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Sexual Motivation and Satisfaction Among Consensually Q1 Non-Monogamous and Monogamous Individuals

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Q4 ABSTRACT

Background: Previous research has found differences in sexual motives and, separately, sexual satisfaction in consensually non-monogamous (CNM) and monogamous individuals and that these constructs are related to relationship outcomes (eg, relationship quality).

Aims: The present study sought to refine and expand on previous research by (i) using a more common, validated measure of sexual motives, (ii) measuring sexual satisfaction with multiple partners within CNM relationships, and (iii) examining how sexual motives are related to sexual satisfaction in CNM relationships.

Methods: Participants were recruited from a university and using online forums that CNM individuals frequently use (eg, reddit, Facebook). Individuals recruited included those in non-exclusive relationships with one partner (“non-exclusive single-partner;” n = 40), those in non-exclusive relationships with more than one partner (“non-exclusive multipartner;” n = 87), and monogamous individuals (n = 322). Data were analyzed using MANOVAs and hierarchical multiple regressions.

Outcomes: The main outcome measures of this study are scores on the Why Humans Have Sex Scale and the New Scale for Sexual Satisfaction.

Results: Non-exclusive multipartner participants were more motivated to have sex for physical motivations compared with monogamous participants. Although there were no significant differences in sexual satisfaction when comparing monogamous with non-exclusive multipartner participant’s secondary and primary partners, unique patterns of sexual motivations were associated with sexual satisfaction based on relationship configuration.

Clinical Translation: Understanding the unique sexual motives associated with sexual satisfaction in various relationship configurations may help improve clinical approaches to couples counseling for both CNM and non-CNМ populations.

Strengths and Limitations: Data were collected from CNM participants in a variety of relationship configurations and provide analyses comparing primary and secondary partners. However, these results are limited by a small sample of CNM participants who were intentionally recruited from self-identified CNM e-forums.

Conclusions: These findings add further understanding to the unique traits that characterize CNM individuals and the underlying motivational framework that may encourage individuals to initiate and maintain CNM relationships. **Mitchell VE, Mogilski JK, Donaldson SH, et al. Sexual Motivation and Satisfaction Among Consensually Non-Monogamous and Monogamous Individuals. J Sex Med 2020;XX:XXX–XXX.**

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Consensual non-monogamy (CNM) refers to relationship configurations (eg, secondary/primary models, triads, poly “webs,” or families)^{1,2} with partners who practice ongoing romantic and/or sexual relationships beyond a dyad. CNM individuals in multiple simultaneous relationships may differ from individuals in open relationships, as they may not

necessarily engage in an ongoing romantic and/or sexual relationship with the same individuals over time other than with their primary/main partner. It has been estimated that more than 4–5% of people in American samples are currently involved in CNM relationships³ and, based on U.S. census data, at least one in 5 individuals have been involved in CNM

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relationships at some point in their lives.⁴ Despite the frequency of CNM relationships, research investigating similarities and differences in relationship dynamics between CNM partnerships and monogamous paradigms is still relatively sparse. Yet, recent research documents that CNM and monogamous individuals differ in their sexual motivations^{5,6} and sexual satisfaction,^{5,7,8} and understanding these differences has important applications for providing appropriate clinical and therapeutic interventions to these individuals.

CNM relationships

CNM is an overarching term used to describe a variety of non-exclusive relationship configurations that vary in their degree of commitment to and interaction with non-dyadic partners, although there is no agreed on nomenclature for different relationship configurations. The most common CNM relationship types are swinging, open relationships, and polyamory.¹ Polyamorous relationships entail engagement in extradyadic emotional and/or sexual romantic relationships with or without a dyadic partner.⁹ “Swinging” or “swingers” is used to describe relationships where both partners engage in extradyadic relationships that are typically sexual only in nature, whereas “open relationship” describes configurations wherein individuals engage in extradyadic sex without their partner and usually without emotional/romantic attachment.¹⁰ The present research distinguishes between individuals in non-exclusive relationships with one current partner (here referred to as either “non-exclusive single-partner relationships” or “single-partner CNM relationships”) and those with multiple concurrent romantic and/or sexual partners (here referred to as either “non-exclusive multipartner relationships” or “multipartner CNM relationships”) to account for differences in investment and involvement with multiple romantic and/or sexual partners in these groups, which both fall under the CNM umbrella term.

These relationship configurations can be differentially characterized, in part, by the type and duration of involvement with individuals outside of the dyadic relationship. In this regard, strategic pluralism,¹¹ which is an evolutionary theory of human mating, which posits humans pursue different types of relationships (eg, short-term sexual relationships, long-term committed relationships) depending on different contextual cues and to fulfill specific individual needs, may provide a particularly salient lens through which to investigate different CNM relationship configurations. For example, Mogilski et al¹² and Shackelford found CNM participants rated their primary partners as more desirable as long-term partners than themselves, whereas they rated their secondary partners as less desirable long-term partners than themselves (ie, results indicated that primary and secondary partners may fulfill unique relationship desires for short-term vs long-term partners, with primary partners being considered the most desirable as long-term partners). Individuals in CNM relationships also report they experience

more satisfaction with the level of partner communication and higher commitment to their primary partner and that they spend a greater proportion of time on sexual activity with their secondary compared with their primary partners.¹³ These results suggest individuals in CNM relationship configurations may be satisfying multiple motivations for relationships (ie, maintaining a short-term and/or long-term relationship), wherein different concurrent relationships fulfill unique relationship desires (ie, desire for nurturing long-term partners and the sexual variety of short-term partners). To this degree, it is possible individuals may prefer different CNM relationship configurations that allow these mating motivations to be met. However, which specific mating motivations (ie, sexual motives) are associated with these differences outside of a general difference in short-term/long-term mating orientation is still unclear.

Sexual Motivations and Sexual Satisfaction

Sexual motivations, defined as the reasons why individuals pursue sex, are associated with several important relationship and health outcomes. Understanding differences in sexual motivations between monogamous and CNM individuals have important implications for understanding how and why sex is pursued across relationship types (which differ in ways related to sexual motivation, such as testosterone level.)¹⁴ Motives relating to the physically pleasurable aspects of sex, for example, have been shown to negatively predict safe sex practices, such as condom use,¹⁵ and have been positively associated with using less effective forms of contraception or no contraception in monogamous couples.¹⁶ Impett et al¹⁷ found when individuals in monogamous relationships engage in sex for approach-motivated reasons, they experience an increase in relationship satisfaction, closeness, and fun and a decrease in relationship conflicts. Sexual motivations have also been linked to sexual satisfaction in monogamous couples; Stephenson et al¹⁸ found women’s sexual satisfaction was associated with pleasure, resources, and experience-seeking motivations, whereas men’s sexual satisfaction was associated with self-esteem and resource-related motivations. Sexual satisfaction in monogamous couples, in turn, is reliably associated with relationship satisfaction and stability, love, and commitment in both sexes.^{6,7,18–29}

