Social Support as a Mediator for the Relationship Between Gender Role Nonconformity and Sexual Dysfunction

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INTRODUCTION

- Uncertainty remains about the psychological implications of gender role nonconformity (GRNC), generally defined as men endorsing or performing femininity, and women endorsing or performing masculinity.
- Variance in gender presentation can be associated with negative psychological consequences.
- Homophobic stigmatization and internalized homophobia partially mediate this association, suggesting that it is not the practice of GRNC that causes distress, but the internal or external reactions to it.
- We hypothesized that people reporting higher levels of GRNC experience higher levels of sexual dysfunction, and that social support will mediate this relationship.

MEASURES

**Subtypes of GRNC**

- "How feminine/masculine do you act or behave?"
  - Behavioral GRNC (B-GRNC)
- "How feminine/masculine do you think you are?"
  - Subjective GRNC (S-GRNC)
- "How feminine/masculine do you think you appear and come across to others?"
  - Perceived GRNC (P-GRNC)

**MEDIATION**

- We analyzed data from the Nathan Kline Institute Rockland Sample (n= 781, mean age= 48.99 ± 17.42 years, sex= 67% female), a community sample in New York.
- Participants completed the Trauma Symptom Checklist (TSC-40) and the Sex Role Identity Scale (SRIS).
- GRNC subtypes were quantified using SRIS questions (value range: 1-5); composite variables were created for masculinity and femininity to assess overall GRNC.
- Sexual dysfunction was measured with the relevant TSC-40 subscale (value range: 0-24).
- We performed correlational analyses and a quantile regression to understand the mediation effect of social support on the relationship between GRNC and sexual dysfunction.

CORRELATIONS

- Masculinity and sexual dysfunction
  - Men: $r = 0.138^{* *}$, $p = 0.027$
  - Women: $r = 0.048$, $p = 0.471$

- Femininity and sexual dysfunction
  - Men: $r = 0.103$, $p = 0.369$
  - Women: $r = 0.128^{*}$, $p = 0.128^{*}$

DISCUSSION

- GRNC significantly predicts sexual dysfunction, and social support significantly mediates this relationship.
- Although GRNC is associated with negative psychological and sexual consequences, the impacts may be mediated by the quality and strength of social relationships.
- This suggests that negative reactions to nonconformity, both personal and systemic, may account for decreased well-being in people exhibiting GRNC.
- While limited by the nature of secondary analysis, these results have clinical significance; practitioners should promote healthy sexual functioning for all individuals and be aware that patients exhibiting GRNC may need additional support.

REFERENCES