

(Hetero)sexual Compliance with Unwanted Casual Sex: Associations with Feelings about First Sex and Sexual Self-Perceptions

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Abstract Sexual compliance involves willing consent to unwanted sex. The current study examined experiences and correlates of compliant sex with casual partners. Guided by sexual script theory, feelings about first partnered sex and sexual self-perceptions were identified as possible correlates of compliance. Potential moderating effects of gender also were explored. Sexually active heterosexual undergraduates ($N=258$) in the northeastern U.S. responded to self-report measures of desire, pleasure, and emotional discomfort associated with first partnered sex, sexual self-awareness, sexual refusal efficacy, and compliance with vaginal and oral sex. About a third of the sample reported complying with casual sex at least once. Overall, very few participants who complied with a casual partner also complied with a committed partner. More women than men complied with giving oral sex to a casual partner; there were no gender differences in compliance with either vaginal sex or receiving oral sex. Emotional discomfort with first partnered sex was positively associated with compliant casual sex only among women. Although women reported less desire and pleasure associated with first partnered sex than men, neither desire nor pleasure from first sex were associated with casual compliance for either gender. Refusal efficacy was negatively associated with compliant casual sex for both women and men. The implications of these findings for future research and educating college students about compliance and its correlates are discussed.

Keywords Sexual compliance · Casual sex · First sex · Sexual refusal efficacy · Gender differences

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Introduction

Sexual compliance is unwanted yet consensual acquiescence to sex. Sexual compliance occurs around the world, including in Japan, Russia, and the U.S., with especially high rates in the U.S. (Sprecher et al. 1994). Although in the U.S. college women comply with unwanted sex more frequently than men (Impett and Peplau 2003; Sanchez et al. 2012), both college women and men in committed relationships report complying with unwanted activities such as kissing, touching, vaginal sex, and oral sex (O'Sullivan and Allgeier 1998; Vannier and O'Sullivan 2010). Significant variability overall and between genders suggests that individual difference variables may affect compliance with unwanted sex. The current research applied sexual script theory (Gagnon 1990; Simon and Gagnon 1986) to study U.S. undergraduates' experiences of compliant sex with casual partners.

Sexual compliance typically is conceptualized as a type of relationship sacrifice and studied in the context of committed relationships. In the U.S. and in Canada, undergraduates of both genders endorse an "implicit contract" involving sexual obligation to committed partners (Vannier and O'Sullivan 2010, p. 434) and motives for complying with sex that reflect an investment in relationship maintenance (e.g., Impett and Peplau 2002; Katz and Tirone 2009; Quinn-Nilas et al. 2013; Vannier and O'Sullivan 2010). To date, little research has investigated sexual compliance in the absence of a committed relationship, such as a hook up. According to Lewis et al. (2012) a hook up is

a sexual encounter where two people are physically intimate (e.g., kissing, touching, oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex) with someone whom they are not dating or in a romantic relationship with at the time, and in which it

is understood there is no mutual expectation of a romantic commitment (p. 1219).

Two studies with U.S. undergraduates suggest that compliant sex sometimes occurs during hook ups. In a study of hook up culture, Flack et al. (2007) found that 23 % of women and 7 % of men reported one or more episodes of unwanted, possibly compliant sex since starting college. Moreover, Katz et al. (2012) found that 16 % of women and 3 % of men reported complying with sex at least once within the first 2 months on campus; two-thirds of those who were compliant reported consenting to unwanted sex during a hook up. Research is needed to better understand why some emerging adults comply with unwanted casual sex with hook up partners in the absence of commitment to an ongoing relationship.

Because rates of sexual compliance and gender differences in compliance are particularly high in the U.S. compared to other countries (Sprecher et al. 1994), and hook ups are most common in college settings (Bogle 2008), studies of U.S. undergraduates may help researchers understand why some young adults comply with unwanted sex during hook ups. Understanding compliance with casual hook up sex is important because of its potential consequences, including unintended pregnancy, STIs, feelings of disempowerment, loss of control, or limited sexual pleasure (e.g., Lewis et al. 2012; Owen and Fincham 2011). When people consent to unwanted sex, they act counter to their own sexual feelings while hiding these feelings from partners. It is important to understand factors that help explain the ability to interact with partners, including casual sexual partners, in an authentic, genuine way.

Sexual Script Theory

In the current study, sexual script theory was used to develop hypotheses about young adults' compliance with unwanted casual sex. Sexual scripts are cognitive schemata that operate on cultural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal levels to guide expectations about sexual behavior (Gagnon 1990; Simon and Gagnon 1986). Sexual scripts dictate a sequence of generally predictable behaviors; less intimate acts, such as kissing, typically occur first, and if the interaction continues, kissing precedes more intimate acts, such as genital touching, which typically precede more intimate acts such as vaginal, oral, or anal sex (Gagnon 1990). Furthermore, in the U.S. and similar cultures, sexual scripts are gendered. That is, scripts prescribe different roles for women and men: agentic, dominant men are expected to feel desire and initiate sexual activity with submissive (or resistant) women who may or may not also feel desire (Gavey 2005; Sanchez et al. 2012).