Broadly, individuals in CNM relationships report higher scores on measures of permissive sexual attitudes (ie, attitudes towards casual sex) and instrumental sexual attitudes (ie, attitudes associated with the biological, physical, and pleasurable nature of sex) than monogamous individuals,^{7,12} and these attitudes are associated with relationship satisfaction in CNM couples (whereas they have been typically associated with relationship dissatisfaction in monogamous couples.)^{22,23} Given that a number of therapeutic perspectives focus on the difference in meaning that sex has for men and women (eg, Emotion Focus Couples Therapy²⁴), it is pertinent that clinical perspectives take into account that sexual motives may differ between CNM and monogamous relationships and among CNM relationship configurations. Although researchers in this area have broadly

characterized differences in sexual motivation between CNM and monogamous individuals with measures of sociosexual orientation, very little research has been performed investigating nuanced differences in sexual motives between these groups (although refer to the study by Wood et al⁶). For example, higher scores on measures of sociosexuality have been associated with lower motivation for having sex for love and commitment for women in monogamous relationships,³⁰ but it is possible that this association is reversed for women in CNM relationships. The lack of detailed information available to clinicians about how CNM and monogamous individuals may vary in terms of sexual motivations and the ways these motivations may differentially be associated with relationship satisfaction may hamper effective counseling practices for this already stigmatized population.^{3,25,26}

Research Aims

The present study examines sexual motives using an evolutionary psychological perspective informed by the theory of strategic pluralism. This perspective conceptualizes sexual motives as a collection of processes that drive individuals to pursue particular mating strategies (eg, to secure a long- or short-term romantic partner).^{11,27} Previous work^{12,13,28} suggests individuals within CNM relationships often mate with individuals who fulfill different relationship needs (eg, emotional support, sexual pleasure). Indeed, most CNM relationships have a primary-secondary configuration,^{12,13} and recent evidence suggests within these relationships, one partner often fulfills relatively more emotional intimacy needs, whereas the other fulfills more sexual needs.¹³ It is possible the motives an individual has for engaging in sex may contribute to or be reflective of their relationship needs.

In line with these findings, the present study sought to investigate (i) the potential motivational framework that may influence the types of sexual relationships individuals maintain, (ii) their sexual satisfaction within those relationships, and (iii) how sexual motives are associated with sexual satisfaction in different relationship models. The current research accomplishes this goal by investigating differences in sexual motives and sexual satisfaction between individuals in non-exclusive and monogamous relationships. The present study distinguishes between non-exclusive multipartner individuals (ie, participants who indicated they currently had more than one romantic and/or sexual partner) and those in non-exclusive single-partner relationships (ie, they are currently in a relationship they identified as non-exclusive and have one partner) to account for possible differences between these groups based on the differences in concurrent, multipartner investment. Use of these categories is consistent with previous work.^{12,29,31,32} It is important to note that this research is particularly focused on investigating sexual motivations among individuals with sexual partners and determining how these motivations are associated with sexual satisfaction. Because of this, individuals along the asexual and asexual spectrum were not included as focal groups in recruitment or in the following analyses.

It was hypothesized that individuals in non-exclusive relationships would express stronger motivations for engaging in sex in specific domains relative to monogamous participants and that motives associated with unrestricted sociosexual orientation (eg, physical motives) may be predictive of sexual satisfaction in CNM but not in monogamous relationships. Previous research has found individuals in CNM relationships spend more time on sexual activities with secondary rather than primary partners,²⁸ although the exact association of sexual satisfaction with partners within CNM relationships is unclear.⁵ Therefore, the analyses comparing sexual satisfaction between monogamous participants and CNM participants with primary and secondary partners were exploratory.

METHOD

Recruitment and Procedures

Participants (N = 522) were recruited from a university in the Midwestern United States (n = 263) and from social networking sites (eg, Facebook, reddit), online forums, and e-groups frequented by individuals who identify as non-monogamous (eg, non-monogamy sub-reddit forums and Facebook groups; n = 186). Participants recruited from online sites were provided a link to access the online Qualtrics survey and were not compensated for their time, whereas university participants were compensated with course credit. Participants who failed to complete at least 50% of the survey (n = 16; average percentage of completion by these participants: 7.10%) and those who spent less than 15 minutes taking the survey (n = 57; average time for these participants to complete the survey: 3.83 min) were excluded from the final analyses owing to large quantities of missing data on focal variables. The final sample consisted of 449 individuals (83 men, 357 women, 9 “other”; age: M = 23.15 years, SD = 7.66, range = 18–71). All participants provided informed consent before completing survey materials, and all materials and procedures were approved by the institutional review board of the university.

All materials were presented using the online survey program Qualtrics. After providing informed consent, participants provided demographic information (ie, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation) and information about their current romantic relationship(s). Participants who indicated that they were currently in a multipartner CNM relationship were then asked, “Think of the 2 romantic partners with whom you currently spend the most amount of time. Of these 2 individuals, now think of the person who best fits the following description: The person you give the most time, energy, and priority in your life. Your relationship with this person includes high levels of intimacy, attraction and commitment; shared life paths and goals; similar beliefs with respect to parenting, economics, housing, important values, ongoing emotional support, etc. You could see yourself having a shared lifelong future together with this person. This description may not completely describe either individual, but please think of the person who is best described in this way.”

Participants were then asked to provide the first name of the partner that best fit the aforementioned description (referred to here as their primary partner), the first name of the other partner with whom they spend the most time (referred to here as their secondary partner), and the respective gender and sexual orientation of each individual. Using piped text, the name of each partner was inserted into future instructions (eg, “Thinking about your sex life during the last 6 months with Jane, please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects”) and questions to increase clarity about which partner the questions were referencing. Partners of CNM participants were thus never referred to as “primary” or “secondary” throughout the survey. Monogamous and single-partner CNM participants were also asked to provide their partner’s first name and information about their partner’s gender and sexual orientation. Participants also completed the Why Humans Have Sex Scale (YSEX)³⁰ and the New Scale for Sexual Satisfaction (NSSS)³³ in a random order. Participants in non-exclusive multipartner relationships were asked to complete the NSSS once while thinking about their sex life with their primary partner and again while considering their sex life with their secondary partner. All other participants completed the NSSS only once.

Participants

As a participation requirement, all participants had to indicate they were currently in a romantic relationship of some sort. Because non-exclusive multipartner participants completed the NSSS twice, considering both their primary and secondary partners, their median time to complete the survey (41.98 min) was longer than monogamous (33.03 min) or single-partner CNM (36.74 min) participants. Of the final sample, all participants who identified their gender as “other” indicated they were agender, genderqueer, bigender, non-binary, gender fluid, or did not identify with a specific gender. These participants indicated they were assigned the female sex at birth (ie, are listed as female on their birth certificate). Because a small portion of the total participant sample consisted of these individuals, creating a third group in the analysis plan for gender would not yield statistically meaningful results for this group and would reduce overall power. To include the data provided by these participants in the analyses, all of the following tests were run first including these individuals in the group that identified as female and then again without. There were no significant differences in any analyses based on this grouping, and so the larger grouping variables were maintained. In addition, 4 participants in the current sample identified as being asexual. These participants were included in the following analyses because they all indicated motivations for sexual activity based on the YSEX scale scores (ie, they are sexually active). Refer to [Table 1](#) for demographic information broken down by the relationship type.

