

Tactics for Promoting Sexual Encounters

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Through empirical studies we explored the perceived effectiveness and reported usage of tactics to promote sexual encounters. In the first study (N = 58) we identified 122 acts and 34 tactics for promoting sexual encounters. In the second study (N = 50) we examined the perceived effectiveness of each tactic when used by a man and when used by a woman. In the third study (N = 100) we examined the reported frequency with which men and women performed each tactic, as well as the frequency of being the recipient of each tactic from the other sex. Tactics were generally perceived as more effective for women than for men. Women were particularly effective, however, when conveying signals of immediate sexual access and enhanced physical appearance. Despite the effectiveness of signaling immediate sexual access, women performed these acts only infrequently. The most effective male tactics for promoting a sexual encounter involved investing time and attention and communicating love and commitment to a woman. Overall, the sexes showed much similarity in what types of tactics they performed, despite the large differences in perceived effectiveness, largely because women typically refrained from performing the most effective tactics for promoting sexual encounters. Discussion focuses on a framework for understanding the sex of actor differences in tactic effectiveness and performance and on examining the factors that likely contribute to sexual miscommunication.

Adult humans form mateships in all cultures. One central component of mateships is sexual activity. Men and women often initiate or engage in sex with members of the other sex. With some notable exceptions (e.g., Moore, 1985; Perper & Weiss, 1987), little is known about the *specific tactics* used to promote sexual encounters. Nor is much known about the relative *effectiveness* of different tactics and whether some tactics are more effective for men than for women. The aims of this program of research were to identify the range of tactics men and women use to promote sexual encounters, evaluate perceived effectiveness of each tactic, gauge the relative frequency with which men and women use these tactics, and test hypotheses about sex differences in the use and effectiveness of these tactics.

Signaling Sexual or Romantic Interest

A partial knowledge base about tactics for promoting sexual encounters has been provided by the work of Jessor (1978), McCormick (1979), Moore (1985), Muehlenhard, Koralewski, Andrews, and Burdick (1986), and Perper and Weis (1987). Muehlenhard et al. (1986) examined both verbal and nonverbal

cues used by women to show interest in dating. Verbal behaviors were considered cues if men thought that women who performed them would be significantly more likely to accept a date than would women who did not. The researchers, however, omitted the study of cues they found demeaning to women, did not assess how often these cues were performed by women, and did not evaluate how successful the cues were.

Both McCormick (1979) and Perper and Weis (1987) coded participants' essays of how they would promote a sexual encounter with, or indicate they were sexually interested in, a member of the other sex. In the McCormick study, 10 strategies were decided upon a priori. As a result, many behaviors participants said they would perform were left uncoded, because those behaviors did not fit one of the expected categories. Seduction (i.e., a direct step-by-step plan for promoting sex) was the most frequently used strategy of both men and women, although men used this strategy more than did women. McCormick also found that women were more likely than men to use body language (i.e., an indirect strategy involving facial expressions, posture, and distance) to promote sex.

Overall, both men and women viewed all the strategies for promoting sex as masculine, fitting the stereotype that men and not women are the active promoters of sexual encounters.

Perper and Weis (1987) identified many strategies used by a woman to indicate her sexual interest in a man by coding themes in their participants' essays explaining how they would influence a date to have sex. They found that women frequently use talking, touching, and kissing, as well as initiating an encounter and allowing a man to follow up on her advances. Similarly, Jessor (1978) reported that both men and women in active sexual relationships most often used touching, letting hands "wander," and directly asking for sex as methods of influencing their partner to have sex.

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Moore (1985) cataloged the courtship behaviors of women. Her research involved observing women in four locations (singles' bar, snack bar, library, and women's center). Women in singles' bars gave more sexual signals (such as tossing hair, smiling, and touching others) and were approached more often than were women in the other locations. Across locations, there was a positive relationship between how often women performed sexual signals and how often they were approached by men.

Interpreting the Behavior of Others

Several researchers have examined the attributions men and women made regarding the behavior of a member of the other sex. Abbey (1982) found that men and women perceived a friendly or neutral interaction between a male-female dyad in different ways. After viewing a five-minute interaction between a previously unacquainted man and woman, female observers rated the female actors as less promiscuous and seductive than male observers rated the female actors. Male actors and observers also rated the male actors as more flirtatious and seductive than women rated them. Male raters expressed more sexual attraction to the female actors than female raters did to the male actors. Finally, male raters perceived the female actors as being more sexually attracted to the male actors than female raters perceived female actors to be.