Many young women and men internalize elements of gendered sexual scripts. For example, in a German sample of undergraduates, thoughts of sex prompted women and at least some men to act in gender-stereotypic ways (Hundhammer

and Mussweiler 2013). Many women in the U.S. automatically associated sex with passivity and submission (Kiefer and Sanchez 2007a; Kiefer et al. 2006), and sex-primed men in Germany showed greater dominance or aggression (Mussweiler and Förster 2000), although some men in the U.S. inhibited dominance or aggression (Kiefer and Sanchez 2007b). Sexual scripts also encourage both women and men to prioritize men's apparent desire and pleasure during heterosexual interactions (Gavey 2005). For example, in U.S. samples of heterosexual youth, men were more likely to receive and women were more likely to give oral sex (Vannier and O'Sullivan 2012).

In the current study, sexual script theory provided a conceptual framework for studying sexual compliance during hook ups. Sexual (and other types of social) scripts help individuals make meaning out of interactions with others, particularly in ambiguous or novel situations (Gagnon 1990). As such, sexual scripts may be particularly likely to influence compliance during hook ups because hook ups are ambiguous (i.e., may involve a range of behaviors) and typically involve new, unfamiliar partners (e.g., Bogle 2008; Epstein et al. 2009). Vannier and O'Sullivan (2010) speculated that there may be few gender differences in compliance in committed relationships in which partners have established patterns of interaction. However, it is unclear whether there are gender differences in compliance with new, casual partners. Because gendered sexual scripts may guide behavior with new sexual partners, the current study examined potential gender differences in casual compliance with different types of sex as well as potential gender differences in correlates of compliance.

Compliant Casual Sex and First Partnered Sex

Studies of sexual scripts among heterosexually active undergraduates in the U.S. suggest that individuals vary in the degree to which gendered sexual scripts guide their sexual behavior (Epstein et al. 2009; Masters et al. 2013). One potential influence on the development of sexual scripts that may forecast later compliance with casual partners is an individual's experience of first partnered sex. That is, those who learn from experience that sexual interactions center on partner desire and pleasure, not personal desire and pleasure, may subsequently go along with sex that they do not want.

For many youth, first partnered sex is a memorable experience that may shape expectations for future interactions. First partnered sex may involve vaginal sex, oral sex, or both. The ways that young women and men experience first sex may be affected by traditional sexual scripts. For example, Holland et al. (2000) describe young men's experiences of first vaginal sex in the U.K. as an opportunity to establish sexual agency, legitimize their masculinity among peers, and identify as having achieved manhood. In contrast, ambivalence is commonly reported by women in the U.K. (Holland

et al. 2000) and the U.S. (Houts 2005), who report both wanting and not wanting first vaginal sex. Girls in the U.S. often describe first vaginal sex as something that “just happened” (Tolman 2002, p. 2; see also Mitchell and Wellings 1998), implying a passive role in which female sexual desire and pleasure were, at most, peripheral. Likewise, in U.S. samples of adolescents and young adults, men report greater desire for first vaginal sex than women (Michels et al. 2005), and men are more likely to report pleasure from first vaginal sex (Guggino and Ponzetti 1997; Sprecher et al. 1995). In contrast, young women report greater emotional discomfort than men, including guilt (Guggino and Ponzetti 1997; Sprecher et al. 1995). Yet despite relative gender differences in desire or pleasure, young women often report some degree of desire and pleasure associated with first vaginal sex (Tanner et al. 2010), and young men often report performance anxiety (Michels et al. 2005; Sprecher et al. 1995).

Because adolescents in the U.S. perceive oral sex as less risky, more common, and more acceptable than vaginal sex (Halpern-Felsher et al. 2005; Michels, et al. 2005), and because oral sex may substitute for vaginal sex (Hunt and Curtis 2006), feelings about first oral sex, not just vaginal sex, may forecast compliance. Less research exists on feelings about first oral sex, although the available research matches with expectations based on traditional sexual scripts. In general, oral sex among youth involves fellatio; cunnilingus is rare (Vannier and O’Sullivan 2012). Moreover, in a U.S. sample, Mahay et al. (2001) found both fellatio and cunnilingus were less appealing to young women than men. According to Burns et al. (2011), fellatio involves active performance demands and anxieties in which adolescent girls in the U.S. are “students” who need practice and boys are “teachers” who provide evaluative feedback (p. 246). Likewise, cunnilingus may evoke physical body self-consciousness in girls and women in the U.S. (Bay-Cheng et al. 2009), New Zealand, and the U.K. (Braun and Wilkinson 2001). Still, some women report desire and pleasure associated with both types of oral sex, particularly with committed partners (Bay-Cheng et al. 2009), and some men do not (Mahay et al. 2001).

Overall, research on first partnered sex suggests that there are gender differences in feelings about first vaginal and first oral sex, yet feelings among individual women and men vary. Subjective feelings about first partnered sex, including desire, pleasure, and emotional discomfort, may forecast later sexual compliance because such feelings may shape expectations about future interactions with partners. Sexual desire involves “being in the mood” due to sexual interest (Peterson and Muehlenhard 2007, p. 78). Pleasure includes positive feelings of satisfaction, love, and romance, whereas emotional discomfort includes feelings of sadness, embarrassment, guilt, and tension (Guggino and Ponzetti 1997). Both male and female adolescents whose first partnered experiences involved high personal desire and pleasure and low discomfort may perceive

such feelings as necessary in future sexual interactions. Thus, they may be less willing to go along with sex that is unwanted. In contrast, adolescents whose first experiences involve low desire, pleasure, or comfort may not expect to feel differently during later sexual interactions. Such adolescents may be more willing to participate in unwanted sex because such situations are familiar and expected. The current study investigated whether feelings about first sex would be negatively associated with compliant casual sex for both women and men. In addition, potential gender differences in the expected associations between feelings about first sex and compliance with casual sex were explored.