Participants were separated into 3 separate groups (monogamous, non-exclusive single-partner, or non-exclusive multipartner) based

on their responses to 3 questions about their romantic relationship(s). As per the previous work,^{12,31} participants indicated whether they were currently in an exclusive (ie, both partners have agreed dating other people is not permitted) or non-exclusive (ie, both partners have agreed dating other people is permitted) relationship. Second, participants indicated whether they were currently in a romantic and/or sexual relationship with one and only one other person or with more than one person. Finally, participants reported how many individuals they were currently in a physical and/or romantic relationship with. Individuals who indicated they were currently in an exclusive romantic and/or sexual relationship with only one other individual were categorized as “monogamous” (n = 322; age: M = 20.52, SD = 4.21, range = 18–55 years), those who indicated they were in a non-exclusive romantic and/or sexual relationship with 2 or more partners were categorized as “non-exclusive multipartner” (n = 87; age: M = 30.44, SD = 9.34, range = 18–55 years), and participants who reported they were in a non-exclusive romantic and/or sexual relationship with one individual were categorized as in an “non-exclusive single-partner” (n = 40; age: M = 28.43, SD = 11.52, range = 18–71 years). These distinctions were made to adequately capture individuals who are both currently and consensually in non-monogamous relationships. Individuals who indicated they were currently in a non-exclusive relationship with one other person were included as a third relationship category because of the potential for differences in continued romantic and/or sexual commitment to extradyadic partners in this relationship configuration. Most participants who were categorized as being in multipartner and single-partner CNM relationships were recruited from online sources (multipartner CNM: university: n = 11, online: n = 76; single-partner CNM: university: n = 8, online: n = 32), whereas most monogamous participants were recruited from the university (university: n = 244, online: n = 78).

Multipartner CNM participants answered a series of questions about the number of partners they had (2 partners: 59.8%; 3 partners: 25.3%; 4 or more partners: 14.9%) and were asked to describe their relationship structure by selecting any of the following options that applied to their relationship:

- I am in a primary relationship with one person (ie, an emotional/sexual relationship characterized by a high degree of commitment, shared life goals, and affection) and in secondary relationships with one or more other people (ie, close, ongoing emotional/sexual relationship(s), but with a lesser degree of commitment than a primary relationship) (n = 57)
- I am equally involved with only 2 people” (n = 20)
- I am equally involved with more than 2 people (n = 4)
- I am involved in a poly ‘web’, ‘family’, or ‘intimate network’ (ie, a social web resulting from having romantic relationships among you, your romantic partners, their romantic partners, and so forth) (n = 21)

Owing to concerns with power in the analyses and the majority of the non-exclusive multipartner participants indicating that they were currently involved in a primary-secondary

Table 1. Sexual orientation and ethnicity reported by participant gender and relationship configuration

Monogamous	Women (n = 272), n (%)	Men (n = 50), n (%)	
Heterosexual	249 (55.46%)	47 (10.46%)	
Homosexual	8 (1.78%)		
Bisexual or Pansexual	14 (3.12%)	2 (.45%)	
Asexual	1 (.22%)	1 (.22%)	
White	216 (48.1%)	41 (9.13%)	
Black	26 (5.79%)	5 (1.11%)	
Hispanic	4 (.89%)	1 (.22%)	
Asian	11 (2.45%)	1 (.22%)	
Other Race	14 (3.12%)	1 (.22%)	
Age (years), M(SD)	20.1 (7.40)	23.07 (7.40)	
Open	Women (n = 25)	Men (n = 14)	Other (n = 1)
Heterosexual	11 (2.44%)	11 (2.45%)	1 (.22%)
Homosexual	3 (.67%)		
Bisexual or Pansexual	12 (2.67%)	3 (.67%)	
Asexual			
White	21 (4.68%)	14 (3.12%)	1 (.22%)
Black	1 (.22%)		
Hispanic	3 (.67%)		
Asian			
Other Race			
Age, M(SD)	24.17 (8.23)	35.07 (13.49)	
CNM	Women (n = 60)	Men (n = 19)	Other (n = 8)
Heterosexual	25 (5.57%)	12 (2.67%)	1 (.22%)
Homosexual			
Bisexual or Pansexual	42 (9.35%)	6 (1.34%)	7 (1.56%)
Asexual	1 (.22%)	1 (.22%)	
White	52 (11.58%)	15 (3.34%)	7 (1.56%)
Black	1 (.22%)		
Hispanic	2 (.45%)	1 (.22%)	
Asian	2 (.45%)	2 (.45%)	1 (.22%)
Other Race	3 (.67%)	1 (.22%)	
Age, M(SD)	30.02 (9.06)	34.31 (10.70)	

CNM = consensual non-monogamy.

Participants in the 3 relationship groups differed significantly on the distribution of gender and sexual orientation. Percentages reflect percentage of the final overall sample that are grouped into each relationship category.

configuration, the aforementioned information is provided for descriptive purposes only, and responses were not compared within different multipartner configurations (eg, 2-partner vs 3-partner structures).

Measures

The Why Humans Have Sex Scale

The YSEX³⁰ is a 140-item scale that measures a variety of sexual motives. Participants indicate on a Likert scale from 1 (none of my sexual experiences) to 5 (all of my sexual experiences) how frequently a set of statements outlining reasons for having sex apply to them. They were specifically prompted to respond how frequently each of the items on the scale had led them to have sex in

“the past” to capture general sexual motivations. The YSEX inventory consists of 4 separate factors, each encompassing several subfactors: physical (eg, “It feels good”; subfactors: stress reduction, pleasure, physical desirability, and experience-seeking), goal attainment (eg, “I wanted to have a child”; subfactors: resources, social status, revenge, utilitarian), emotional (eg, “I realized I was in love”; subfactors: love and commitment, expression), and insecurity (eg, “I wanted to keep my partner from straying”; subfactors: self-esteem boost, duty/pressure, mate guarding). Here, scores on factors and subfactors of the YSEX were obtained by using the mean for the items representing each factor and subfactor so that scores on each factor and subfactor were comparable with one another (previous research has used sum-scores; refer to Table 2 for factor and subfactor means, standard deviations, and reliabilities).

