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Dating Couples' Disagreements Over the Desired Level of Sexual Intimacy

E. SANDRA BYERS AND KIM LEWIS

Sixty-seven female and 54 male college students participated in a study of sexual disagreements in which the man desired to engage in a higher level of sexual activity than did the woman. Participants kept an ongoing record of dates and disagreements and provided descriptive information about some of these. We had three goals: (a) to determine how frequently this type of disagreement occurs in dating relationships; (b) to determine the types and frequencies of the various strategies that men use when their partner indicates that she is unwilling to engage in a particular sexual activity; and (c) to describe the characteristics of disagreement situations and relate these to male compliance with the woman's refusal. One or more disagreements were reported by 47% of participants, but disagreements occurred on only 7% of reported dates. In 61% of the disagreement situations, the man complied with the woman's refusal without question. Verbal and/or physical coercion was reported in 25% of the disagreement situations. These results suggest that although sexual coercion is a part of some dating relationships, it does not characterize our dating system to the degree suggested by Clark and Lewis (1977). Characteristics of the disagreement situation and their relationship to male compliance are reported and discussed.

Men and women in our society are socialized to adopt different roles with respect to sexual activity. Men are expected to initiate and pursue sexual activity; women to be reluctant to engage in sexual activity and to set firm limits on the extent of their sexual involvement (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Gager & Schurr, 1976; LaPlante, McCormick, & Branigan, 1980; McCormick, 1979; Peplau, Rubin, & Hill, 1977). Although not all sexual interactions conform to this stereotype (Jesser, 1978; Perper & Weis, 1987), college women report using all strategies for avoiding sex more frequently than do college men, whereas college men report using all strategies for having sex more frequently than do

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college women (LaPlante et al.; McCormick, Brannigan & LaPlante, 1984). Similarly, Peplau et al. found that, even among dating couples who held a single standard of sexual conduct for men and women, the men tended to take the role of the initiator in the sexual interactions, whereas the women tended to exert negative control.

If men and women do routinely adopt antagonistic positions with respect to sexual involvement, women would frequently be in a situation in which their male partners desire a more intimate level of sexual involvement than they. Several studies indicate that a substantial proportion of women report having experienced at least one sexual interaction involving this type of disagreement (Byers, 1980; Koss & Oros, 1982; McCabe & Collins, 1984). These studies, however, did not investigate the frequency of these disagreements. Thus, one goal was to investigate how frequently this type of disagreement occurs.

Clark and Lewis (1977) argued that the male role of trying to extend the level of sexual involvement introduces coercive elements into most sexual dating interactions. They suggest that when disagreements about the desired level of sexual involvement arise, men use any means possible, including coercion, to "convince" their date to engage in the desired sexual activity. This view is shared by college students. McCormick (1979), for example, found that college students generally believe that in most sexual encounters men will use any means to engage in sexual intercourse, whereas women will use any strategy to avoid sexual intercourse. Using a role-play procedure, Byers and Wilson (1985) found that some men did use coercive strategies in response to women's refusals of their sexual advances. Further, between 34% and 83% of women report having experienced male sexual aggression at some time, usually with a date and following a disagreement about the desired level of sexual involvement (Brickman & Briere, 1984; Byers & Eastman, 1979; Kanin & Parcell, 1977; Koss & Oros, 1982; Mynatt & Allgeier, 1985; Russell & Howell, 1983). However, these researchers have not considered whether coercive strategies or compliant behaviors are used more frequently to resolve disagreements. Thus, a second goal was to investigate the types and frequencies of the various responses of men when their partner indicates unwillingness to engage in a particular sexual activity.

A third goal was to provide descriptive information about disagreement situations. Factors suggested as mediating whether sexual disagreements between dating couples result in sexual coercion and/or sexual aggression (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Giles & Byers, 1982; Kanin, 1969; Korman & Leslie, 1982; Price & Byers, 1983) include the definite-

ness of the woman's refusal, whether the disputed sexual activity was coitally directed, the woman's romantic interest in the man, the man's romantic interest in the woman, and the duration of the dating relationship. We obtained data on the relationship between these factors and men's compliance with the woman's refusal. The relationship between men's compliance and subject characteristics was also explored.