Compliant Casual Sex and Sexual Self-Perceptions

Beyond feelings about first sex, gendered sexual scripts may foster sexual self-perceptions that forecast compliance with casual sex. More specifically, sexual self-perceptions associated with these prescribed roles may foster compliance among both women and men. For example, some women may comply with unwanted sex because women are expected to be pleasing to men, as shown in research with U.S. undergraduates (Bay-Cheng and Eliseo-Arras 2008). A focus on pleasing others could foster a focus on the feelings of partners rather than oneself, decreasing personal sexual awareness and increasing the likelihood of compliance. Likewise, some men may comply with unwanted sexual activities because sexual refusals violate expectations for masculinity (Gavey 2005). To the degree that individuals feel constrained from refusing unwanted sexual advances, they may experience decreased sexual refusal efficacy and an increased likelihood of compliance. For these reasons, sexual awareness and refusal efficacy were examined as correlates of compliance with casual sex.

Sexual awareness involves attention to internal sexual feelings and arousal (Snell et al. 1991). There may be gender differences in sexual awareness. Traditional sexual scripts suggest that feelings of sexual desire, arousal, and interest in sex are less acceptable among girls and women (e.g., Gavey 2005; Tolman 2002). Similarly, Moore and Davidson (1997) suggest that feelings of guilt about sex may decrease U.S. undergraduate women’s feelings of arousal and satisfaction. It may be expected that sexual awareness is negatively associated with compliance. Those who are not attuned to their own internal sexual feelings of arousal may be more likely to comply with unwanted sex than those who are attuned because individuals low in awareness will not necessarily feel aroused during sexual encounters. The current study tested whether sexual awareness was negatively associated with compliant casual sex and also explored potential gender differences in this expected association.

Another self-perception is *refusal efficacy*: confidence in refusing unwanted sexual advances. Gender differences in refusal efficacy have been inconsistently reported. Although

Quinn-Nilas et al. (2013) reported no gender difference in refusal efficacy among Canadian undergraduates, most studies have shown that female adolescents in the U.S. reported *greater* refusal efficacy than male adolescents (Mitchell et al. 2005; Rosenthal et al. 1991; Rostosky et al. 2008). A possible explanation for gender differences in refusal efficacy is that refusing sex may run counter to men's sexually scripted roles as dominant and pleasure-seeking (Gavey 2005). Regardless, refusal efficacy is a central construct in Kennett's self-control model of women's sexual compliance. For example, Kennett et al. (2013) found that Canadian college women with greater refusal efficacy also reported less compliant activity, broadly defined, with current or recent dating partners. In contrast, Quinn-Nilas et al. (2013) found that Canadian college men's level of compliant activity, broadly defined, was unrelated to men's refusal efficacy. Although these studies suggest potential gender differences in the relationship between refusal efficacy and compliance generally, research is needed to investigate refusal efficacy as a possible correlate of compliance with casual sex for both women and men. In addition, possible moderating effects of gender warrant study given that refusal efficacy was associated with compliance in past research with women (Kennett et al. 2013) but not men (Quinn-Nilas et al. 2013).

Hypotheses

The present research examined gender differences and similarities in U.S. undergraduates' experiences and correlates of complying with casual sex. Sexually active heterosexual undergraduates who had participated in at least one hook up were sampled. We explored whether and to what degree individuals who complied with sex with a casual partner also reported having complied with sex with a committed partner. In addition, based on sexual script theory, we examined gender differences in types of compliant sex (i.e., vaginal or oral) with casual partners and correlates of compliance: feelings about first sex (i.e., desire, pleasure, and emotional discomfort) and sexual self-perceptions (i.e., sexual awareness and refusal efficacy).

Because sexual scripts position men as initiators of sexual encounters with women (Sanchez et al. 2012), more women than men were expected to have complied with casual sex (Hypothesis 1). Furthermore, because sexual scripts prioritize male pleasure (Gavey 2005), more women than men were expected to have complied with performing casual oral sex (Hypothesis 2). We also expected gender differences in the potential correlates of compliant casual sex based on past research with adolescents and young adults in the U.S. Compared to men, women were expected to report that their first partnered sexual experiences involved less desire, less pleasure, and more emotional discomfort (Hypothesis 3). Women also were expected to report less sexual awareness

(Hypothesis 4) and more refusal efficacy (Hypothesis 5) than men. Beyond these potential gender differences, compliance with casual sex was expected to be associated with feelings about first sex, specifically, less desire, less pleasure, and more emotional discomfort (Hypothesis 6). Likewise, compliance with casual sex was also expected to be associated with sexual self-perceptions, specifically, less sexual awareness (Hypothesis 7) and less refusal efficacy (Hypothesis 8). Finally, moderating effects of gender were tested to identify potential gender differences in the expected associations between these hypothesized correlates of compliance and compliance with casual sex.

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students at a small Northeastern public liberal arts college in the U.S. participated in this study. Eligible participants a) were between 18 and 23, b) identified as heterosexual, c) reported past consensual partnered sex (vaginal, oral, or both), and d) reported involvement in one or more hook ups since age 14. There were 258 eligible participants (72.5 % women). Demographic information is presented in Table 1. As can be seen, male participants were significantly older than female participants.