Table 2. Mean differences between men and women on YSEX factor and subfactor scores

YSEX factors	YSEX subfactors	Men (n = 83) M(SD)	Women (n = 357) M(SD)	F	P	η^2
Physical		2.49 (0.07)	2.20 (0.04)	6.62	.01	0.015
	Stress Reduction	2.03 (0.07)	1.72 (0.04)	14.40	<.001	0.032
	Pleasure	3.39 (0.12)	3.06 (0.05)	7.28	.007	0.016
	Physical Desirability	2.62 (0.09)	2.00 (0.08)	42.73	<.001	0.089
	Experience-Seeking	2.25 (0.08)	1.92 (0.04)	14.60	<.001	0.032
Goal-Attainment		1.31 (0.04)	1.15 (0.02)	9.60	.002	0.021
	Resources	1.24 (0.04)	1.08 (0.02)	16.20	<.001	0.036
	Social Status	1.31 (0.04)	1.09 (0.02)	27.46	<.001	0.059
	Revenge	1.29 (0.04)	1.13 (0.02)	15.46	<.001	0.034
	Utilitarian	1.44 (0.05)	1.30 (0.02)	7.57	.006	0.017
Emotional		2.42 (0.08)	2.41 (0.04)	0.015	.904	0.000
	Love and Commitment	2.83 (0.85)	2.73 (0.87)	0.84	.361	0.002
	Expression	1.84 (0.66)	1.80 (0.62)	0.20	.655	0.000
Insecurity		1.57 (0.06)	1.49 (0.03)	.495	.482	0.001
	Self-Esteem Boost	1.64 (0.74)	1.52 (0.57)	2.49	.115	0.006
	Duty/Pressure	1.53 (0.66)	1.43 (0.51)	2.23	.136	0.005
	Mate Guarding	1.57 (0.74)	1.43 (0.57)	3.69	.055	0.008

YSEX = Why Humans Have Sex Scale.

Men generally scored higher on all physical and goal-attainment subfactors compared to women.

The New Scale for Sexual Satisfaction

The NSSS³³ is a 20-item scale developed to measure sexual satisfaction across several domains that influence satisfaction with one's sexual experiences (ie, sexual sensations, sexual exchange, emotional connectedness, and sexual activity.) Participants are asked to reflect on their sex life during the previous 6 months and rate their satisfaction with a list of items from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied). The NSSS contains 2 ten-item subscales: Ego-focused (eg, "The quality of my orgasms"; $\alpha = 0.92$) and Partner and Activity-focused satisfaction (eg, "The balance between what I give and receive during sex"; $\alpha = 0.93$). Scores for both subscales are obtained by calculating the mean of the responses.

Planned Analyses

To determine if there were group-level differences in the YSEX factor and subfactor scores, MANOVAs were performed with relationship configuration and gender entered as between-subject factors and YSEX factors entered as dependent variables. Post-hoc Tukey's tests were used to compare means across the 3 relationship configurations to determine which groups varied from one another. For YSEX factors that showed significant differences based on relationship configuration, follow-up MANOVAs with relationship configuration and gender were used to examine group differences in subfactor scores. Post-hoc Tukey's tests were used to compare group differences on subfactor scores. To compare scores on the NSSS subscales across the 3 relationship configurations, 2 MANOVAs were used with relationship configuration and gender entered as between-subject variables and scores on the NSSS subscales entered as dependent variables. One MANOVA included scores of non-exclusive multipartner participants considering their primary

partner, and another MANOVA included scores considering their secondary partner. To compare scores on sexual satisfaction for non-exclusive multipartner participants' reports for primary and secondary partners, repeated-measures ANOVAs were used, with scores for primary and secondary partners entered as within-subject variables and participant gender entered as a between-subject variable.

To determine if different sexual motives predict sexual satisfaction among monogamous, single-partner CNM, and multipartner CNM relationships, a series of separate hierarchical multiple regressions were used for each relationship configuration (ie, the data were split by the relationship type, and separate regressions were used for each relationship category.) In every regression, age and gender were entered in the first step and the 4 factors of the YSEX were entered into the second step. For monogamous and single-partner CNM participants, 2 analyses were performed with ego-centered and partner-centered satisfaction as the outcome variables, respectively. For multipartner CNM participants, who reported NSSS scores for both their primary and secondary partner, 4 regression analyses were performed, 2 with NSSS subscale scores for primary partners and 2 with NSSS subscale scores for secondary partners.

RESULTS

The following analyses were performed using SPSS 25.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL). All follow-up analyses were corrected for multiple comparisons (critical $P = .01$).

Motivations for Sex

There were main effects of gender ($F[4,440] = 5.53$, $P < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.047$) and relationship status (F

[8,882] = 3.08, $P = .002$, $\eta^2 = 0.027$) on YSEX factor scores but no significant interaction ($F[8,882] = 0.167$, $P = .101$, $\eta^2 = 0.015$). To determine if participant demographics confounded the effect of relationship status on YSEX factor scores, a MANCOVA including the main effects of age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in addition to the main effects of gender and relationship status (and the gender \times relationship interaction term) was specified. The main effect of relationship status on YSEX factor scores remained significant when controlling for the main effects of age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in addition to gender ($F[8,786] = 2.371$, $P = .016$, $\eta^2 = 0.024$). Therefore, the more parsimonious analyses containing gender and relationship category was maintained for the following post-hoc analyses. Post-hoc analyses indicated men had higher scores on physical ($P = .01$, $\eta^2 = 0.015$) and goal attainment ($P = .002$, $\eta^2 = 0.021$) factors compared with women (see Table 2).

There was also a main effect of relationship status on physical ($P = .002$, $\eta^2 = 0.028$) and goal attainment ($P = .013$, $\eta^2 = 0.019$) but not emotional ($P = .54$, $\eta^2 = 0.003$) or insecurity ($P = .059$, $\eta^2 = 0.013$) YSEX factor scores (refer to Table 3 for means, standard deviations, and detailed MANOVA results of these analyses). Individuals in non-exclusive, multi-partner relationships had higher scores on the physical factor and the goal-attainment factor compared with monogamous but not non-exclusive single-partner participants, and the scores of monogamous and non-exclusive single-partner participants did not differ on these 2 factors.

There were also significant differences in the subfactors of the physical factor scale of the YSEX. These subfactors include stress reduction (ie, having sex to reduce stress), pleasure (ie, having sex to experience physical pleasure), physical desirability (ie, having sex with someone because they are particularly desirable), and experience-seeking (ie, having sex to experience new partners or novel sexual situations). There were significant differences in the pleasure ($P < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.038$) and experience-seeking subscales ($P < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.048$) but no difference in the stress reduction ($P = .052$, $\eta^2 = 0.013$) and physical desirability subscales ($P = .204$, $\eta^2 = 0.007$) based on relationship category. Non-exclusive multipartner participants had significantly higher scores on the pleasure subfactor than monogamous participants but not non-exclusive single-partner participants. Non-exclusive single-partner participants did not differ significantly from monogamous participants on the pleasure subfactor. Non-exclusive multipartner participants had significantly higher scores on the experience-seeking subfactor compared with monogamous participants and higher scores than non-exclusive single-partner participants ($P = .035$), although this latter relationship fell short of the critical P -value after correcting for multiple comparisons.

