

Jealousy and Sexual Orientation

Testing the “Double-Shot” Hypothesis in a Heterosexual, Homosexual, and Bisexual Sample

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The Jealousy and Infidelity Question

Please think of a serious committed romantic relationship with a woman that you have had in the past, that you currently have, or that you would like to have. Imagine that you discover that the woman with whom you've been seriously involved became interested in someone else. What would upset or distress you more?

- (a) Imagining your partner forming a deep emotional attachment to that person
- (b) Imagining your partner enjoying passionate sexual intercourse with that other person

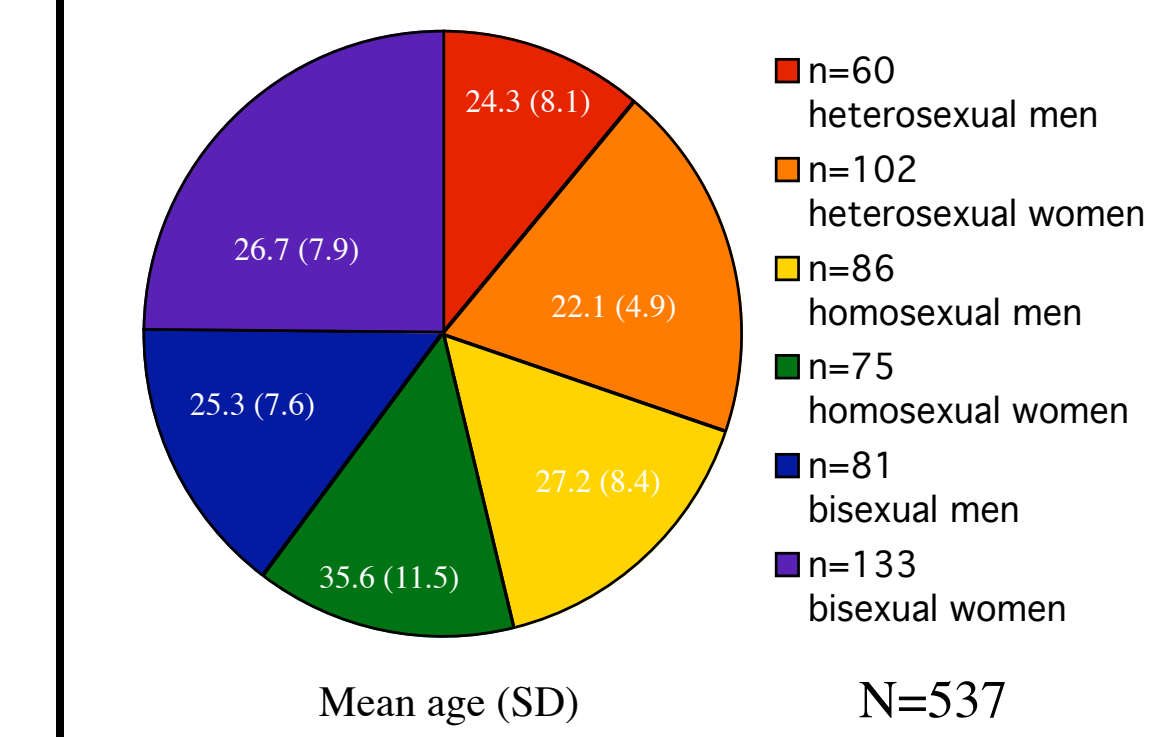
Taken from Buss et al. (1992)

Abstract

Previous research (Buss, et al., 1992) has found that men are relatively more distressed by a female partner's sexual infidelity while women tend to be more distressed by a male partner's emotional infidelity. Evolutionary theorists have related this sex effect to the differential adaptive strategies of men and women. This explanation was contested by the “double-shot” hypothesis (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996; Harris & Christenfeld, 1996) proposing that differential reactions to infidelity are solely driven by individuals' expectations concerning their partner's behavior. As this hypothesis should explain the behaviors of all types of people, the present study investigates this hypothesis in a sample of heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual men and women (n = 537). Results showed that:

- Only heterosexual men were approximately equally concerned about their partner's sexual and emotional infidelity whereas all other groups found their partner's emotional infidelity more distressing.
- At the same time, there was no support for the double-shot hypothesis. That is, with few exceptions, expectations of a partner's behavior did not predict jealousy response.
- In contrast to Buss et al. (1992), this study failed to find a difference in the pattern of jealousy as a function of sexual relationship experience among heterosexual men. Homosexual and bisexual men showed the opposite pattern.