Measures

Participants were asked to report their lifetime number of consensual vaginal and oral sex partners. Vaginal sex was defined as *any penetration by a male's penis into a female's vagina, regardless of whether he ejaculated*. Oral sex was defined as *any contact between one person's mouth and another person's genitals, regardless of whether orgasm occurred*. Specific questions were: *At any time prior to today have you consented to vaginal sex with a person of the opposite sex? How many*

Table 1 Tests of gender differences in demographic variables

	Women (n=187)	Men (n=71)	Test statistic
Age (<i>M, SD</i>)	19.17 (1.10)	19.55 (1.22)	$t(256)=-2.40^*$
Self-identified race/ethnicity (%; <i>n</i>)			$\chi^2(4)=9.36$
Asian	3.2 (6)	9.9 (7)	
Black/African American	1.1 (2)	4.2 (3)	
Hispanic/Latino/Chicano	6.4 (12)	5.6 (4)	
White/Caucasian	86.6 (162)	80.3 (57)	
Other	2.7 (5)	0	

* $p < .05$

vaginal sex partners have you had in your lifetime? Identical questions were asked about experiences with oral sex. The total number of sex partners was calculated as the sum of vaginal and oral sex partners.

Participants read a definition of hook ups and then were asked about their overall number of hook up experiences using questions adapted from Paul et al. (2000). Specific questions were *During high school/before college, how many times did you ‘hook up?’* and *Since you started college, how many times have you ‘hooked up?’* Responses to each question were summed to create an overall number of hook ups.

Several questions were used to assess participants’ first vaginal and oral sexual experiences. For first oral sex only, participants were asked how they participated (i.e., if they gave, received, or both). Participants were asked their age at the time of first vaginal sex and their age at the time of first oral sex. Participants also were asked the degree to which each of 16 items from Peterson and Muehlenhard’s (2007, p. 78) “in the mood” subscale affected their level of desire for each type of first sex. A sample item is: *I felt interested in and excited about the possibility of the sexual act.* Items were rated on a 4 point scale (0 = *not a reason for wanting sex*, 1 = *a weak reason for wanting sex*, 2 = *a moderate reason for wanting sex*, 3 = *a strong reason for wanting sex*). Separate items assessed desire for first vaginal sex and first oral sex. However, desire for both types of sex were highly related and thus averaged as an overall index of desire for first sex (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.92$).

To assess feelings of emotional pleasure and discomfort from first sex, participants were asked *Immediately after your first time with vaginal sexual intercourse, how much did you feel* and then rated twelve feelings adapted from Guggino and Ponzetti (1997). Identical items were asked regarding participants’ first time with oral sex. Feelings reflecting pleasure were *pleasure, romance, satisfaction, excitement, and loving.* Feelings reflecting emotional discomfort were *sadness, exploited, tense, fearful, guilt, nervous, and embarrassed.* Each item was rated on a 7 point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). Responses to items for both first vaginal and first oral sex were highly inter-correlated and averaged. Higher pleasure scores reflected more positive feelings from both first vaginal and oral sex (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.85$), and higher emotional discomfort scores reflected more negative feelings from both first vaginal and oral sex (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.91$).

Sexual awareness was assessed with the 6-item sexual consciousness subscale of the *Sexual Awareness Scale* (Snell et al. 1991). Participants rated each item on a 5 point scale (0 = *not at all characteristic of me*, 4 = *very characteristic of me*). A sample item is: *I am very aware of my sexual feelings.* Responses are averaged, with higher scores reflecting more awareness (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.82$).

Refusal efficacy was assessed with the eight item *Say No* subscale from the *Sexual Self-Efficacy Scale* (Rosenthal et al.

1991). Respondents were asked their confidence regarding their ability to engage in each activity on a 5 point scale (1 = *not at all certain*, 5 = *absolutely certain*). A sample item is: *Have a sexual encounter without feeling obligated to have intercourse.* Responses were averaged; higher scores reflected greater refusal efficacy (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.72$).

Compliance, or consensual unwanted sex, was assessed by adapting questions from Impett and Peplau (2002): *Since age 14, how many times have you willingly consented to vaginal or oral sex, even though you didn’t want to? Only consider times when the person you were with was not pressuring you.* Following this query, participants listed the initials of all of the different partners with whom they had complied with sex. Participants also were instructed to indicate their relationship to each person at the time and to circle each partner who represented a hook up after a hook up had been defined. Finally, for each partner, participants were asked to indicate the type of sex (e.g., vaginal or oral, if oral, please specify, giving, receiving, or both). Dichotomous variables were created based on reports of compliance with different types of partners. The presence of compliant casual sex was based on whether participants reported one or more episodes of compliant sex with a casual partner, and the presence of committed compliance was based on whether participants reported one or more episodes of compliant sex with a committed partner. In addition, the presence of compliance with different types of casual sex (i.e., vaginal sex, giving oral sex, receiving oral sex) was coded based on reports of at least one episode of each type of compliant sex with a causal hook up partner.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through a voluntary human subjects pool for an anonymous study of *College Students’ First Sexual Experiences*. Participants arrived at an on campus classroom and sat in alternating rows to ensure privacy. After providing informed consent, participants provided self-report data on the measures listed above as well as some additional measures assessing typical alcohol use and intoxication. At the end of the data collection session, a full written debriefing was provided. Sessions lasted less than 1 h.