Scores on the goal-attainment subfactors also differed by the relationship type. These subfactors include resources (ie, having sex to obtain physical resources from a partner), social status (ie, having sex with another individual, such as a celebrity, to increase social status), revenge (ie, having extradyadic sex to get "revenge" on a partner who has cheated), and utilitarian motivations (ie,

Table 3. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons of YSEX factor and subfactor scores comparing monogamous, non-exclusive single partner, and non-exclusive multi-partner participants controlling for gender

YSEX factors (α)	YSEX subfactors (α)	Monogamous (n = 322)	Non-exclusive, single partner (n = 40)	Non- exclusive, multi partner (n = 87)	F	P	η^2
Physical (.96)		2.07 (0.69) _a	2.25 (0.62) _{a,b}	2.53 (0.49) _b	6.45	.002	0.028
	Stress Reduction (.88)	1.86 (0.05)	1.82 (0.12)	2.08 (0.09)	2.978	.052	0.013
	Pleasure (.90)	3.08 (0.07) _a	3.32 (0.16) _{a,b}	3.68 (0.12) _b	8.711	<.001	0.038
	Physical Desirability (.88)	2.34 (0.06)	2.21 (0.13)	2.40 (0.10)	1.597	.204	0.007
Goal Attainment (.95)	Experience Seeking (.91)	1.98 (0.05) _a	2.12 (0.11) _{a,b}	2.46 (0.09) _b	11.102	<.001	0.048
		1.15 (0.32)	1.13 (0.12)	1.25 (0.41)	4.41	.013	0.019
	Resources (.92)	1.14 (0.02)	1.08 (0.05)	1.27 (0.04) _b	4.891	.008	0.022
	Social Status (.89)	1.20 (0.03)	1.10 (0.06)	1.26 (0.04)	2.796	.062	0.012
	Revenge (.93)	1.19 (0.03)	1.12 (0.06)	1.33 (0.05)	4.304	.014	0.019
Emotional (.91)	Utilitarian (.80)	1.37 (0.03) _a	1.23 (0.07)	1.46 (0.06)	3.092	.046	0.014
		2.35 (0.74)	2.29 (0.54)	2.53 (0.53)	0.61	.544	0.003
Insecurity (.95)		1.45 (0.50)	1.41 (0.37)	1.62 (0.59)	2.85	.059	0.013

YSEX = Why Humans Have Sex Scale.

Letters refer to pairwise comparisons within a row. Means with different letters are significantly different from one another ($P < .01$). For instance, monogamous participants had significantly lower scores on the physical factor of the YSEX compare to non-exclusive multi-partner participants, indicated by a unique letter for each group. Conversely, non-exclusive single-partner individuals did not differ significantly from either group and have both 'a' and 'b' subscripts to denote this lack of significant difference.

having sex achieve a purpose or outcome, for example to fall asleep). There were significant differences on scores for the resources ($P = .008$, $\eta^2 = 0.022$), revenge ($P = .014$, $\eta^2 = 0.019$), and utilitarian ($P = .046$, $\eta^2 = 0.014$) subfactors based on relationship status. Non-exclusive multipartner participants had higher scores on the resources subfactor compared with monogamous (although correction for multiple comparisons rendered this finding non-significant; $P = .019$) but not non-exclusive single-partner ($P = .136$) participants. There were no other post-hoc comparisons of goal-attainment subfactors that were significant. Tests were run to determine whether recruitment methods influenced these results, and controlling for recruitment site resulted in the difference between goal-attainment scores becoming marginally significant, suggesting that these specific results should be interpreted cautiously.

Sexual Satisfaction

In comparisons between monogamous, non-exclusive single-partner participants, and primary partnerships for non-exclusive multipartner partnerships, there were no significant differences on either NSSS subscales ($P = .977$, $\eta^2 = 0.001$; Refer Table 4 for means, standard deviations, and detailed MANOVA results). There was a main effect of gender ($P < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.039$), but the effect was not significant in follow-up ANOVAs for either the self ($F[1,422] = 0.544$, $P = .461$, $\eta^2 = 0.001$) or ego ($F[1,422] = 2.26$, $P = .075$, $\eta^2 = 0.008$) subscales of the NSSS. For the second comparison considering secondary partners of non-exclusive multipartner participants, there was no main effect of relationship

status on sexual satisfaction scores ($P = .956$, $\eta^2 = 0.001$), but there was a main effect of gender ($P = .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.037$) and a relationship status by gender interaction ($F[4,844] = 3.73$, $P = .005$, $\eta^2 = 0.017$). This interaction effect was still significant after running a MANCOVA controlling for the main effects of age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity in addition to the main effects of gender and relationship type (and the relationship type \times gender interaction) on sexual satisfaction scores ($F[4,754] = 3.73$, $P = .008$, $\eta^2 = 0.018$). Therefore, the model with gender and relationship type was maintained for post-hoc analyses. Follow-up analyses indicated that there was no effect of relationship status on satisfaction for men ($F[4,158] = 0.922$, $P = .453$, $\eta^2 = 0.023$), but there was an effect on satisfaction for women ($F[4,158] = 5.752$, $P < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.033$). Follow-up analyses for women revealed there was an effect of relationship category for partner-centered satisfaction ($F[2,342] = 5.494$, $P = .004$, $\eta^2 = 0.031$) but not for ego centered satisfaction ($F[2,342] = 1.653$, $P = .193$, $\eta^2 = 0.010$). Women in non-exclusive multipartner relationships had marginally lower partner-centered satisfaction with their secondary partner ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.85$) than did women in monogamous relationships with their partner ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.84$, $P = .013$) and marginally lower scores than women in non-exclusive single-partner relationships ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.68$, $P = .012$). Women in non-exclusive single-partner and monogamous relationships did not differ on partner-centered sexual satisfaction ($P = .378$).

For comparisons of satisfaction within non-exclusive multipartner relationships, there were no significant main effects of

Table 4. Comparisons of partner-centered and ego-centered sexual satisfaction subscales of the NSSS for monogamous, non-exclusive single-partner, and non-exclusive multi-partner participants

		Monogamous	Non-exclusive single partner	Non-exclusive multiple partner
Primary Partner	NSSS Subscale	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
	Ego-centered	3.70 (0.86)	3.95 (0.73)	3.82 (0.91)
	Partner-centered	3.83 (0.86)	3.89 (0.75)	3.79 (0.81)
		F	P	η^2
	Relationship Configuration	0.115	.977	0.001
Secondary Partner	Gender	8.456	<.001	0.039*
	Relationship Configuration * Gender Interaction	2.284	.059	0.011
	NSSS Subscale	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
	Ego-centered			3.79 (0.83)
Secondary Partner	Partner-centered			3.6 (0.79)
		F	P	η^2
	Relationship Configuration	0.166	.956	0.001
	Gender	7.957	<.001	0.037*
	Relationship Configuration * Gender Interaction	3.727	.005	0.017

NSSS = New Scale for Sexual Satisfaction.

