

Women, Men and the Bedroom

October 13, 2011

In the racy television hit show, *Sex and the City*, Carrie, one of the main characters tells her best girlfriends that “Men who are too good looking are never good in bed because they never had to be.” This is just one of the many gender stereotypes that audiences were exposed to in this show. The show challenged many stereotypes about sex and gender and refrained from the gender caricatures that typify so much television fare. Now, a new review article written by University of Michigan psychology professor Terri Conley and her team of graduate students – Amy Moors, Jes Matsick, Ali Ziegler and Brandon Valentine – examines how such gender stereotypes fueled the sexual revolution started by women in the 60s, now carried on proudly by Carrie and her gang.

The review article, published in the latest issue of [*Current Directions in Psychological Science*](#), a journal of the [*Association for Psychological Science*](#), challenges the assumptions and myths that people have about sex and the roles that men and women have in the bedroom. According to the authors, “the take home message of our review article is that people should not take gender differences in sexuality at face value.”

Conley’s team set out to review recent research and literature on gender roles and sexuality with the aim of providing a contemporary understanding of how women and men engage, think and desire sex and romantic partners. For example, there are some who think of the fairer sex as being gentle, delicate flowers – shy and timid in the bedroom, with the men being in control, taking charge and showing off their prowess in the bedroom. Since time immemorial, gender stereotypes about sex have persisted and it is only in the modern era that people have begun to shake off stereotypes and challenge the existing assumptions and myths about it. “We’re hoping that this article helps to debunk and dispel common myths and make people more aware of the social factors (rather than supposed biologically based reasons) related to sex,” state Conley and her co-authors.

The idea behind this subject occurred to Conley and her team who felt that psychology needed a more eclectic and representative perspective on contemporary relations between men and women. “In short, the driving force behind this article was that people typically think that men are sex-crazed and women are sexually-prudish; however, we believe that these descriptions may not paint the picture of how men and women typically behave,” says Conley and her co-authors.

After reviewing the various literatures, Conley and her co-authors arrived at several conclusions regarding gender differences in sexuality which demonstrated that none of the original assumptions people have had about how men and women engage in sex, think about sex and desire sex are not as compelling and well-founded as previously believed. “We expect people to be surprised by the small or, in some places completely absent gender differences,” says Conley and her co-authors.

This review article is important for today’s society because it questions how society views sexuality and the role of men and women in sexual relationships. Conley and her co-authors hope that this article

could help debunk some stereotypes that might be the result of inaccurate information.

“When stereotypes based on inaccurate information are left unquestioned, they will continue to impact people’s perceptions. For example, the assumption that men think about sex so much more than women could potentially contribute to the stereotype that men are more sexual, while women are more prudish.”