The general finding that men are more likely than women to view and interpret interactions between the sexes in sexual terms has been replicated in studies that place actors in a number of social roles. For example, Saal, Johnson, and Weber (1989) found the same effect when participants rated male actors in supervisory roles (e.g., assistant manager, professor) interacting with female actors in subor-

dinate roles (e.g., cashier, student). Johnson, Stockdale, and Saal (1991) found that, even when women were in a high status role (a professor to a male student), they were perceived as more seductive, sexy, and flirtatious by men than by women. Shotland and Craig (1988) also found that men were more likely than women to rate male and female actors as seductive, promiscuous, and flirtatious. The researchers concluded that men have a lower threshold than women for perceiving non-overtly sexual behaviors as signs of sexual intent.

Evolutionary Psychology

According to the tenets of evolutionary psychology, women and men are predicted to differ in their mating strategies specifically in those domains where the sexes have confronted different adaptive problems over evolutionary time (Buss, 1994; Symons, 1979). In domains where the sexes have faced the same adaptive problems, however, men and women are predicted to show the same underlying sexual psychology and hence the same sexual strategies.

One theoretical starting point for identifying these sex-differentiated adaptive problems derives from sexual selection theory (Darwin, 1871) and its modern conceptual elaborations (Dawkins, 1976; Symons, 1979; Trivers, 1972). The obligatory minimum parental investment by women to produce a child is much greater than the obligatory parental investment required by men (e.g., nine months of gestation versus an act of copulation). Therefore, evolutionary psychologists have predicted that under circumstances in which women can exert choice, their mate preferences are expected to center, in part, on qualities of men that signal the ability and willingness to invest resources (e.g., time, attention, food, protection, economic goods) in them and their children. Over evolutionary time, those women who expressed

these desires experienced greater survival and reproductive success than women who failed to express preferences at all or whose preferences did not include a man's willingness and ability to invest resources.

Ancestral men, in contrast, faced the critical adaptive problem of identifying women who were fertile—in part because of concealed ovulation or lack of detectable estrus (e.g., compared with chimpanzees, our closest primate relative). Therefore, evolutionary psychologists have predicted that men more than women should desire in mates those qualities linked with fertility, such as physical cues to youth and health.

Empirical studies of mate preferences bear out these sex-linked predictions. In a study of 10,047 individuals from 37 cultures located on six continents and five islands, Buss (1989) found universal sex differences, as predicted. Men around the world express a greater desire than women for young and physically attractive mates. Women worldwide express a greater desire than men for mates with good financial prospects, as well as for the qualities that lead to the accumulation of resources such as social status, ambition, industriousness, and older age. These sex differences in mating desires have been replicated by many other investigators and have been shown to affect actual mating decisions (see, e.g., Bailey, Gaulin, Agyei, & Gladue, 1994; Kenrick, Sadalla, Groth, & Trost, 1990; Sprecher, Sullivan, & Hatfield, 1994; Thiessen, Young, & Burroughs, 1993; Udry & Eckland, 1984; Wiederman & Allgeier, 1992).

These sex differences in desires are critical theoretically in understanding sex differences in the tactics men and women use to promote sexual encounters. According to Buss's (1988) elaboration of sexual selection theory, mate preferences are predicted to drive tactics of intra-sexual competition. In particular,

the most effective tactics for promoting sexual encounters should be those that fulfill or embody the desires of the other sex. Because women desire men who have resources and show a willingness to commit them, for example, effective sexual tactics for men should include displaying resources to a woman and signaling cues that he is willing to commit.

Some evidence exists for these theoretical links. Tooke and Camire (1991), for example, examined the tactics of deception that men and women used in mate attraction. They found that men were more likely to perform acts that emphasized their social dominance and their willingness to commit resources. Women were more likely to deceive in mate attraction by altering their physical appearance, presumably in ways that embody men's desires for physical signals of fertility. Deceptive tactics, however, presumably represent only a subset of tactics men and women use to promote a sexual encounter. A more comprehensive taxonomy of tactics is needed.

Choosiness in Sexual Partner Selection

Although both men and women sometimes pursue short-term sexual strategies, over human evolutionary history the costs and benefits of doing so have not been equal for men and women. Ancestral men who successfully engaged in a short-term (and low investment) sexual strategy would have stood to father a greater number of offspring than men who were not able to or chose not to employ such a strategy. There were not the same advantages for women who opted to use a short-term sexual strategy. Not only would a woman have been unable to have as many children as a man using the same strategy, her minimum investment would still have been much greater. Furthermore, women have more to lose if they make a poor choice of sexual

partner. There is the risk that the father of the children will not be willing or able to contribute to their well-being. The men may turn out to be of poor quality (e.g., ill, unintelligent, abusive). Women also suffer greater reputational damage than men for having many sexual partners (Buss, 1994).

This adaptive logic helps to explain why women are generally more choosy than men about whom they select as potential mates. For women, the benefits of having many sexual partners are fewer, and the potential costs are sometimes great. Men incur relatively little cost as a result of a poor choice of sexual partner. Making such an "error" may even be reproductively beneficial for men.