Results

As shown in Table 1, there was a significant gender difference in age at the time of the study. To determine whether age might be confounded with the expected relationships among gender, sexual compliance, feelings about first sex, and sexual self-perceptions, Pearson’s r correlations were conducted to test associations between age and continuous variables; Spearman’s ρ correlations were conducted to test associations between age and the presence of any compliance. Age

was not significantly associated with any of these study variables and thus was not controlled for in subsequent analyses.

Participants' sexual histories, overall and by participant gender, are listed in Table 2. On average, participants were about just over 17 years old for first vaginal sex and 16.5 years old at first oral sex. Men and women did not differ in age at first sex. Most first oral sex experiences involved women giving and men receiving sex. Most participants had multiple vaginal sex and oral sex partners, with men reporting more partners than women. The average number of hook ups was 11.70; there was no gender difference in number of hook ups.

Overall, about 31 % ($n=79$) of the sample reported complying with casual sex (oral, vaginal, or both) at least once. Univariate analyses were conducted to determine whether participants who complied with casual sex differed from participants who did not in terms of sexual history variables. Results showed that participants who complied with casual sex did not differ from others in age of first vaginal sex, first oral sex, or number of hook ups but did report more total sex partners ($M=9.42$, $SD=8.24$) than those who did not comply with casual sex ($M=6.53$, $SD=5.76$), $F(1, 254)=6.95$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.03$. To determine whether number of sexual partners might be confound the expected relationships among compliant casual sex, feelings about first sex, and sexual self-perceptions, zero-order correlations were conducted. Results showed that participants' total number of sex partners was significantly associated with less desire for first sex, $r(257)=-.14$, $p<.05$, less pleasure from first sex, $r(257)=-.28$, $p<.001$,

and less refusal efficacy, $r(257)=-.24$, $p<.001$. Accordingly, total number of sexual partners was controlled for in subsequent analyses.

Sexual Compliance with Casual and Committed Partners

Overall, 24 % ($n=62$) of the sample reported complying with unwanted sex (oral, vaginal, or both) at least once with a committed relationship partner. In order to assess the degree to which individuals who complied with sex with a committed partner also complied with a casual partner, a chi-squared analysis was conducted to determine whether compliance with casual partners was independent of compliance with committed partners. Results showed that compliance with casual partners was not independent of compliance with committed partners, $\chi^2(1)=12.06$, $p=.001$. Participants who complied with one type of partner rarely complied with the other type. That is, about 87 % of those who reported compliance with a casual partner reported no compliance with a committed partner. Likewise, 90 % of those who reported compliance with a committed partner reported no compliance with a casual partner. Only eight participants reported complying with unwanted sex with both types of partners. Because of this lack of independence, compliance with committed partners was controlled for in subsequent analyses investigating potential correlates of compliant casual sex.

Hypothesis 1 was that more women than men would report complying with casual sex. Contrary to this prediction, a chi-squared analysis showed no significant difference in any compliance when different types of sex were combined (see Table 2). However, when different types of casual sex were examined separately, a chi-squared analysis showed that a greater proportion of women than men complied with giving oral sex at least once. This finding supported Hypothesis 2. There were no significant gender differences in reports of any compliance with either casual vaginal sex or receiving oral sex. Also, as shown in Table 2, gender was independent of any type of compliant sex with a committed partner.

Feelings about First Sex and Sexual Self-Perceptions as a Function Compliant Casual Sex and Gender

To test the remaining study hypotheses, a 2 (any compliant casual sex: absent or present) \times 2 (gender: female or male) multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted. Total number of sex partners and compliance with committed partners were included as covariates. The five dependent measures were desire, pleasure, and emotional discomfort with first sex, sexual awareness, and refusal efficacy. Results showed an overall main effect of gender, $F(5, 248)=17.14$, $p<.001$, Pillai's Trace=.26, no overall main effect of compliant casual sex, $F(5, 248)=1.55$, $p=.13$, Pillai's Trace=.03, and no overall significant interaction, $F(5,$

Table 2 Tests of gender differences in sexual history

	Women ($n=187$)	Men ($n=71$)	Test statistic
Age, first vaginal sex (M, SD)	17.09 (1.62)	17.24 (1.87)	$t(253)=-0.52$
Age, first oral sex (M, SD)	16.57 (1.54)	16.18 (1.74)	$t(253)=-1.76$
Type, first oral sex (%; n)			$\chi^2(2)=45.93^{***}$
Give only	53.4 (99)	9.0 (6)	
Receive only	25.5 (47)	65.7 (44)	
Give and receive	20.7 (38)	25.4 (17)	
Vaginal sex partners (M, SD)	3.29 (3.35)	4.67 (5.11)	$t(256)=-2.12^*$
Oral sex partners (M, SD)	3.42 (3.50)	4.60 (3.78)	$t(256)=-2.29^*$
Hook ups (M, SD)	11.42 (17.61)	12.44 (12.95)	$t(256)=-0.44$
Any committed compliance (%; n)	25.1 (47)	21.1 (15)	$\chi^2(1)=0.45$
Any casual compliance (%; n)	33.2 (62)	23.9 (17)	$\chi^2(1)=2.06$
Vaginal sex	20.9 (39)	12.7 (9)	$\chi^2(1)=2.27$
Give oral sex	19.8 (37)	8.5 (6)	$\chi^2(1)=4.76^*$
Receive oral sex	9.1 (17)	16.9 (12)	$\chi^2(1)=3.15$

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

248)=1.66, $p=.14$, Pillai's Trace=.03. Number of total sex partners was a significant covariate, $F(5, 248)=8.07$, $p<.001$, Pillai's Trace=.14, but compliance with committed partners was not, $F(5, 248)<1$, $p=.48$, Pillai's Trace=.02.