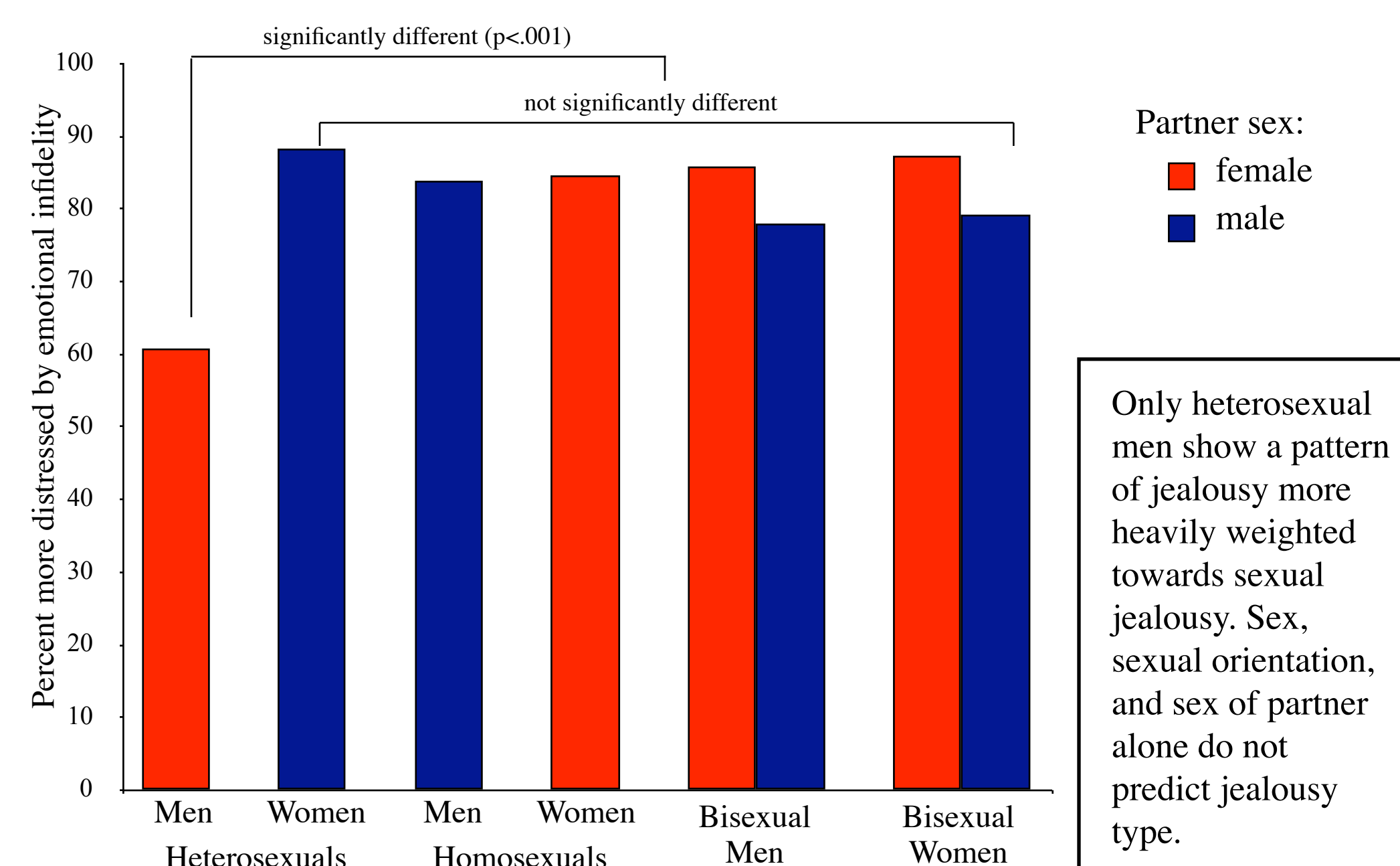
Participant Demographics



References Cited

Buss, DM, Larsen, RJ, Westen, D, & Semmelroth, J (1992) Sex differences in jealousy: Evolution, physiology, and psychology. *Psychological Science*, 3, 251-255.
 DeSteno, DA, & Salovey, P (1996) Evolutionary origins of sex differences in jealousy? Questioning the “fitness” of the model. *Psychological Science*, 7, 367-372.
 Harris, CR, & Christenfeld, N (1996) Gender, jealousy, and reason. *Psychological Science*, 7, 364-366.

Jealousy Response by Participant Sex and Sexual Orientation



Only heterosexual men show a pattern of jealousy more heavily weighted towards sexual jealousy. Sex, sexual orientation, and sex of partner alone do not predict jealousy type.