Previous research supports this evolutionary logic. Buss and Schmitt (1993) found that men were positively inclined to engage in sex with an attractive woman after knowing her one week. Women reported needing to know a man they found attractive several months before being positively inclined to have sex with him. Men also reported desiring an average of eight partners to women's one over the next two years, and men were also more likely than women to be currently seeking a short-term relationship. These findings suggest that women are more choosy about whom they mate than are men. Kenrick et al. (1990) found that men and women are both very choosy about long-term mates. However, women maintain their high standards when selecting someone for just a sexual relationship, whereas men's standards for a sexual partner drop substantially.

Previous studies of sexual behavior also indicate sex differences in selection of mates. Carroll, Volk, and Hyde (1985) found that men were more willing to engage in sexual intercourse when there was no emotional involvement with their partner and felt much more positively about one-night stands than did the women in their study.

Finally, in a study of sexual fantasy, Ellis and Symons (1990) found that men had more sexual fantasies per day and fantasized about more different partners than did women—presumably a difference reflecting a greater evolved desire of men for sexual variety.

Consistent with a greater desire for sexual variety would be a greater motivation for men to seek or promote initial sexual encounters. Men's greater interest in short-term sex may be what leads to the sex differences in the interpretation of neutral or friendly behaviors as sexual. This difference along with women's relative choosiness in selecting mates and well-documented sex differences in mate preferences are possible driving forces behind the use and perceived effectiveness of tactics for initiating sex.

This reasoning leads to the expectation that men more than women will devote greater effort to promoting sexual encounters. Because of men's desire for casual sex, extremely effective tactics for women in promoting a sexual encounter should be those that signal immediate sexual accessibility (e.g., increasing the level of sexual contact). But precisely because sex *as an end in itself* is unlikely to constitute an evolved desire in women, men who use overt tactics that signal sex and *nothing else* should be especially ineffective, in contrast to women performing analogous tactics.

Despite these predicted sex differences in tactic effectiveness, it is important not to overlook the fact that women as well as men are predicted to use tactics for promoting sexual encounters. In particular, there is evidence that women as well as men have short-term mating within their strategic repertoire (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Furthermore, recent research has documented the benefits women can gain from casual sexual encounters (e.g., immediate access to resources)

as well as contexts under which women are likely to pursue casual sex (Greiling, 1994).

Goals of Current Research

Our overarching goal with this research was to explore the tactics that women and men use to promote sexual encounters. Specifically, our goals were to (a) provide a taxonomy of tactics that men and women use to promote sexual encounters, (b) test hypotheses about between-sex differences in the perceived effectiveness of the tactics, (c) test hypotheses about men's and women's use of the tactics, and (d) examine the relationship between perceived tactic effectiveness and tactic use.

Seven hypotheses were articulated regarding the effectiveness and frequency of use of acts or tactics for promoting sexual encounters. Our first four hypotheses dealt with the effectiveness of behaviors, whereas the latter three addressed the frequency with which men and women perform these types of behaviors.

Hypothesis 1. Acts judged to be most effective were hypothesized to be those that mirror mate preferences. The rationale was that individuals are likely to respond favorably to a potential mate who embodies preferred characteristics. If men and women are aware of what members of the other sex value in a sexual partner, they should behave in such ways when striving to maximize their success in obtaining sexual access.

Hypothesis 2. Historically, men have faced the problem of gaining sexual access to women. Acts performed by a woman that are indicative of sexual accessibility were thus expected to be highly effective, particularly if a man is pursuing a short-term relationship.

Hypothesis 3. Female reproductive capacity is highly correlated with youth and health (Symons, 1979). The window of time during which women are able to conceive

children is considerably smaller than the window for men. For these reasons men put greater emphasis on youth and health of a mate than do women. Thus, enhancement of appearance was expected to be more effective for women than for men because men value attractiveness in a mate more so than do women.

Hypothesis 4. Over human history, women have had a much greater minimum investment to make in offspring than have men. Women who preferred men who invested time, energy, attention, and resources in them and offspring increased the chances of those offspring surviving and reproducing. Men who behaved as though they desired to invest and commit to a woman were likely to be more effective at initiating sex than men who failed to signal investment. Highly effective acts for men to perform were expected to be those that indicate their willingness and ability to invest in a woman.

Hypothesis 5. On the basis of previous research and theory (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Symons, 1979; Trivers, 1972), men appear to have a greater desire to engage in short-term sexual relationships than do women. Hence, men were hypothesized to report performing more acts for promoting sexual encounters and to perform these acts more often than do women.

Hypothesis 6. Men's mate preferences are focused more on cues to reproductive value, such as youth and health, than are women's mate preferences. Compared to men, women, then, were expected to perform more acts to signal high reproductive value when seeking a sexual partner. Such behaviors were hypothesized to include those that would serve to enhance their appearance.