There were no significant differences in sexual satisfaction for comparisons of the 3 groups including non-exclusive multi-partner participants' rating of their primary partners. Women in non-exclusive multi-partner relationships were marginally less satisfied with their secondary partner than women in monogamous or non-exclusive single-partner relationships.

*Significant effect that fell short of significant after correction for multiple comparisons.

partner type on partner-centered sexual satisfaction ($F[1,72] = 3.00, P = .087, \eta^2 = 0.040$) or on ego-centered sexual satisfaction ($F[1,72] = 0.113, P = .738, \eta^2 = 0.002$) in primary vs secondary relationships. There were also no significant interactions between gender and partner-centered or ego-centered sexual satisfaction (all $F_s < 2.658$, all $p_s > 0.107$). In other words, non-exclusive multipartner individuals reported similar sexual satisfaction with both primary and secondary partners.

Association of Sexual Motives and Sexual Satisfaction

Monogamous Relationships

Age and gender alone were significantly associated with monogamous participants' scores on the ego-centered subscale of the NSSS ($F[2, 289] = 4.55, R^2 = 0.032, P = .011$). Gender was significantly predictive of ego-centered sexual satisfaction scores ($\beta = -0.181, P = .003$). Men in monogamous relationships had significantly higher scores on ego-centered sexual satisfaction than did monogamous women ($t[309] = 2.935, P = .004$). Age was not significantly associated with sexual satisfaction in monogamous participants ($\beta = -0.037, P = .539$). The second step of the regression, which included the 4 factors of the YSEX, accounted for more variance in ego-centered sexual satisfaction than did age and gender alone ($R^2 = 0.112, \Delta R^2 = 0.081, F_{\text{change}} = 6.46, P < .001$). Scores on the goal-attainment ($\beta = 2.007, P = .046$) and emotional ($\beta = 1.956, P = .051$) factors were both marginally positively associated with scores on ego-centered sexual satisfaction. Higher scores on the insecurity factor were negatively associated with ego-centered sexual satisfaction ($\beta = -4.716, P < .001$). Scores on the physical factor were not associated with ego-centered sexual satisfaction ($\beta = 0.128, P = .149$).

For the regression with partner-centered sexual satisfaction, age ($\beta = -0.093, P = .127$) and gender ($\beta = 0.032, P = .608$) alone were not significantly predictive of partner-centered sexual satisfaction scores ($F[2, 289] = 1.597, R^2 = 0.011, P = .204$). With the inclusion of the YSEX factors in the second step, the model fit the data well ($F[6, 283] = 2.555, R^2 = 0.266, P = .002$) and significantly better than the first step ($\Delta R^2 = 0.051, F_{\text{change}} = 4.539, P < .001$). Scores on the physical ($\beta = 0.028, P = .757$) and emotional ($\beta = 0.137, P = .110$) factors were not associated with partner-centered sexual satisfaction scores. Goal-attainment scores were positively associated ($\beta = 0.216, P = .006$) and insecurity scores were negatively associated ($\beta = -0.363, P < .001$) with partner-centered sexual satisfaction.

Non-Exclusive Single-Partner Relationships

For participants in non-exclusive single-partner relationships, age ($\beta = 0.218, P = .248$) and gender ($\beta = 0.186, P = .321$) alone were not significantly predictive of ego-centered sexual satisfaction ($F[2, 35] = 0.833, R^2 = 0.045, P = .443$). The

inclusion of YSEX factors as predictors fit the data well ($F[6, 31] = 1.053, R^2 = 0.348, P = .029$) and resulted in a significantly better fit than the first step alone ($\Delta R^2 = 0.302, F_{\text{change}} = 3.591, P = .016$). Scores on the physical factor were marginally positively associated with ego-centered satisfaction ($\beta = 0.408, P = .033$), and scores on the insecurity factor were marginally negatively associated with ego-centered satisfaction ($\beta = -0.431, P = .036$). Scores on the goal-attainment ($\beta = -0.195, P = .357$) and emotional ($\beta = 0.023, P = .893$) factors were not significantly predictive of ego-centered sexual satisfaction.

The first step of the model with partner-centered sexual satisfaction as the outcome variable and age and gender entered as predictors did not fit the data well ($F[2, 37] = 1.282, R^2 = 0.124, P = .098$), and age ($\beta = 0.123, P = .482$) was not a significant predictor of partner-centered sexual satisfaction. Gender was marginally associated with partner-centered sexual satisfaction ($\beta = 0.391, P = .034$), wherein men in single-partner CNM relationships had lower partner-centered sexual satisfaction scores than women in single-partner CNM relationships ($t[37] = -2.266, P = .029$). The second step of this regression with the 4 YSEX factors entered as predictors did not fit the data well ($F[6, 31] = 2.279, R^2 = 0.306, P = .061$), and none of the factors of the YSEX were associated with partner-centered sexual satisfaction (all $\beta_s < |0.299|$, all $p_s > 0.123$).

Non-Exclusive Multipartner Relationships: Primary Partners

For participants in CNM relationships, age ($\beta = -0.087, P = .480$) and gender ($\beta = 0.002, P = .989$) were poor predictors of ego-centered sexual satisfaction with their primary partners ($F(2, 69) = 0.265, R^2 = 0.008, P = .768$). The second step of the model fit the data well ($F[6, 65] = 3.174, R^2 = 0.227, P = .009$) and resulted in a significantly better fit than the first step ($\Delta R^2 = 0.219, F_{\text{change}} = 4.60, P = .002$). Higher scores on the physical factor were associated with higher scores on ego-centered sexual satisfaction with primary partners ($\beta = 0.531, P < .001$), and scores on the goal-attainment ($\beta = 0.302, P = .113$), emotional ($\beta = -0.382, P = .091$), and insecurity ($\beta = -0.279, P = .214$) factors were not associated with ego-centered sexual satisfaction with primary partners. A separate regression with the 4 physical subfactors entered into the second step rather than the YSEX factors indicated that no individual subfactor (stress reduction, pleasure, physical desirability, and experience-seeking) were significantly associated with ego-centered sexual satisfaction with a primary partner (all $\beta_s < |0.264|$, all $p_s > 0.077$).

Both age ($\beta = -0.032, P = .794$) and gender ($\beta = 0.067, P = .584$) were poor predictors of partner-centered sexual satisfaction with primary partners ($F[2, 69] = 0.224, R^2 = 0.006, P = .800$), and the addition of 4 YSEX factors in the second step did not result in a better fit ($F[6, 65] = 1.813, R^2 = 0.143, P = .110$).

