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Dual-Trauma and Assortative Mating Associations Among Dating Young Adults

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Abstract

In the present study, we examined the concept of assortative mating, which means that people tend to find partners who are similar to themselves. Prior research has primarily focused on areas such as attraction and personality, with less evidence on couples who have experienced trauma. Further, less evidence is available about couples who have experienced trauma. The first focus was to detect whether couples who have experienced similar levels of trauma gravitate towards each other using the concept of disordered familiarity and assortative mating. The second question examined whether individual personality traits were also similar, and whether these associations were also evident regarding relationship satisfaction. In our study, 49 couples (N = 98 participants) ranging from ages 18-30 participated in an in-lab protocol. Several measures such as a Relationship Assessment Scale, PTSD Checklist for DSM -5, and the International Personality Item Pool were used for further analyses to examine relationship satisfaction, trauma, and the Big Five personality within couples. Only within couple correlations were shown for openness on the big five personality scale (negatively correlated) and relationship satisfaction (positively correlated). The implications of this work suggest that as one partner reports more openness, the other reports less openness. However, for relationship satisfaction, each partner's relationship satisfaction increased together.

Keywords: Dual-Trauma, Assortative Mating, Disordered Familiarity, Mate selection, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Childhood Trauma, Adultization