

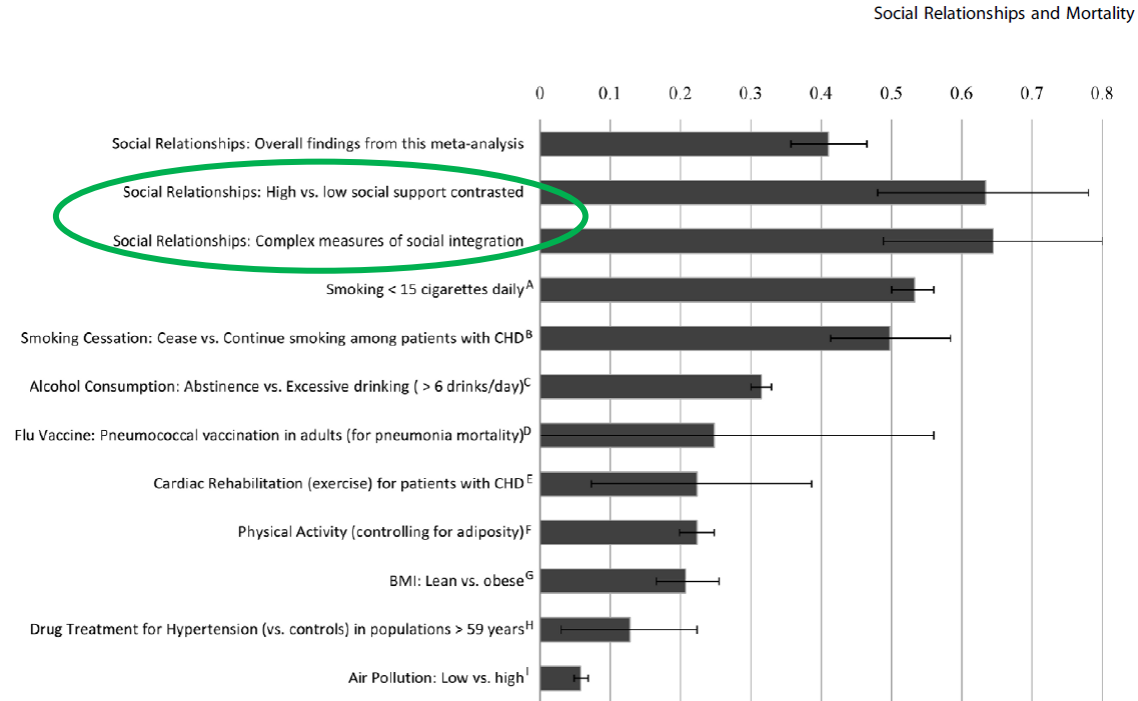
PSY 149: Close Relationships, M20

Outline

- Why is studying close relationships important?
 - Physical well-being (mortality, immune system)
 - Psychological well-being (stress, mental health)
 - How different from lay knowledge

Why are close relationships important?

Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton (2010)



Why are close relationships important?

- How relationships can affect your cold symptoms (Cohen et al., 2003)
 - **Sociability**- # of people and time spent socializing, measured for 2-4 weeks before “virus challenge”
 - Quarantine Day 0: Expose to virus
 - Quarantine Day 1-5: Measured cold symptoms
 - Objective measures: weight of snot (ew)
 - Self-report measures: symptoms experienced (e.g., congestion, runny nose, sneezing) using Jackson measure

Why are close relationships important?

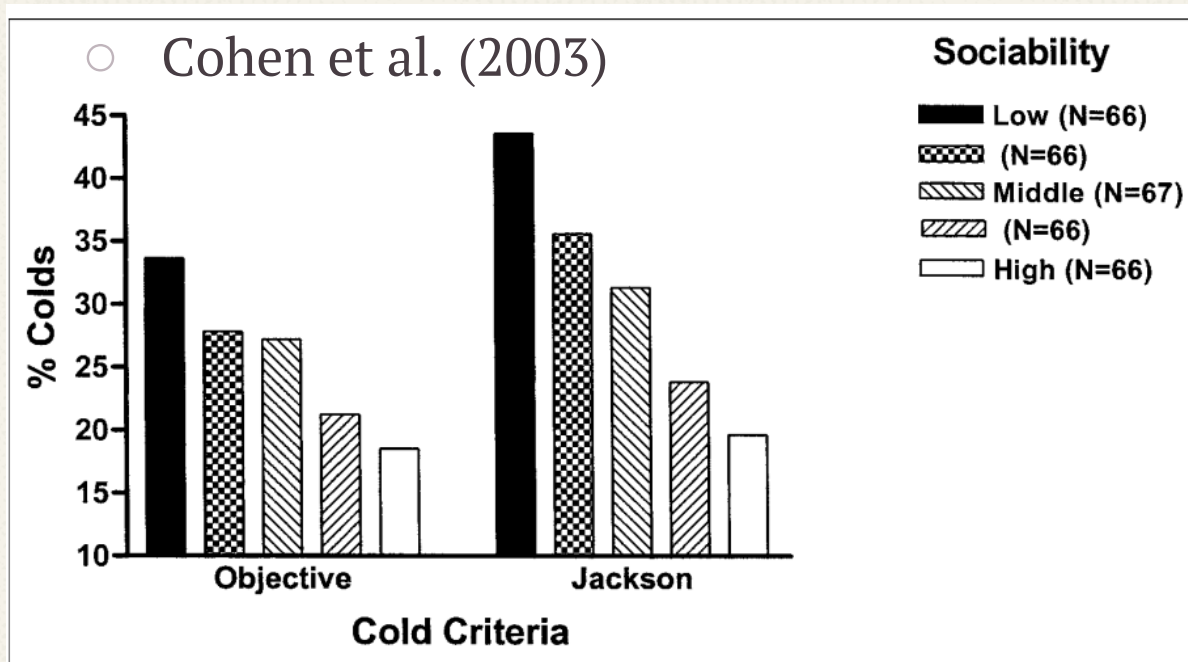


Fig. 1. Rate of developing colds (adjusted for controls) as a function of sociability quintile. Colds were defined either as infection plus objective signs of illness or as infection plus subjective symptoms of illness (modified Jackson criterion).