Method

Subjects

Participants were 132 (74 women and 58 men) unmarried students enrolled in Introductory Psychology who volunteered for a study of communication in sexual dating situations. They received course credit. Two students withdrew from the study after the procedures were explained. In addition, 11 participants (7 men and 4 women) did not complete all 4 weeks of the study and were excluded from the analyses. Participants ranged in age from 17-24 years, with the women being somewhat younger than the men ($M = 18.7$ and 20.3 , respectively), $t(119) = 6.21, p < .001$. Most grew up in New Brunswick (68%) or elsewhere in Canada (26%). The women were earlier in their university careers than were the men (e.g., 76% of the women and 33% of men were in their first year), $t(77) = 5.17, p < .001$. Most participants were active daters (median of six dates during the month prior to the start of the study) and moderately sexually experienced (median score on the Sexual Behavior Inventory = 15; see below). Male and female participants did not differ on any of the other background characteristics.

Measures

Age, year in university, various aspects of participants' dating history, and other demographic information were collected using a self-administered Background Questionnaire designed for the present study.¹ Participants also completed the Sexual Behavior Inventory (SBI) (Bentler, 1968a, 1968b).

Male and female versions of the Sexual Situation Questionnaire (SSQ) were designed and pretested for use in the present study. A few questions were represented on only one version of the questionnaire, reflecting men's and women's different perspectives in a disagreement situation. Participants indicated at the end of each day whether they had been on a date, defined as any social situation they were in with a specific person of the opposite sex. Participants who had been on a

¹A copy of this and other questionnaires are available from the first author.

date also indicated whether the date had involved sexual activity (from holding hands to intercourse) and whether the man had desired a more intimate level of sexual activity than did the woman. In order to reduce the number of questionnaires and since pilot data indicated that few participants experienced more than one disagreement in a week, participants completed the remainder of the questionnaire only if they had experienced this type of disagreement for the first time that week. Participants provided information on the type of sexual activity prior to and constituting the disagreement from a hierarchical list of 11 sexual activities (hugging to intercourse), their relationship with their date (number of previous dates, ratings of their own and their date's romantic interest), and the verbal and nonverbal aspects of the disagreement interaction (what the man said and/or did to indicate his desire to engage in the unwanted sexual activities; the woman's response to these advances; the man's subsequent behavior; the woman's second response.) In addition, participants rated their own and their date's romantic interest after the disagreement and evaluated their own and/or their date's responses.

Most of the questions on the SSQ were multiple choice. However, participants described their activities on the date and the couple's location during the disagreement. Categories used to score the SSQ data and descriptions can be found in Tables 2 and 3.

Participants' descriptions of their own and their date's behavior during the disagreement were coded by two trained raters. Interrater agreement was calculated for each rating scale by dividing the number of exact agreements by the total number of responses. Agreement ranged from 71% to 100% ($M = 85\%$), indicating good reliability. A third judge rated all responses on which the two raters disagreed. Disagreements were resolved by using the rating assigned by two of the three raters. The reliability and validity of the two definiteness scales and the compliance scale has been established in previous research (Byers & Wilson, 1985; Giles & Byers, 1982). Further, respondents were very confident ($M = 5.2$ on a 6-point rating scale) of the accuracy of their responses.

Procedure

Prior to receiving the SSQ to complete at home, participants were seen individually. After the nature of the study was explained, informed consent was obtained, and participants completed the Background Questionnaire and the SBI. Participants were then trained to complete the SSQ. To do this, participants were presented with a fictitious written scene and asked to complete the SSQ using

the information provided in the scene. Participants were given feedback on their completion of the practice SSQ and given a second practice scene if they had not initially met training criteria. Participants were then given four copies of the SSQ, each dated for 1 of the 4 weeks, and instructed to complete these questionnaires at home on a daily basis. Participants returned a completed, anonymous questionnaire at the end of each of the 4 weeks. Those who failed to return the questionnaire on the indicated date were contacted by telephone.

Results

Male and female participants' responses on the SSQ were compared using *t* tests. Men and women differed on only one question: the definiteness of the woman's nonverbal response. However, data and correlations have been provided for the men and the women separately for informational purposes. Only significant findings are reported. However, in instances when two variables were significantly related for one sex only, any trends for the other sex are reported.

Dating and Sexual Experiences

Participants had dated on an average of 10.5 days (called "dates" below) during the 4 weeks. Of these dates, 73% involved some form of sexual activity. Disagreements in which the man desired to engage in a more intimate sexual activity than did the woman constituted 7% of the total dates or 10% of the dates on which there was some sexual activity. The average frequency of dating and sexual experiences are reported in Table 1. Men and women who reported more dates were also more likely to report more dates with sexual activity, $r = .88$ and $r = .89$, $p < .001$, respectively. Participants experienced more disagreements if they had dated more frequently ($r = .24$ for the men and $r = .30$ for the women, $p < .05$) and if they had more dates involving sexual activity ($r = .30$ for the men and $r = .25$ for the women, $p < .05$).

