



The Relationship Between Body Dissatisfaction and Risky Sexual Behavior



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Introduction

- Body image dissatisfaction remains prevalent in adolescents, with 77% of college girls reporting dissatisfaction with their bodies (Ganesan et al., 2018)
- Negative body image and a desire for thinness are related to an increase in the likelihood of eating disorders (Levinson et al., 2022).
- Body image issues and sexual intercourse behavior have been shown to have a correlation.

Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between negative body image and risky sexual behavior?
- Does this relationship change when accounting for sexual guilt?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=6,504) were drawn from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescence to Adult Health (ADD Health) of 1994-1995, a nationally representative sample of adolescents from different schools, neighborhoods, geographies, and physical and biological data.

Measures

- Risky sexual behavior was coded dichotomously, measured on a series of questions regarding birth control and condom usage.
- Negative body image was measured with two questions, coded dichotomously from a 5 point scale. The questions were :“How do you think of yourself in terms of weight?” And “Are you trying to lose weight, gain weight or stay the same?” This variable was coded dichotomously in terms of presence or absence of the attempt to lose weight

Results

Bivariate

- According to a Chi Square test, there was a significant relationship between body satisfaction and risky sexual behavior. X squared was 7.0732 . The P value was <.05 (.008).
- A bivariant graph (Figure 1) showed that people with high body satisfaction engaged in less risky sexual behavior

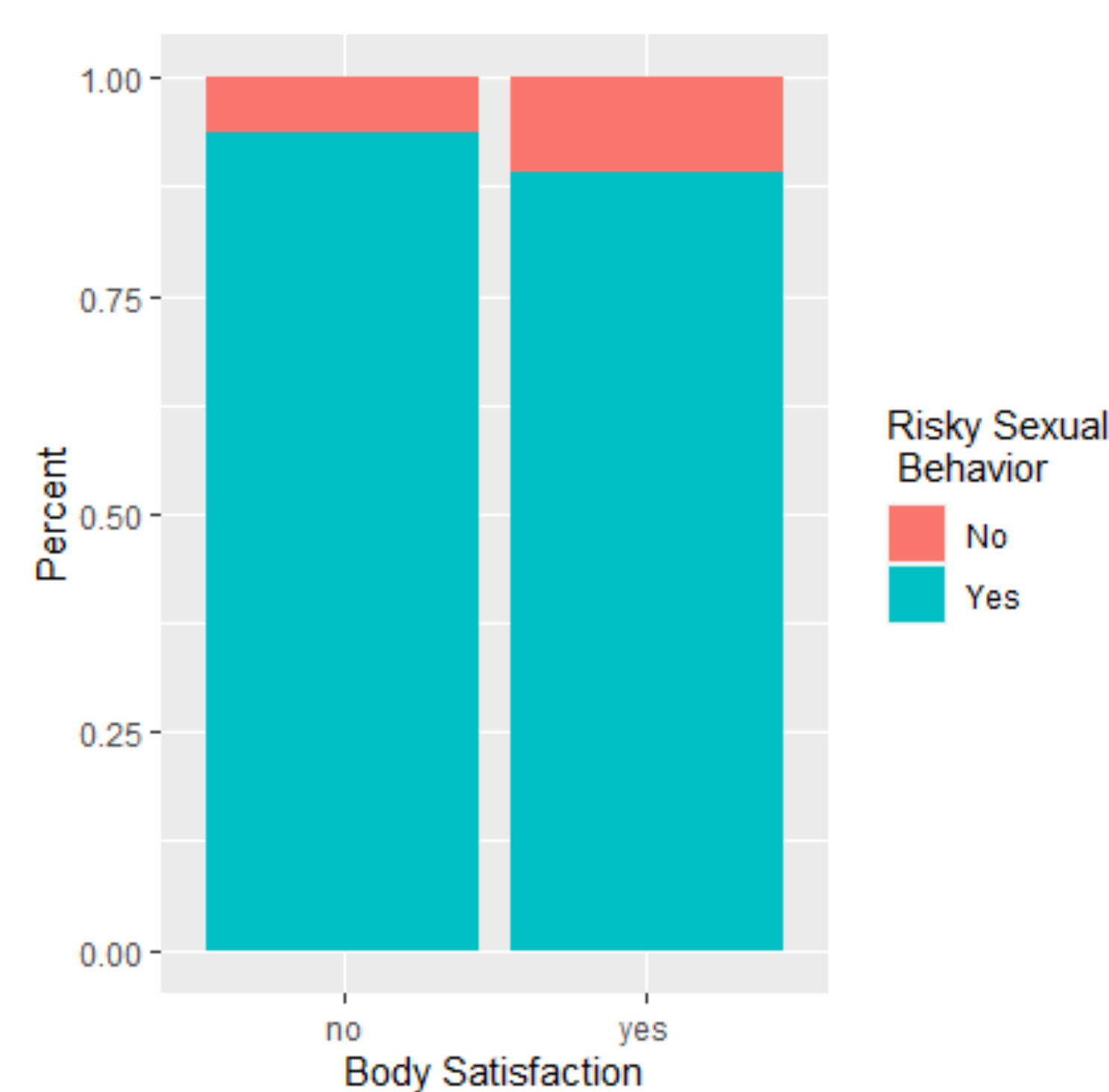


Figure 1: The Relationship Between Body Satisfaction and Risky Sexual Behavior

Multivariate

- Logistic regression analysis showed that body dissatisfaction (O.R .55, CI .37- .86) is significantly associated with the likelihood of engaging in sexually risky behavior.
- After controlling for sexual guilt, it is not significant (p value> .05). Thus sexual guilt was a confounder.
- According to a multiple regression, for people who feel high sexual guilt and have high body image satisfaction, there is less risky sex behavior. Risky sex is highest when there is body image satisfaction and least amount of sexual guilt (Figure 2).