Univariate follow up analyses are reported in Table 3. It was expected that women would have less favorable feelings about first sex (Hypothesis 3), less sexual awareness (Hypothesis 4), and more refusal efficacy (Hypothesis 5) than men. As can be seen, gender differences emerged with regard to feelings about first partnered sex; women reported less desire ($M=1.95$, $SD=0.56$), less pleasure ($M=4.40$, $SD=1.25$), and more emotional discomfort ($M=2.69$, $SD=1.27$) as compared to men (desire: $M=2.20$, $SD=0.50$; pleasure: $M=5.20$, $SD=0.94$; emotional discomfort: $M=2.07$, $SD=0.98$). These results fully supported Hypothesis 3. Contrary to Hypothesis 4, there was no gender difference in sexual awareness. However, Hypothesis 5 was fully supported; women reported significantly more refusal efficacy ($M=4.25$, $SD=0.52$) than men ($M=3.79$, $SD=0.55$).

Hypothesis 6 was that compliance with casual partners would be associated with feelings about first sex, specifically, less desire, less pleasure, and more emotional discomfort. This hypothesis was partially supported, as shown in Table 3. Participants who complied with casual sex reported greater discomfort from first sex ($M=3.06$, $SD=1.39$) than those who did

not comply with casual sex ($M=2.30$, $SD=1.08$). However, there were no significant differences in either desire or pleasure associated with first sex. In addition, the main effect of compliance on emotional discomfort was qualified by a significant compliance \times gender interaction as shown in Table 3. Simple effects analyses showed that, among women, those who complied with casual sex reported more emotional discomfort with first partnered sex ($M=3.29$, $SD=1.40$) than those who did not ($M=2.39$, $SD=1.09$), $F(1, 184)=21.44$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.10$. In contrast, among men, there was no difference in emotional discomfort with first partnered sex between those who did and did not comply with casual sex, $F<1$.

Compliance with casual sex was also expected to be negatively associated with sexual self-perceptions, including sexual awareness (Hypothesis 7) and refusal efficacy (Hypothesis 8). Contrary to Hypothesis 7, level of sexual awareness did not differ between participants who did and did not comply with casual sex (see Table 3). In contrast, Hypothesis 8 was supported. As shown in Table 3, participants who complied with casual sex reported less refusal efficacy ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.60$) than those who did not ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.55$).

Discussion

The present study investigated gender differences and similarities in the experiences and correlates of compliance with unwanted casual sex. To date, the literature on emerging adults' compliance has predominately focused on compliance with committed partners, particularly for women. Yet about one third of women and about one fourth of men in the current study reported complying with casual sex at least once. Moreover, for the most part, different participants reported complying with different types of partners. These results suggest that compliance with casual sex does not reflect a tendency to be sexually compliant with partners generally. Overall, results also suggest that sexual script theory provides a useful framework for understanding gender differences and similarities in compliance with casual partners.

Gender and Type of Compliant Casual Sex

The current results showed that similar proportions of women and men reported having complied with unwanted sex. This pattern was observed for any compliance with at least one committed partner and for any compliance with at least one casual sexual partner. Likewise, when compliance with specific types of casual sex was examined, women and men did not differ in having ever complied with either casual vaginal sex or receiving casual oral sex. In contrast, a significant difference emerged for giving casual oral sex; significantly more women than men reported having complied with giving oral sex during a hook up.

Table 3 Feelings about first sex and sexual self-perceptions as a function of any compliant casual sex and gender

	Compliant casual sex					
	Absent ($n=179$)	Present ($n=79$)	$F(1, 252)$	Compliance	Gender	Interaction
Desire for first sex ^a			2.64		10.52**	<1
Women	2.04	1.76				
Men	2.22	2.13				
Pleasure from first sex ^b			2.16		26.66***	1.60
Women	4.65	3.96				
Men	5.23	5.11				
Emotional discomfort from first sex ^b			3.95*		16.18***	6.00*
Women	2.39 _b	3.29 _a				
Men	2.08 _b	2.04 _b				
Sexual awareness ^c			2.87		<1	3.50
Women	3.15	2.84				
Men	3.11	3.14				
Refusal efficacy ^d			4.81*		31.68***	<1
Women	4.36	4.10				
Men	3.83	3.65				

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$; ^a possible range 0 to 3; ^b possible range 1 to 7; differing subscripts denote mean differences at $p<.05$; ^c possible range 0 to 4; ^d possible range 1 to 5

Gender differences in complying with giving oral sex match previous research on oral sex among youth in the U.S. showing that oral sex almost always involves male partners receiving oral sex (Vannier and O'Sullivan 2012). Moreover, gender differences in complying with giving oral sex support the conceptualization that compliance with casual oral sex may be driven by gendered societal norms and sexual scripts in which both partners prioritize male desire and pleasure (e.g., Gavey 2005). In hook up situations, women were disproportionately more likely than men to comply with a form of casual sex that promoted partner sexual pleasure. In contrast, women were not more likely than men to comply with casual sex focused on their own pleasure (i.e., receiving oral sex) or potentially mutual pleasure (i.e., vaginal sex). These results suggest that studying both vaginal and oral sex is important for researchers interested in understanding gender differences in compliant casual sex.