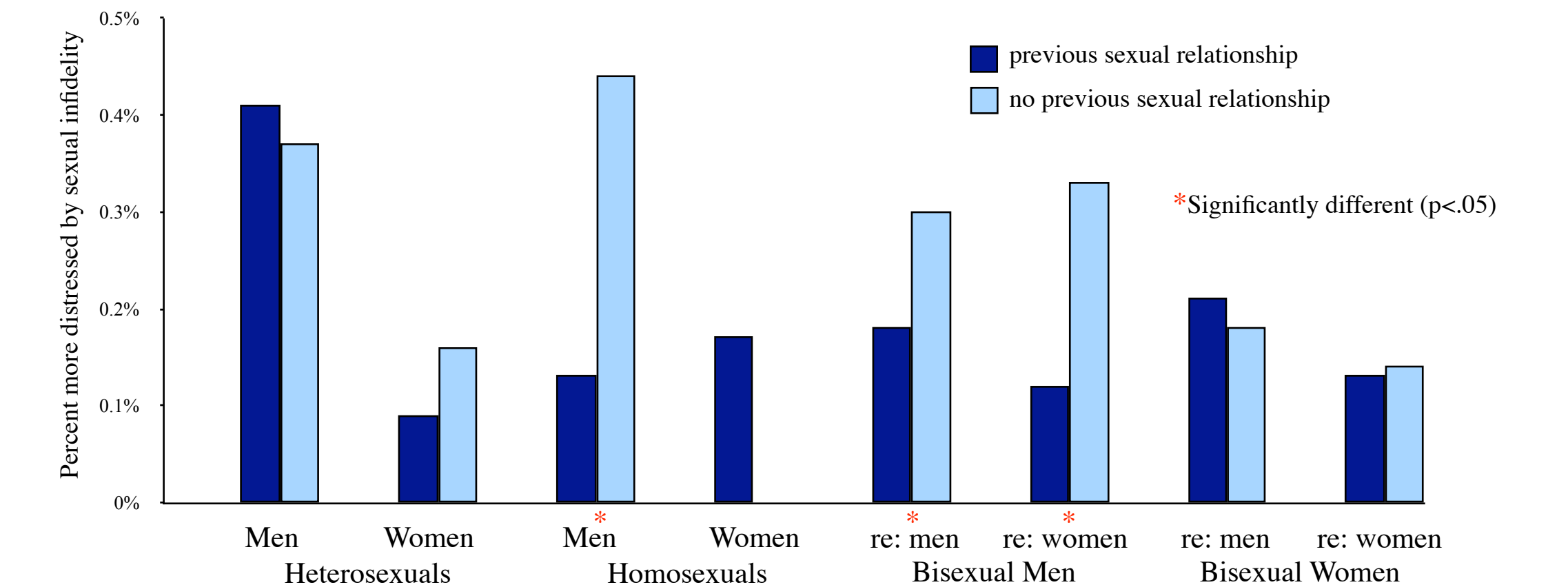
The Double-Shot Hypothesis

DeSteno and Salovey (1996) and Harris and Christenfeld (1996) argued that men and women are rational decision makers who base their judgments on available knowledge and expectations. People have different perceptions about the likelihood of a person's sexual involvement given that person's emotional attachment and vice versa. As a result, one type of infidelity may imply another type of infidelity to a different extent for men and women.

For example, if sexual infidelity strongly implies emotional infidelity in women, but not the converse, sexual infidelity should be more upsetting to men because it is a “double-shot” of infidelity.

Thus, according to the double-shot hypothesis, jealousy type depends not on the sex of the subject, but the sex of their partner and perceptions about that person. If people have similar stereotypes about all men and women, regardless of their sexual orientation, all people with female partners should show a greater degree of sexual jealousy than should all people with male partners.