Table 1

Mean Frequency of Dating and Sexual Activity Over 4-Week Period

	Men (<i>n</i> = 51)		Women (<i>n</i> = 70)		Total (<i>n</i> = 121)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Dates	11.4	8.1	9.8	7.5	10.5	7.8
Dates with sex	8.9	8.2	6.8	5.8	7.7	6.9
Disagreements	0.9	1.2	0.6	0.8	0.7	1.0

Note. Participants could report a maximum of one date and one disagreement per day.

Since these data include multiple reportings by some individuals, it is also important to indicate how many different individuals these data

represent. Only 7% of participants did not report any dates. An additional 7% had dated during the period of the study but indicated that none of the dates involved any sexual activity. A further 39% had been involved in a sexual dating situation but not one in which there was a disagreement about the desired level of sexual involvement. Of the 47% of respondents who reported one or more disagreement, the majority reported only one (64%) or two (26%) disagreements.

Multiple regression analyses were performed to predict number of dates and number of disagreement experiences from background information: age, religious commitment, number of steady dates, number of dating occasions in the past month, and sexual experience. A backward stepwise procedure was used in which variables which do not significantly contribute to the model are removed one at a time. An alpha level of .055 was used as a criterion for removal. For both men and women, number of dates in the month before the study emerged as the only significant factor predicting number of dates during the study, $r = .49, p < .01$ and $r = .62, p < .001$, respectively. Participants who dated more frequently reported more dates during the study.

Significant one factor models also emerged for predicting the number of disagreements. Men with more sexual experience reported more disagreements, $r = .32, p < .05$, as did women who had dated more in the month prior to the study, $r = .26, p < .05$.

Characteristics of the Disagreement Situation

The following results refer to participants who reported one or more disagreements only ($n = 31$ women and 25 men). For participants who reported more than one disagreement, only data from the first disagreement were analyzed in order to avoid the possibility that a few subjects with many disagreements might bias the results.

Characteristics of the disagreement situation are presented in Table 2. Most of the disagreement situations involved couples with a dating history and who were romantically interested in each other. Participants' ratings of their own and their dates romantic interest were highly correlated, $r = .60$ and $.76, p < .01$, for the men and the women, respectively. However, the women but not the men rated their dates as significantly more interested in them than they were in their dates, $t(29) = 3.55, p < .001$. Coitus was the behavior disagreed about most frequently (32.1%), followed by breast play (23.2%). Most participants (94.6%) reported having engaged in consensual sexual activities immediately prior to the disagreement. A substantial proportion (60%) of the men reported having engaged in the sexual activity involved in the

disagreement with their current partner on a previous occasion.²

Table 2

Characteristics of Disagreement Situations

Characteristics	% Men (n = 25)	% Women (n = 31)	% Total (n = 56)
Prior dating relationship status			
None	9.1	16.7	13.5
Occasional date	45.5	23.3	32.7
Regular date	9.1	20.0	15.4
Long-term relationship	36.4	40.0	38.5
Own romantic interest before date			
Not romantically interested	8.0	16.7	12.7
Slightly romantically interested	16.0	20.0	9.1
Moderately romantically interested	12.0	6.7	8.9
Very romantically interested	32.0	20.0	5.5
Extremely romantically interested	32.0	36.7	34.5
Date's romantic interest before date			
Not romantically interested	0.0	3.3	1.8
Slightly romantically interested	4.0	6.7	5.5
Moderately romantically interested	32.0	13.3	21.8
Very romantically interested	28.8	33.3	30.9
Extremely romantically interested	36.0	43.4	40.0
Activity on date			
Alone at a dwelling	45.9	32.4	38.2
Social event or pub	45.8	45.1	45.5
Movie or sports event	4.2	12.9	9.1
Other	4.2	9.6	7.2
Location during disagreement			
Woman's apartment, bedroom	17.4	35.5	27.8
Woman's apartment, other room	26.1	19.4	22.2
Man's apartment, bedroom	21.7	16.1	18.5
Man's apartment, other room	26.1	6.5	14.8
Friend's apartment	0.0	6.5	3.7
Other	8.7	16.1	13.1
Consensual sexual activities^a			
None	4.0	6.5	5.4
Hug	16.0	22.6	19.6
Kiss	16.0	9.7	12.5
Necking	32.0	45.2	39.3
Fondling or kissing breasts	40.0	25.8	32.1
Fondling woman's genitals	24.0	35.5	30.2
Fondling man's genitals	12.0	3.2	7.1
Oral-genital stimulation	8.0	0.0	3.6
Coitus	4.0	0.0	1.8
Other	4.0	16.1	10.7

(Continued on next page)

²This question was accidentally omitted from the female version of SSQ.