Notably, gender differences in complying with giving oral sex match with gendered sexual scripts, but may be interpreted in multiple ways. For example, this difference may be due to gender differences in the strength of disinterest or aversion to this act, to gender differences in the motivation to comply despite disinterest or aversion, or both. That is, it is possible that women are less averse than men in giving casual oral sex, and it is also possible that women are more motivated to ignore or overcome their aversion. Because women but not men who do not provide partners with orgasms are considered “frigid” or “a tease” (e.g., Gavey 2005, p. 105), some women may comply with giving oral sex in order to avoid complying with vaginal sex. Nevertheless, women's greater compliance with this specific casual sexual behavior matches with scripted expectations for promoting male pleasure.

Compliant Casual Sex and Feelings about First Partnered Sex

In the current study, only emotional discomfort with first sex was associated with compliant casual sex. Those who complied with casual sex reported more emotional discomfort from first sex than those who did not. In contrast, neither desire nor pleasure from first sex was associated with complying with casual sex. These findings did not support our a priori hypothesis that lower personal desire and pleasure from first sex may shape tendencies to subsequently go along with sex in the absence of desire or expected pleasure. Rather, the observed results suggest that the presence of more negative feelings about first sex, not the absence of positive feelings, may forecast future compliance.

Importantly, however, elevated emotional discomfort with first sex was observed only among casually compliant women. That is, women who complied with casual sex reported greater emotional discomfort with first sex than women who did not. In contrast, there was no difference in emotional discomfort with first sex between men who did and did not

comply with casual partners. At the same time, overall, women reported less desire and pleasure and more emotional discomfort with their first partnered sexual experiences than did men. These gender differences in feelings about first sex match past research on first vaginal sex with undergraduates in the U.S. showing that men report greater pleasure and women report greater emotional discomfort (e.g., Guggino and Ponzetti 1997).

Our results extend this past research to suggest that young women's greater tendency to experience emotional discomfort (including guilt, embarrassment, and tension) during first sex may put them at risk for subsequently going along with unwanted sex with new, casual partners. Although our data are cross-sectional, they suggest that initial partnered sexual experiences may shape women's expectations within future sexual encounters, especially if initial encounters induce negative feelings. These feelings of emotional discomfort may be at least partially related to the observed gender differences in the types of first oral sex adolescent women and men in the U.S. often first experienced, with oral sex as “something girls do to boys” (Burns et al. 2011, p. 245).

Observed gender differences in types of first oral sex, feelings associated with first sex, and types of sexual compliance with casual partners all appear to broadly reflect gendered sexual scripts for heterosexual interaction (Gagnon 1990). We speculate that first sexual experiences affect the development of gendered sexual scripts that affect later sexual interactions, including the likelihood and type of compliance with casual sex. That is, sexual scripts prescribe certain types of first (hetero)sex experienced by adolescent women and men in the U.S. (and perhaps other similar contexts). In turn, these types of first sexual experiences solidify gendered sexual scripts, which in turn, affect future sexual interactions with new partners. Notably, the significant gender difference in type of compliant sex emerged for giving oral sex to casual partners, an act that mirrors most women's first oral sex experiences. Moreover, women's emotional discomfort associated with first sex may create low expectations for emotional comfort in future sexual situations, increasing their willingness to comply with unwanted casual sex.

Compliant Casual Sex and Sexual Self-Perceptions

In the current study, sexual refusal efficacy was significantly, negatively associated with complying with casual sex. These results match Kennett's self-control model (Kennett et al. 2013) linking refusal self-efficacy with women's general compliance with sexual activities defined broadly. The current results expand this association to casual compliant sex for men as well as women. Specifically, our results suggest that both women and men who do not feel that they have the ability to refuse sexual advances may be at greater risk for complying with casual sex. It is also possible that the

relationship between refusal efficacy and sexual compliance is bidirectional, with experiences of complying with casual sex reducing efficacy for future interactions. Of note, the current findings diverge from those reported by Quinn-Nilas et al. (2013), who found no association between Canadian undergraduate men's sexual refusal efficacy and men's compliance with unwanted sexual activities, broadly defined. Additional research is needed to clarify inconsistent findings across studies. For example, perhaps men's refusal efficacy affects their likelihood of compliance in some situations (e.g., during hook ups, as shown in the present study) but not in others. Alternatively, or in addition, it is possible that men's refusal efficacy affects whether they ever comply with sex, as shown in the present study, but not how often they comply, as shown by Quinn-Nilas et al. (2013).

In the present study, men reported significantly less sexual refusal self-efficacy than women. This pattern is consistent with past studies of refusal efficacy among U.S. samples of students in high school (Rostosky et al. 2008) and college (e.g., Mitchell et al. 2005); and matches with gendered sexual scripts. More specifically, refusing sex runs counter to men's sexually scripted roles as dominant and pleasure-seeking given sociocultural pressure for men to establish their masculinity as sexually virile; compliance might help men avoid potential embarrassment because "healthy normal men" are expected to want and to capitalize on opportunities for sex (Gavey 2005, p. 104). In fact, some U.S. undergraduate men have reported initiating sexual acts in which they were compliant (Vannier and O'Sullivan 2010).