Non-Exclusive Multipartner Relationships: Secondary Partners

Non-exclusive multi-partner participants' ego-centered satisfaction with their secondary partners was not significantly predicted by age ($\beta = -0.056$, $P = .641$) but was associated with gender ($\beta = -0.245$, $P = .045$), with men reporting marginally higher ego-centered satisfaction scores with their secondary partner than women ($t[75] = 2.56$, $P = .013$) in this group. However, gender and age alone did not significantly predict scores on ego-centered satisfaction with secondary partners ($F[2, 68] = 2.086$, $R^2 = 0.058$, $P = .132$). The addition of the 4 YSEX factors into the second step did not significantly predict scores either ($F[6, 64] = 1.564$, $R^2 = 0.128$, $P = .172$). For partner-centered satisfaction with secondary partners, age ($\beta = -0.180$, $P = .133$) and gender ($\beta = -0.257$, $P = .034$) as predictors fit the data marginally well ($F[2, 68] = 2.978$, $R^2 = 0.081$, $P = .058$). Men in non-exclusive multipartner relationships had marginally higher scores on partner-centered satisfaction with secondary partners than women in this group ($t[75] = 2.504$, $P = .014$). The addition of the 4 YSEX factors in the second step did not fit the data well ($F[6, 64] = 0.850$, $R^2 = 0.123$, $P = .94$).

DISCUSSION

In regards to the first aim of the present study (to investigate differences in sexual motivations between relationship configurations), these results indicate that non-exclusive multipartner, non-exclusive single-partner, and monogamous participants were motivated to have sex for different reasons. In particular, participants in non-exclusive multipartner relationships had higher scores on the physical and goal-attainment factors of the YSEX scale than monogamous participants. These participants reported being more motivated to have sex for experience-seeking and pleasure purposes than monogamous individuals. Non-exclusive single-partner participants did not differ significantly from either non-exclusive multipartner participants or monogamous participants and appeared to have mean scores on the YSEX factors and subfactors that were a middle ground between the other 2 groups. These findings that individuals in non-exclusive multipartner relationships are more motivated to have sex for physical reasons are in line with a previous work.⁶ The aforementioned results expand on this research by having participants providing information about what has motivated them to have sex throughout their entire sexual history more generally, rather than just at the last time they had sex and that individuals in the non-exclusive multipartner sample were more motivated to have sex for pleasure and experience-seeking is congruous with previous literature. Individuals in CNM relationships score higher on measure of sociosexuality than those in monogamous relationships,^{6,12,32} and the physical subfactors of the YSEX are positively associated with higher levels of sociosexuality.³⁰ Sociosexuality is also positively associated with sexual sensation-seeking,³⁴ which the experience-seeking subfactor of the

YSEX may reflect. The current research nuances prior research demonstrating broad differences in sexual motivation between CNM and monogamous populations by focusing on specific facets of unrestricted sociosexuality that are uniquely different between groups.

Our initial results showing that non-exclusive multipartner participants report higher scores on the goal attainment factor than either non-exclusive single-partner or monogamous participants are novel. Individuals in CNM relationships have less restricted sociosexual orientations, and sociosexuality is positively associated with the goal attainment factor of the YSEX.³⁰ These results may reflect differences in the way sex is perceived across relationship types. A more open attitude towards sex and sexual experiences may be associated with treating or using sex as a tangible resource with which to achieve or attain goals (ie, sexual economics theory³⁵). This interpretation is speculative, especially considering these findings may have been driven by the individuals in non-exclusive relationships from the student sample and should be further investigated. Interestingly, although non-exclusive multipartner participants had marginally higher goal-attainment motivation scores, scores on this subfactor were not associated with sexual satisfaction in non-exclusive multipartner relationships. However, goal-attainment motives were positively associated with both ego and partner-centered satisfaction in monogamous participants. This may suggest that sexual goal attainment is integral to sexual satisfaction in monogamous relationships. Further research may be necessary to clarify this association.

Regarding aims 2 and 3, the present study found there were no differences in sexual satisfaction based on relationship configuration but that sexual satisfaction was predicted by different types of motivations based on relationship configuration. Some researchers have found CNM participants, broadly, report slightly more sexual satisfaction than monogamous individuals, although this was influenced by what type of CNM relationship individuals were in (ie, swingers were more satisfied than monogamous individuals but those in open relationships were not).⁸ Other studies have found there are no differences in sexual satisfaction between monogamous and CNM individuals.⁶ So, although it was found that different factors on the YSEX scale were associated with satisfaction in the 3 relationship categories, all participants were just as satisfied with their sexual experiences, at least in the current sample. These findings contribute to a growing body of results demonstrating that CNM relationships do not result in less satisfaction than monogamous relationships, in contrast to what is commonly misperceived.³ These results also demonstrate that unique motivational factors are associated with sexual satisfaction in non-monogamous relationships, corroborating previous results,^{22,23} which is valuable information for clinicians and counselors to account for when providing services to non-monogamous clients.

Furthermore, non-exclusive multipartner participants were not any more satisfied with self-centered or partner-centered facets of

sexual satisfaction in their primary and secondary relationships. Prior work has found primary vs secondary partners may fulfill different types of relationship needs. For example, secondary partners may fulfill more strictly sexual needs compared with primary partners, and polyamorous individuals report gaining more nurturing experiences from their primary compared with secondary partners.¹³ The current findings that physical motives were only predictive of sexual satisfaction for non-exclusive multipartner participants' ego-centered satisfaction with their primary partner support the idea that partner-dependent satisfaction may be influenced by different factors. No sexual motives measured by the YSEX were associated with non-exclusive multipartner participants' satisfaction with their secondary partners in the present sample, which could suggest that other interpersonal motives drive satisfaction with non-primary partners. This finding may also point to a potential shortcoming of this measure of sexual motivation and others that have been developed in mononormative populations. Measures of sexual satisfaction have been developed in largely monogamous contexts and tested almost exclusively only in these populations. The results of this study may demonstrate the need for the development of a more inclusive measure of sexual motivations in non-monogamous populations to adequately capture these factors across a variety of relationship configurations. There may be components of sexual motivations in CNM contexts that are unique to these relationship structures (eg, how sexually satisfied one is with their primary partner may subsequently influence sexual motivations for non-primary partners). Certainly, future research would benefit from performing confirmatory factor analyses comparing the factor structure of the YSEX in non-monogamous populations (which the current data set could not support owing to insufficient power) and develop novel scales measuring relationship constructs like sexual motivation and satisfaction in non-monogamous samples. This approach would be particularly suited to uncover idiosyncratic motivations that are specific to CNM groups and ethos.