Jealousy Response by Participant Sex and Sexual Orientation



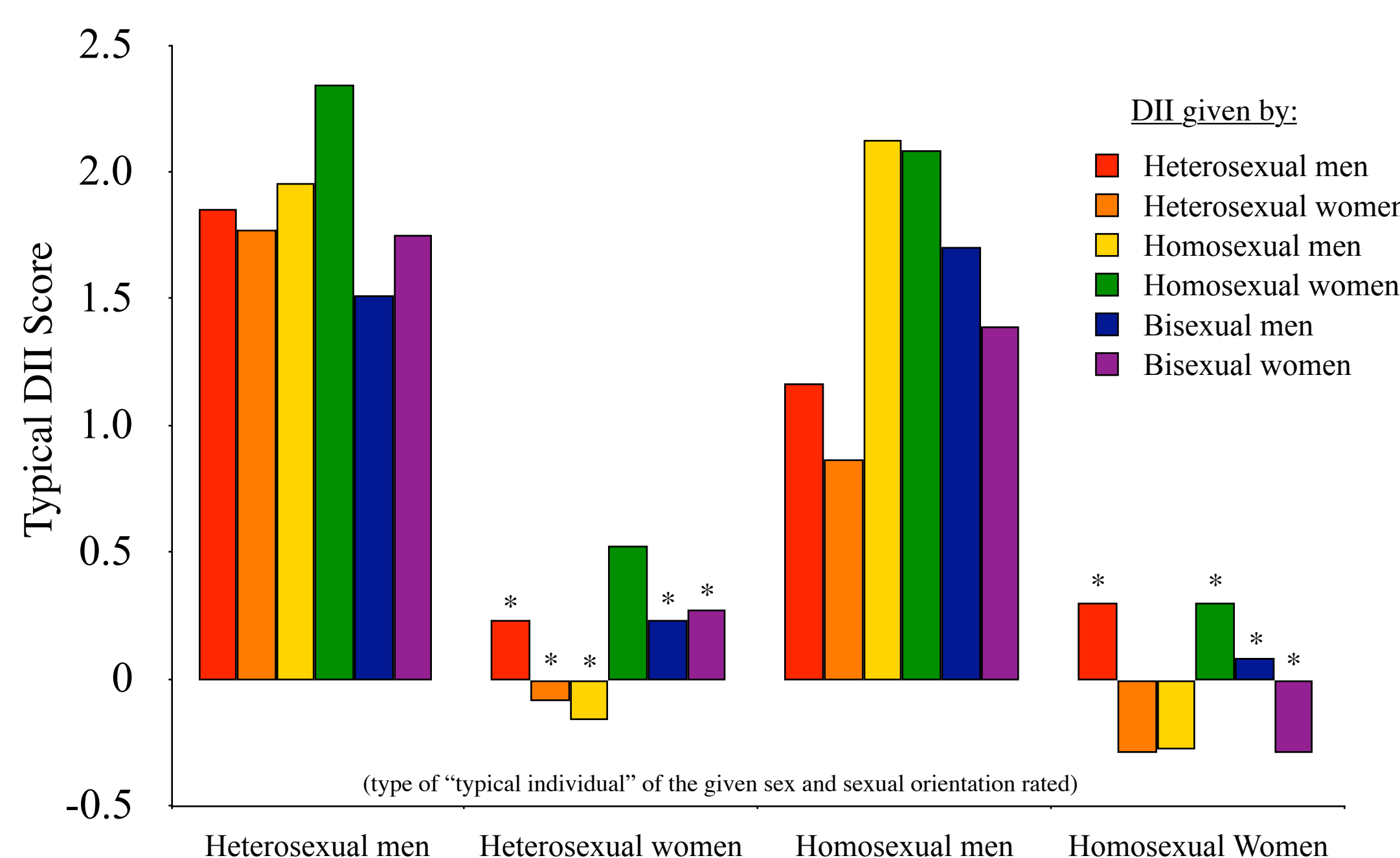
In contrast to Buss et al. (1992), we found no difference for heterosexual men in jealousy type as a function of previous experience in a sexual relationship.

Among homosexual and bisexual men, individuals who have experienced a sexual relationship are more likely to be more upset by *emotional* infidelity.

No association was found between previous experience in a committed *romantic* relationship and jealousy type.

The results of Buss et al.'s (1992) Study 3 were as follows: Among those heterosexual men without experience in a long-term sexual relationship, 29% said that they would find their partner's sexual infidelity more distressing than their partner's emotional infidelity. Among those heterosexual men who had been or were currently in a long-term sexual relationship, the corresponding figure was 55%.

Typical DII for Heterosexual and Homosexual Men and Women



DII - The Differential Infidelity Index

The Differential Infidelity Index (DII) is a measure of beliefs about the implications of sexual or emotional involvement. It is obtained by taking the score (measured on a 5 point Likert scale) from question one below and subtracting the score from question two.

- Positive values indicate the belief that emotional infidelity implies sexual infidelity more than the converse.
- Zero values indicate the belief that sexual and emotional infidelity imply each other equally.
- Negative values indicate the belief that sexual infidelity implies emotional infidelity more than the converse.