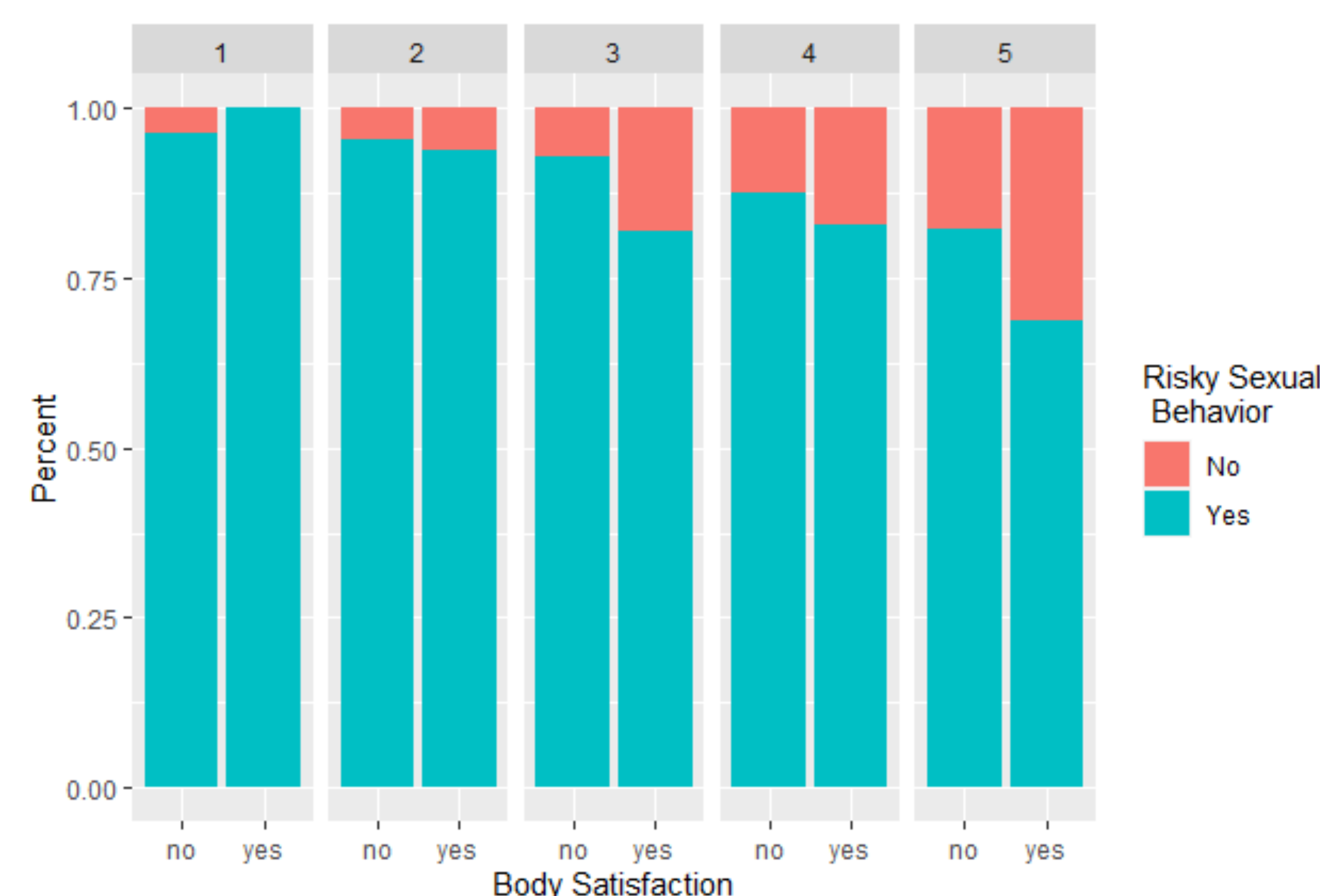


Figure 2: The Relationship Between Sexual Guilt, Body Satisfaction and Risky Sexual Behavior

Discussion

- Body dissatisfaction was significantly associated with risky sexual behavior in adolescents. However, accounting for sexual guilt reduced the significance.
- Sexual Guilt was a confounder between body dissatisfaction and risky sexual behavior.
- These findings may contribute to understanding of the effects of body image issues on sexual behavior, and to understandings of the impact of sexual guilt on risky sexual behavior.
- Future research is needed to determine whether findings still stand in the present and whether eating pathologies have different effects on risky sexual behavior.

References

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