It is possible the differences in motivation to engage in sex observed here are reflective of different mating strategies individuals in CNM and monogamous relationships are taking. Sexual strategies theory²⁷ and strategic pluralism¹¹ both posit that humans have evolved a plethora of mating strategies that optimize lifetime reproductive fitness and which vary based on temporal contexts (ie, long-term vs short-term relationships) and environmental cues (eg, partner availability, partner quality, one's own mate value). Considering CNM from this perspective, it is possible individuals in CNM relationships are pursuing a pluralistic strategy that balances some of the costs and benefits of having a committed long-term partner and multiple short-term partners. Differences in underlying motivations for engaging in sex may be part of a complex framework of psychological mechanisms that influence the type of mating strategy one pursues. If an individual is motivated very strongly to engage in sex for emotional support or for experience-seeking, for example,

it is possible a single partner may not be able to adequately meet some of these needs. This discrepancy in need-fulfillment and motivation may therefore influence whether one seeks a new partner for a monogamous relationship, whether someone decides to join or initiate an open or CNM relationship, and how satisfied an individual is in their current relationship configuration. These findings also corroborate and expand on research indicating CNM relationship satisfaction is positively associated with unrestricted sociosexual orientations and contextualizes these results in a strategically pluralistic framework. Unique motivations for sex, such as pleasure or experience-seeking motives, may add stability and satisfaction to a CNM relationship. The different sexual motivations were associated with sexual satisfaction based on relationship configuration in this sample suggests that specific combinations of motives may be more or less suited to support relationship satisfaction in different relationship contexts.

Clinical Applications

These findings have important clinical implications. The most common reason that couples seek therapy is to cope with issues and problems surrounding sex and sexual satisfaction,³⁶ yet many clinicians may not currently be appropriately equipped to help clients who are CNM. For instance, a recent study found that a sample of current and potential psychotherapists pathologized CNM relationships relative to monogamous relationships in part owing to their non-exclusivity.³⁷ The symptoms expressed by monogamous individuals in vignettes were attributed to factors outside of individuals' romantic relationships (eg, work problems, the stress of day-to-day life), whereas vignettes with CNM individuals had symptomology attributed to relationship-centric factors (eg, the fact that CNM relationships were non-exclusive, that one party might pressure the other to maintain a CNM relationship.) This tendency towards stigmatizing relationship configuration rather than focusing on individual factors that contribute to patient symptoms may interfere with clinician's ability to successfully treat patients in CNM. Other research has found that CNM therapy clients find therapists particularly helpful when therapists, among other things, remain open to discussing issues relating to relationship structure and provide clients with techniques that are in line with the client's goals³⁸ and that a number of therapeutic perspectives focus on the difference in meaning that sex has for men and women (eg, Emotion Focus Couples Therapy²⁴), it seems pertinent that clinical perspectives take into account that sexual motives may differ between CNM and monogamous relationships and among CNM relationship configurations.

The results of the present research specifically document the ways in which sexual motivation can be differentially associated with sexual satisfaction in different relationship contexts, information which is important information for clinicians to have access to so that they may avoid treating CNM individuals from a blanket mononormative perspective (ie, a perspective takes monogamous

relationships as the norm and assumes that CNM relationships do not afford similar benefits as monogamous relationships.) Similar to other research focusing on sexual motivations and sexual health in minority populations (eg, individuals who practice BDSM),³⁹ this research contributes to a growing body of information documenting clinically-relevant differences and similarities between CNM and monogamous individuals. Having clinicians who are not knowledgeable enough about CNM practices has been associated with early termination of therapy,³⁸ and a number of couples therapy techniques have also been developed around the notion that men and women have unique sexual motives.²⁴ The results of the present study suggest that whether particular motives are associated with sexual satisfaction, an important component of relationship satisfaction, which is dependent on the relationship type. Therefore, taking a blanket approach for treating men and women in different relationship configurations based on mononormative standards may not be the best practice. In all, satisfaction in a given relationship context may be due to the alignment between motivations and the capacity to pursue those motivations within one's current relationship structure. Lack of appropriate relationship literacy and acceptance among practitioners may hinder this alignment process.

Limitations and Future Directions

The current research had several limitations that should be taken into consideration. Perhaps the most important limitation of this research and research looking at CNM in general is a need for larger, more heterogeneous samples. This study used a limited sample of non-exclusive participants who were specifically recruited from online sites frequented by individuals who self-identified as CNM. This targeted recruitment of participants in addition to the fact that compensation was not offered to non-student participants may have resulted in online participants self-selecting into the study. Future research may avoid specifically targeting individuals who self-identify as CNM⁵ to avoid oversampling from those who might be more involved in the CNM community structure. Furthermore, the present study's approach did not capture differences between different CNM relationships (eg, swingers, polyfidelity) or differences between relationship configurations (eg, poly webs, V-structured relationships). For instance, it is possible individuals in swinging relationships, who may engage in more non-committal sexual relationships compared with individuals in CNM relationships with a primary and secondary partner, may report a unique set of sexual motives. Future research should disambiguate differences between CNM relationship types and structures, such as comparisons between non-hierarchical multipartner structures and self-identified hierarchical relationship structures in which case larger samples of participants who maintain unique relationship structures is needed. It is also possible the manner in which relationships were categorized into exclusive and non-exclusive relationships fails to adequately capture all participants who were currently in non-exclusive relationships. Participants were asked if "dating" others was permissible in their current relationship, and how participant's interpreted "dating" may have influenced whether

they indicated if their relationship was exclusive or not. For example, if "dating" is perceived as having a strong emotional connotation, it is possible some individuals in non-exclusive single-partner relationships would have indicated they were exclusive by this rule even if they had casual, non-emotional relationships with other people. Future research may also investigate how infidelity is conceptualized and perceived based on relationship configuration and how infidelity influences sexual satisfaction and motivation in monogamous and CNM relationships. In addition, of the current sample, no men reported being homosexual and future research should consider recruiting participants with a broader variety of sexual orientations to be able to adequately investigate whether these results replicate in more diverse samples of CNM participants. Similarly, future work could collect more culturally relevant demographic variables, such as socioeconomic status, highest level of education, and religious/spiritual beliefs. Finally, participants were asked in the present study to provide information about what motivated them to have sex in general, but it may be fruitful to investigate differences in motivations individuals express for having sex with their primary vs secondary partners in future work. This may provide information about the specific needs those relationships fulfill that may have consequences for relationship outcomes that are specific to partner type. Furthermore, the present study explicitly addressed sexual motivations and sexual satisfaction in different relationship contexts, but this framework may not account for sexual or romantic aspects of relationships that asexual and aromantic individuals in CNM populations' pursue.

CONCLUSION

The present study is one of very few investigations into differences in sexual motives that may contribute to relationship and sexual satisfaction in CNM relationships. This area of research may prove prolific for researchers interested in testing novel hypotheses about sexual motivation or sexual satisfaction/need-fulfillment, as many models (eg, the Investment Model)⁴⁰ of these concepts are based around monogamous paradigms. Furthermore, understanding relationship processes within CNM relationships has the potential to shed light on pluralistic mating strategies that are relatively understudied compared with forms of monogamy (eg, serial or long-term monogamy). Finally, this research may help reduce the stigma surrounding CNM relationships^{3,25} and improve health services provided to individuals in CNM relationships by approaching CNM relationships empirically and providing quantitative, objective data showing they result in at least some of the same positive psychological outcomes that may typically only be attributed to long-term, monogamous relationships.

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