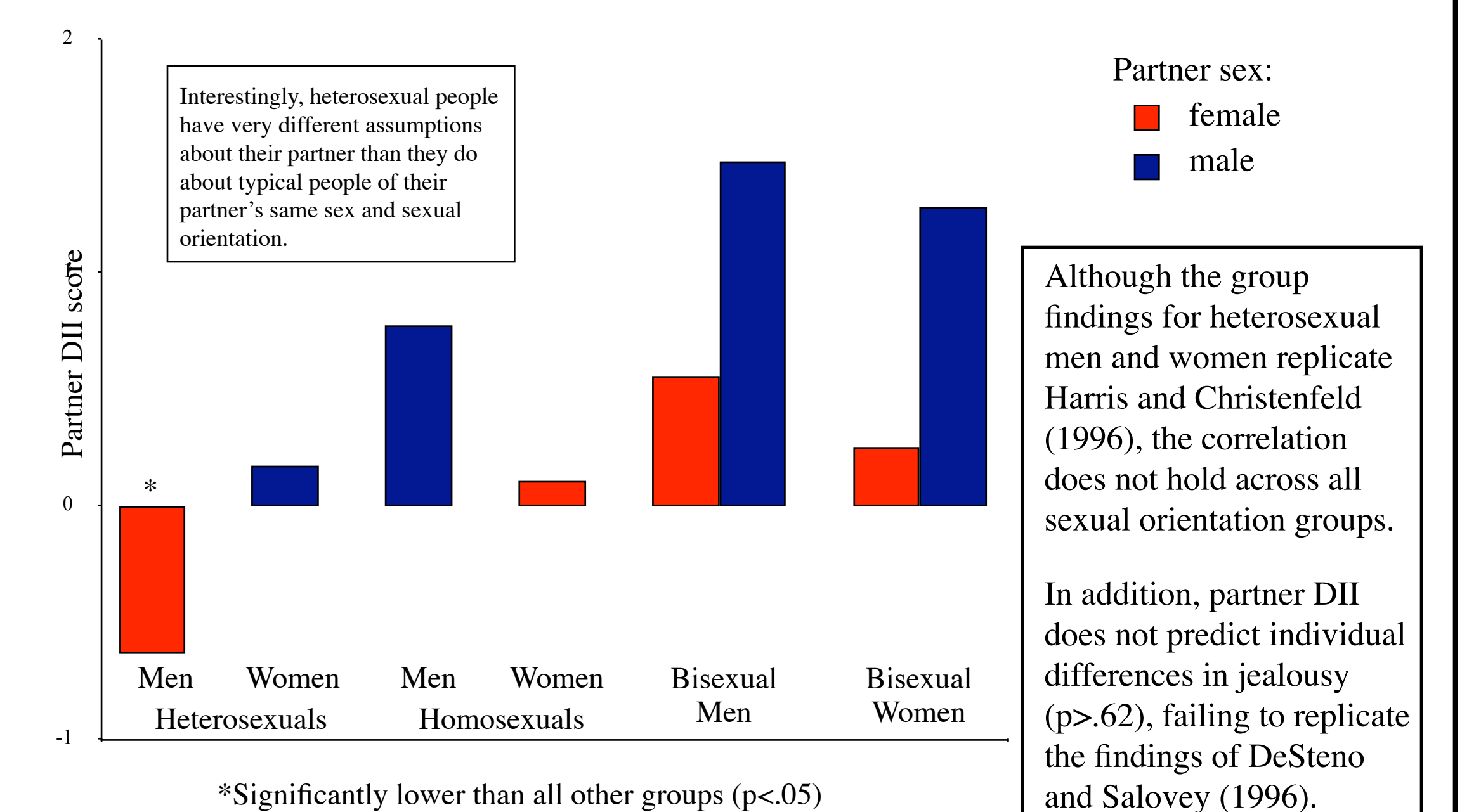
Typical DII was measured for heterosexual and homosexual men and women. All questions followed the pattern below.

- Imagine that you discover this woman has formed a deep emotional attachment to someone else. How likely is it that she is also engaging or will soon engage in sexual intercourse with that person?
- Imagine that you discover this woman is engaging in sexual intercourse with someone else. How likely is it that she has also formed or will soon form a deep emotional attachment to that person?

Partner DII was measured for the person referred to in the jealousy and infidelity question.

- If a typical heterosexual man has formed a deep emotional attachment to a woman, how likely is it that he is also engaging or will soon engage in sexual intercourse with the woman?
- If a typical heterosexual man is engaging in sexual intercourse with a woman, how likely is it that he has also formed or will soon form a deep emotional attachment to the woman?

Partner DII by Participant Sex and Sexual Orientation



Interestingly, heterosexual people have very different assumptions about their partner than they do about typical people of their partner's same sex and sexual orientation.

Although the group findings for heterosexual men and women replicate Harris and Christenfeld (1996), the correlation does not hold across all sexual orientation groups.

In addition, partner DII does not predict individual differences in jealousy (>.62), failing to replicate the findings of DeSteno and Salovey (1996).