Table 2—continued

Characteristics of Disagreement Situations

Unwanted sexual activity			
Kiss	4.0	3.2	3.6
Necking	0.0	9.7	5.4
Breast fondling and kissing	24.0	22.6	23.2
Fondling woman's genitals	12.0	22.6	17.9
Fondling man's genitals	4.0	0.0	1.8
Oral-genital stimulation	16.0	6.5	10.7
Anal intercourse	8.0	0.0	3.6
Coitus	32.0	32.3	32.1
Other	4.0	3.2	1.8

*Respondents checked all categories that applied.

Men's and Women's Behavior in the Disagreement Interaction

Men's initiation of the sexual activity. Most men initiated the disputed sexual activity nonverbally whether with (23.4%) or without (69.6%) a verbal request.

Women's responses to the man's advances. Few participants indicated that the woman went along with the unwanted advances even initially (12% of the men and 3.2% of the women reported that neither the woman's verbal nor nonverbal response was a refusal). Most participants reported that the woman indicated her nonconsent both verbally and nonverbally, (40% of the men and 71.0% of the women).

The most frequent verbal response was an unqualified "No" (37.5%), although many participants (30.4%) also reported a verbal refusal in which the woman indicated that the activity might be acceptable at another time or place (Table 3). Physical responses reported most frequently involved the woman blocking her date's advance (e.g., moving his hand) (46.4%). Verbal and nonverbal definiteness were not significantly correlated with each other for either the men or the women. On average, the men described nonverbal responses that were less definite than those described by the women (M 's = 1.8 and 2.3 respectively), $t(54) = -2.66, p < .01$.

Men's compliance with women's refusals. In responding to women's refusals, the largest number of men (60.7%) unquestioningly stopped their advances, many also apologizing. A number questioned their date's refusal (16.1%). A small proportion of men used verbally coercive strategies such as attempting to persuade their date to engage in the disputed sexual activity (7.1%) or verbally expressing anger (5.4%). An additional 10.7% of participants indicated that the man physically continued the unwanted sexual advances.

Immediate outcome of disagreement. In two thirds of the situations,

Table 3

Men's and Women's Behavior During Disagreement

Behavior	% Women (<i>n</i> = 31)	% Men (<i>n</i> = 25)	% Total (<i>n</i> = 56)
Men's initial advances			
Verbal			
No verbal response	67.7	72.0	69.6
Indirect request for sexual activity	16.1	4.0	10.7
Clear request for sexual activity	16.1	24.0	19.6
Nonverbal			
No physical response	9.7	4.0	7.1
Initiated desired sexual activity	90.3	96.0	92.9
Women's responses to unwanted advances			
Verbal			
No verbal refusal	22.6	36.0	28.6
Refusal implying advances might be accepted at some other time or place	35.5	24.0	30.4
Unqualified refusal	41.9	32.0	37.5
Refusal with anger or threat that date leave	0.0	8.0	3.6
Nonverbal			
No physical refusal	9.7	36.0	21.4
Blocked or did not perform sexual activity	48.4	44.0	46.4
Moved away or pushed man away	41.9	20.0	28.6
Got up or slapped	0.0	8.0	3.6
Men's compliance with refusal			
Stopped without questioning	58.1	64.0	60.7
Stopped and asked why or when	12.9	20.0	16.1
Stopped and attempted to persuade	6.5	8.0	7.1
Stopped and expressed displeasure or anger	6.5	4.0	5.4
Continued unwanted advances	16.1	4.0	10.7
Immediate outcome of disagreement			
Disagreement resolved			
Stopped all sexual activity	29.0	33.0	30.9
Continued acceptable sexual activity	35.5	29.2	32.7
Disagreement not resolved			
Woman reiterated refusal	6.5	12.5	9.1
Woman made more definite refusal	29.0	25.0	27.3

the woman's initial refusal ended the disagreement. Situations in which the women gave a second refusal were those in which the men continued their advances (50%), questioned her reasons (31.3%), or tried to persuade her to continue (18.8%). Additionally, 17.1% of respondents reported that the man's advances were repeated again later on the same date.