Gendered sexual scripts help to explain the apparently paradoxical observation that although women report greater compliance with giving oral sex than men, women also report more refusal efficacy than men. Combined, these results suggest that the relationship between refusal self-efficacy and complying with casual sex may be complicated by gendered sexual scripts prescribing different sexual roles and motives for men (i.e., obtaining pleasure) than for women (i.e., obtaining intimacy). Future research should examine the role of sexual motives in complying with casual sex to better understand differences between genders as well as individual differences within gender.

Contrary to our hypothesis, sexual awareness was not significantly associated with complying with casual sex. We had expected but did not find that individuals who were less attuned to their internal feelings of sexual arousal would be more likely to find themselves in situations in which they did not want sex but agreed to sex anyway. Furthermore, women and men did not differ in their levels of sexual self-awareness. This finding was unexpected, given that adolescent girls in the U.S. often report being unaware of their own sexual feelings (Tolman 2002) and given the focus on male pleasure in sexual scripts (e.g., Bay-Cheng and Eliseo-Arras 2008; Gavey 2005). Although null results are necessarily ambiguous, overall, the

current results suggest that sexual awareness is not a reliable correlate of compliant casual sex.

Limitations, Future Directions, and Implications

Limitations of the present research should be noted. The current results were based on self-reported retrospective accounts of sexual experiences. It is encouraging that the current results show some convergence with data from diary studies of U.S. undergraduates (O'Sullivan and Allgeier 1998; Vannier and O'Sullivan 2010). At the same time, our data differ from shorter term diary studies given the current focus on participants' sexual histories, including first partnered sex, and the current emphasis on casual sex. Our results suggest that certain aspects of first partnered sex matter and that patterns of casual sex may differ from patterns of committed sex. Therefore, studies of different time frames and different relational contexts may yield different patterns of sexual compliance. In addition, the current findings may not generalize widely given that they are based on a convenience sample of ethnically homogenous college students. Sexual experiences and scripts vary as a function of cultural context (Mahay et al. 2001). For example, Sprecher et al. (1994) found that gender differences in compliance were more pronounced among undergraduates in the U.S. than in Russia or Japan. Research comparing compliance across different cultural groups is needed.

The primary focus of our study was to identify correlates of causal compliance for both women and men. Few past studies have examined correlates of men's sexual compliance, and no studies have identified experiences or correlates of compliant casual sex among either men or women. The current study identified both gender similarities and differences in experiences and correlates of complying with unwanted casual sex. These preliminary findings warrant replication and extension to include other individual difference variables associated with casual sex or unwanted sexual behavior among adolescents or emerging adults, including individual sexual motives and attachment styles (Gentzler and Kerns 2004; Sprecher 2013).

Despite a relatively smaller sample size of men compared to women, results showed both similarities and differences between genders that are conceptually consistent with expected patterns based on traditional gendered sexual scripts. Although culturally-based sexual scripts for behaviors and roles are widely recognized, not all individuals are invested in these scripts either during interpersonal interactions with partners or in terms of their own intrapersonal beliefs. That is, college students in the U.S. vary in the degree to which hegemonic scripts guide either their behaviors or beliefs (Masters et al. 2013). Future research should examine the extent to which women and men are invested in traditional sexual scripts, which could be used to understand individual differences within gender as well as between genders. Finally, the current

study investigated correlates of compliance with vaginal or oral sex, not sexual activities more broadly (Kennett et al. 2013; O’Sullivan and Allgeier 1998). It is unclear if similar patterns of association would emerge for compliance regarding less intimate sexual behavior (e.g., kissing, genital touching) as well as more intimate sexual behavior (e.g., oral and vaginal sex) with casual partners.

Our results have several important implications for the types of sexual education programs and workshops that are provided to students on college campuses. Specifically, our results suggest that both college women and men comply with unwanted sex both during hook ups and in committed relationships. About 33 % of the women and 24 % of the men in our sample reported complying with casual sex, and about 25 % of the women and 21 % of the men reported complying with committed sex, with different students complying in the two different contexts. Clearly, college campuses should educate both women and men about sexual compliance and about ways to prioritize and communicate personal interest as well as disinterest in sex.

The present study identified several specific factors that could inform these discussions about authentic sexual communication. As in with past studies with U.S. adolescents (Michels et al. 2005; Sprecher et al. 1995), it appears that first partnered sex experiences tend to reflect male desire and pleasure, and are associated with more emotional discomfort for women. Therefore, discussions of female desire and pleasure, as well as reciprocity and equality in sexual encounters, may help improve women’s expectations for feeling comfortable during sexual encounters with new partners. Such discussions could be indirectly related to improving expectations for feeling emotional comfort. Improved expectations, in turn, may help women refuse unwanted casual sex. Likewise, our results indicated that both women and men who have lower sexual refusal efficacy were more likely to engage in compliant casual sex. Yet, men reported lower self-efficacy than women, and women and men differed in compliance depending on the type of casual sex. As such, educators may promote increased sexual refusal efficacy for all students. They might also help students understand that the link between refusal efficacy and compliant casual sex may function differently for women and men depending on the type of sex.

For many, emerging adulthood is a time of sexual exploration. Healthy sexual development is more likely to occur when sexual explorations are wanted and freely chosen. However, the current results suggest that adherence to traditional sexual scripts may be associated with unwanted but consensual involvement with casual sex. As such, both research and education are needed to reduce how often young women and men go along with casual sex that they do not want.

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