Depression and Romantic Relationships: Two Views
Because it’s there?

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04.24.09
What is Depression

Cause
Depression is a disorder of unknown cause. It may be neurological in nature, psychological, genetic, or behavioral. It is related to migraines, but the nature of the relationship is poorly understood.

Symptoms
- Chronic negative feelings: sadness, guilt, shame
- Chronic negative self talk
- Suicidal thoughts or actions
The No Brainer

Effect

It seems obvious that depression **must** have an effect on patterns of communication in interpersonal relationships, esp. romantic ones.

Intuitively, we expect an increase in negative communication.
The Brainer

Research Question

How does depression effect patterns of communication in couples?
Approach

- Examine two papers
- Compare the Design
- Compare the Results
- Discuss findings
Outline

1. Introduction
2. Two Approaches
3. Two Conclusions
4. Reconciliation
5. Conclusion
6. Bibliography
Men vs. Women

Duggan 2007

Sex differences in communicative attempts to curtail depression: An inconsistent nurturing as control perspective.

Sample Design
- interview
- 68 couples
- All with one depressed member

Hypothesis: Over time
1. Male partners
   - start negative
   - become ’helpful’
   - end in the middle
2. Female partners
   - start positive
   - go to the middle
3. Women less negative
Depressive vs. ... not

Baucom, et al 2007

Relative Contributions of Relationship Distress and Depression to Communication Patterns in Couples

Sample Design
- interviews
- 3 Studies
  - 134 couples
  - 60 couples
  - 135 couples
- Mix of depressive couples and non-depressive

Hypothesis
- Satisfaction Relates to Depression
- Depression affects interaction patterns
- Marital satisfaction relates to deportation
- Depression uniquely contributes to interaction patterns.
Comparison

Are these studies looking at the same questions?

- The first study assumes the hypotheses of the second!
- Significant overlap in communication behaviors studied
  - Withdraw behaviors
  - Problem solving/helping behaviors
  - Overall positivity/negativity
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Men Vs. Women

Findings

Significant differences exist, largely following the predicted pattern. However, it is not the case that functional women are generally less negative than functional men.
Depressive vs. SHF

Findings

- Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Depression does not affect interaction.
- Hypothesis 4 was not supported. Depression does not uniquely affect interaction patterns.
Comparison

First Study:
- 1994
- Small cohort
- Bias

_Baucom_ is the stronger study.

Second study:
- Larger cohort
- Control group analyzed
- Broader cross section
What did Duggan study?

- Universal behaviors?
- Common CODA behaviors?
- False positives?

Other contradictions:

- “helping” behaviors aren’t withdrawal, problem solving, or husband demand/wife withdraw
Question

Do the finding in *Baucom* negate the findings in *Duggan*? Or is it made clear that *satisfaction* is the variable being studied by *Duggan*?
Relative contributions of relationship distress and depression to communication patterns in couples..

A. Duggan.
Sex differences in communicative attempts to curtail depression: An inconsistent nurturing as control perspective.