Variables Related to Men's Compliance

Stepwise regression analyses were used to predict men's compliance in the disagreement situation. Caution should be taken in generalizing

from these results, however, since the beta weights may be unstable due to small sample sizes.

Regression of the background variables (age, religious commitment, number of steady dates, number of dates in the last month, sexual experience) on compliance yielded two 1-factor models. Women who were more frequent daters reported more compliant responses from their dates, $r = .45$, $p < .05$. Men who were more compliant tended to be more sexually experienced, $r = .47$, $p < .05$.

Six variables measuring aspects of the disagreement situation were regressed on the men's compliance: dating involvement, the woman's and the man's romantic interest in the other, whether the sexual behavior was noncoitally or coitally directed, and the woman's verbal and nonverbal definiteness. For the men's data, the only significant relationship was that more compliant responses tended to follow less definite verbal responses given by the women, $r = -.57$, $p < .01$. A significant 3-factor model emerged for the women's description of the men's compliance, $R = -.55$, $F(3, 27) = 3.96$, $p = .05$. More compliant responses were associated with women who were less romantically interested in their dates ($\beta = -.52$), had dated the man more regularly in the past ($\beta = .66$), and gave more definite nonverbal responses ($\beta = .46$).

Reaction to the Disagreement

Only 16% of the men and 9.9% of the women reported a decrease in the man's romantic interest after the disagreement; 20% of the men and 23.4% of the women reported a decrease in the woman's romantic interest. Men and women who reported less compliant male responses tended to report decreased romantic interest after the disagreement on the part of both the man ($r = .49$ for the men and $r = .36$ for the women, $p < .05$) and the woman ($r = .37$, $p < .10$ for the men and $r = .62$, $p < .001$ for the women.)

Most women were satisfied (rated on a 5-point scale) with both their own and their date's responses during the disagreement ($M = 4.16$, $SD = .90$ and $M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.38$, respectively). The men rated themselves (on a 6-point scale) between *slightly sure* and *moderately sure* that the woman did not want to engage in the sexual activity with them, $M = 4.48$, $SD 1.12$.

The men's certainty that their date did not wish to engage in the sexual behavior was not related to either her nonverbal or her verbal definiteness nor to the degree of his compliance. The women's satisfaction with their own response was not related to its definiteness. However, women who described their date as more compliant were

more satisfied with their date's responses, $r = .81, p < .001$.

Discussion

These results provide a description of college students' day to day experiences of sexual disagreements and coercion that has not been available from retrospective research. As discussed below, conclusions about the normativeness of coercive sexuality from research in which participants reported whether they had ever experienced sexual aggression in the past are misleading (e.g., Byers, 1980; Byers & Eastman, 1979; Kanin & Parcell, 1977; Koss & Oros, 1982), since the present data indicate that coercive disagreements are not a "regular" component of sexual dating interactions.

Caution should be taken in generalizing from these results. First, it is not known whether the experiences of college students are generalizable to other groups. Second, although the self-monitoring technique used minimizes bias due to faulty memory (Graham & Lilly, 1984), the data may be affected by socially desirability, perceived demand characteristics, and/or reactivity to being in the study. Finally, due to the small sample size in analyses of the disagreement situations, some of the results may be unstable.

Disagreements about Sexual Activity

Disagreements in which the man desired a higher level of sexual intimacy than the woman were found to be common, although most dates did not involve a disagreement. This is consistent with data that men and women report adopting adversarial positions in sexual situations (LaPlante et al., 1980; McCormick et al., 1984; Peplau et al., 1977) and with the finding that a large proportion of women report having experienced a disagreement about the desired level of sexual involvement (Byers, 1980; Byers & Eastman, 1979; Koss & Oros, 1982; McCabe & Collins, 1984; Mynatt & Allgeier, 1985). However, these data do not support depictions of men as continually trying to extend the limits of sexual intimacy (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Gager & Schurr, 1976), since participants indicated that in most sexual interactions they and their date did not disagree about the desired level of sexual intimacy. This may be in part because women use a variety of proceptive strategies to indicate that they would be receptive to their date's sexual advances (Perper & Weis, 1987), and thus only men who misread or choose to ignore these signals initiate unwanted sexual advances.