Why are close relationships important?

- High quality relationships promoted better individual well-being compared to being single (Hudson, Lucas, & Donnellan, 2020)
 - But low quality relationships *worsened* well-being compared to being single
- Troubled relationships most common problem in psychotherapy (31%) (Pinsker et al., 1985)

Why are close relationships important?

- **Love in the Time of Covid** (Balzarini et al., under review)
 - COVID stressors: social isolation, financial strain, stress
 - Relationship quality, # of times had conflict with partner
 - COVID stressors led to worse relationship quality and more conflict with romantic partner
 - But participants who perceived partner as responsive were *protected* from these negative effects



Isn't lay knowledge enough?

- Example 1: Which response below do you think is more helpful and supportive?
 - Context: Friend B made a joke about Friend A's outfit looking out of style, and Friend A is hurt about this comment.
 - 1: "I get where you're coming from. I would also feel that way if Friend B said that about my clothes too, but I'm sure they didn't mean it."
 - 2: "It's not that big of a deal! You know Friend B didn't mean it seriously. Give it a couple days and you'll forget about all this anyway."
- Poll!

Isn't lay knowledge enough?

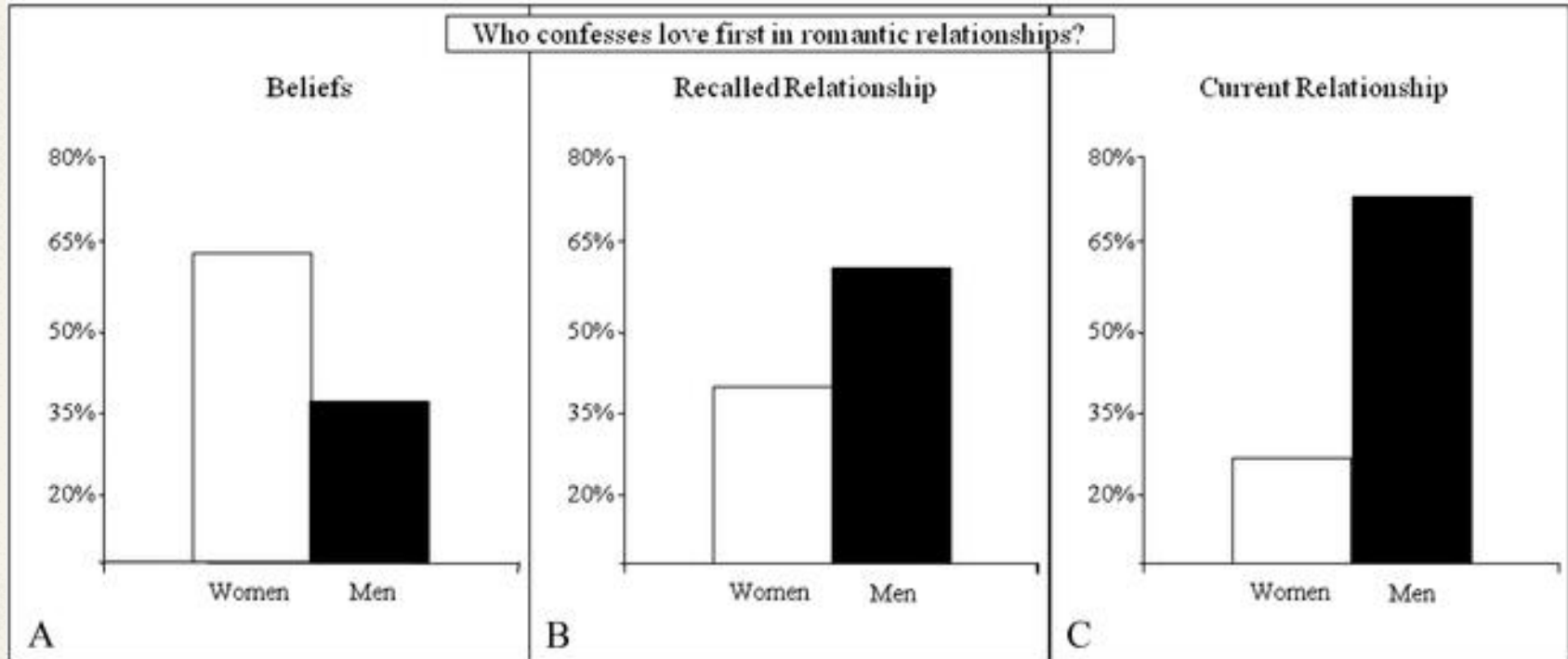
- Some people would say 2 is more helpful, but relationships researchers are more likely to say 1 is more helpful
 - Reis & Shaver (1988)

Isn't lay knowledge enough?

- Example 2: Are men or women more likely to confess that they love their partner *first* in romantic relationships?
 - 1: Women
 - 2: Men
 - 3: Neither, it's equally likely
- Another poll!

Isn't lay knowledge enough?

- Ackerman, Griskevicius, & Li (2011)



Summary

- Why is studying close relationships important?
 - Benefits for physical and psychological well-being
 - Can conflict with lay knowledge and can get better insight via studying relationships processes *scientifically*

Next time...

**Week 1.2: The Methods of
Relationships Science**



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