

Abstract

Results of previous studies testing the influence of oral contraceptives on relationship satisfaction have produced mixed results. These discrepancies might be explained by the „Congruency hypothesis“, which predicts that relationship satisfaction is determined by the congruency (or non-congruency) between current use of oral contraceptives and their use during relationship formation. This is because oral contraceptives appear to alter women’s mate preferences, so that attraction to their partner may have changed in non-congruent women. Indeed, previous studies have shown that women in a non-congruent state were less sexually satisfied with their partner, even though they were more generally satisfied in the non-sexual aspects of the relationship. The aim of our study was to test the congruency hypothesis on two groups of couples (couples attending the Center of Assisted Reproduction, and a comparison group of pregnant women and their partners; note that in neither group were women currently using oral contraception). Based on previous studies, we expected that women who used oral contraceptives at the time of relationship formation would report lower sexual satisfaction with their partner than women who were non-users during relationship formation. The study involved a total of 660 couples from the assisted reproduction center and 123 pregnant women and their partners. Both partners completed a questionnaire on relationship and sexual satisfaction, and women also provided information on hormonal contraceptive use. In contrast to previous studies, we did not find significant difference in sexual satisfaction between these two groups of couples.

Keywords: oral contraceptive, mate choice, relationship satisfaction, congruency hypothesis