The results do suggest that some disagreements occur. Conflict was more likely for women who were more active daters and men who had

more sexual experience. Similarly, Mynatt and Allgeier (1985) found the women who were more sexually active were more likely to report having been sexually coerced. However, most of the disagreements were not instances in which the man was trying to extend sexual boundaries. Instead they represent different desires for sexual activities previously engaged in with a partner with whom they were romantically interested. This type of communication would normally be expected in most dating relationships and would also be essential for maintaining a good relationship. Consistent with this, Jesser (1978) reported that many men at least occasionally rebuff women's sexual advances. A minority of disagreements did involve a dispute over a sexual behavior that the respondent had not previously experienced with that partner. Only these latter instances may have a bearing on theories depicting male and female sexual interactions as adversarial (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Gager & Schurr, 1976).

The Disagreement Situation

In most instances the disagreement occurred in the context of a dating relationship in which the two participants were romantically interested in each other. Usually, the unwanted sexual activity was initiated nonverbally, putting the woman in the position of having to rebuff the advances if she was not interested. This is consistent with college students' reports that women most commonly use nonverbal methods to give consent to sexual intercourse (Byers, 1980), suggesting that the initiation is also usually nonverbal.

Participants described a variety of strategies that women used to indicate their refusal to engage in the sexual activity. Although equivalent proportions of the men and the women described the various verbal refusals, women reported more definite physical refusals than did the men. It may be that the women were responding to perceived demand characteristics in describing more definite nonverbal refusals. It is also possible that some men failed to perceive the nonverbal response given by their dates and/or to report them accurately in order to justify their subsequent persistence.

Even among the minority of dates that resulted in a disagreement about sexual activity, use of coercive strategies by men was the exception rather than the rule. Thus, these data do not support the stereotyped view that when disagreements about the desired level of sexual activity do arise, normative behavior for men is to use any strategy to "convince" the woman to engage in the disputed behavior (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Gager & Schurr, 1976; LaPlante et al., 1980; McCormick, 1979). Rather, it is more typical of men to accept the woman's decision.

Some men did use coercive strategies. In more than one third of the disagreements, the woman felt it necessary to reiterate her refusal, usually using a more definite strategy. Due to the design of the questionnaire, it is not known in how many of these situations the woman was forced to say "no" more than twice or whether any of the women were forced to continue sex against their will. However, it does appear that a small percentage of men subscribe to the rape myth that a woman's "no" means "yes" (Burt, 1980).

Predicting Male Compliance

If women are to avoid being victims of sexual aggression, it is important to identify factors related to men's compliance with women's refusals of their sexual advances. Women who were more frequent daters reported more compliant men. It may be that women who date more frequently develop more effective strategies for stopping unwanted advances, especially since definiteness was also related to compliance. Men who were more sexually experienced reported more compliant responses. However, these men also reported a larger number of disagreements. It may be that men with more sexual experience are more likely to initiate sexual activities, resulting in more frequent disagreements. However, they are also more likely to accept a refusal.

According to the women's reports, more compliant responses tended to follow more definite nonverbal refusals by women who were less romantically interested in their date and had dated him regularly in the past. Thus a woman may be at greater risk for sexual aggression in the early stages of dating and when she is romantically interested in her date, perhaps because she reacts less strongly, as Kanin (1969) found. However, the women reported nonverbal responses that were more definite than those reported by the men. If the women's descriptions were inaccurate, the relationship between nonverbal definiteness and male compliance may reflect only women's expectations about what actions are effective at stopping unwanted advances.

The impact of women's behavior on male compliance is not clear, since the men reported more compliance following *less* definite verbal responses from the women. This may be because this scale was developed to measure definiteness in sexual disagreements occurring at early stages of dating and sexual relationships, whereas most of the couples had engaged in the disputed behavior in the past. It may be that for these couples a response indicating that the behavior might be acceptable at a future point in time, which was scored as low in definiteness, was most effective at stopping the man's advances at that time.

Male compliance was not related to whether the disputed sexual behavior was coitally directed, not supporting the contention that beyond a certain level of intimacy, women are seen as forfeiting their right to say "no" (Burt, 1980; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Korman & Leslie, 1982).

Women whose dates did not take "no" for an answer become less interested in them. Similarly, the men who used more coercive strategies were more likely to perceive their date as becoming less romantically interested in them after the disagreement. This suggests that these men were aware that the use of coercive strategies is not acceptable to women.

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