Hypothesis 7. Women have a preference for mates able and willing to invest time, energy, and resources in them and in potential offspring. Men do not express as strong a preference for these attrib-

utes. Men were hypothesized to perform behaviors that indicate that they are willing to invest more often than were women.

Preliminary Study: Identifying Acts and Tactics for Promoting Sexual Encounters

Our goal in the preliminary study was to determine which specific acts are used by men and women to promote sexual encounters. The act-nomination procedure was adapted from that used by Buss and Craik (1983) to identify naturally occurring acts. We hoped that this procedure would result in a large, diverse group of acts.

Method

Participants. Participants in this study were 26 male and 32 female undergraduate and graduate students at a large Midwestern university. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 28 years (male $M = 21.5$ years; female $M = 21.2$ years) and were volunteers recruited from the graduate psychology department and from an introductory anthropology course.

Measure. Participants received a one-page form that requested their age and gender and contained the following instructions:

In this study, we are interested in what people do when they want to promote a sexual encounter. Think back to situations in which you or people you know wanted to promote the sexual advances of someone else. What actions did you or they perform to promote the development of these advances into a sexual encounter? Some actions might be obvious and easily observable; other actions might be more subtle and difficult to observe easily. Some actions might be very active, whereas others might be more passive. Some actions might be highly effective, whereas others might be relatively ineffective at increasing sexual encounters. Please be as specific as possible, and list as many as you can think of.

Following these instructions were seven lines for recording

actions performed by women and seven lines for recording actions performed by men. Participants were asked to list any additional items on the back of the form.

Procedure. All nominated acts were compiled into one master list. We examined the acts, eliminated redundant acts, generalized overly specific acts, and divided complex acts into their simple components. The remaining 122 acts were representative of all acts garnered in the act-nomination procedure. For efficiency of data analysis and reporting, we sorted the 122 individual acts into homogeneous clusters. We each completed our sorts independently. When we differed in our categorizations, we reached an agreement on the appropriate classifications through discussion. In all, the 122 acts were sorted into 34 distinct tactics. (See the Appendix for a list of the acts and tactics.)

Study 1: Effectiveness of Tactics for Promoting Sexual Encounters

Our goal in Study 1 was to assess how effective each identified act and tactic was perceived to promote a heterosexual sexual encounter. We expected that one's belief about the effectiveness of an act or a tactic for promoting sexual encounters would likely mediate how often one performs certain acts toward a member of the other sex.

Because women and men may interpret the same acts in different ways, we had men and women provide both female effectiveness ratings and male effectiveness ratings. Obtaining the four types of ratings enabled us to examine sex of actor and sex of rater effects in a 2 x 2 design.

Predictions

Hypotheses 1-4 propose that the acts judged most effective for either sex would be those that mirrored the other sex's mate preferences. The first three predictions are based on these hypotheses.

Prediction 1—Sexual accessibility. For women, among the acts and tactics rated most effective at promoting a sexual encounter would be those that signal sexual accessibility. Thus, we predicted that the acts viewed as most effective for women would fall under the following tactics: (a) directly request sex, (b) verbalize desire for sexual contact, (c) increase sexual contact, (d) drop sexual hints in conversation, (e) indicate sexual attractiveness of target, (f) act seductively, (g) dress seductively, and (h) go to a private or secluded area.

Prediction 2—Appearance enhancement. Tactics of enhancing appearance to appear healthy and youthful were predicted to be among the most effective for women to perform. One tactic embodies this: Enhance physical appearance.

Prediction 3—Investment. The most effective acts and tactics for men to perform would be those that signal a willingness and an ability to invest time, energy, and material resources in a woman. We predicted that subjects would rate acts corresponding to the following tactics as the most effective because these tactics are most indicative of a willingness to invest time and attention: (a) imply commitment, (b) act nice, (c) display status cues, (d) increase attention, (e) give gifts, (f) treat to a romantic dinner, (g) compliment on appearance, and (h) create a romantic atmosphere.

Prediction 4—Overall effectiveness. We predicted that both women and men would rate female act-effectiveness higher than male act-effectiveness, because of men's greater desire for sex and women's relative choosiness and cautiousness in selecting a sexual partner. That is, because casual sex as an end in itself looms larger in men's mating strategies than in women's mating strategies, women were predicted to be more effective in promoting sexual encounters (when that is their goal) across an array of tactics.

Method

Participants. Fifty participants, 25 women and 25 men, participated in Study 1. The participants ranged in age from 17 to 26 years ($M = 18.78$ years). Subjects received credit toward the research participation requirement of their introductory psychology class. None of these subjects participated in the preliminary study.

Measures. Each subject completed a packet containing three questionnaires: the Male and Female Effectiveness forms of the Escalating Sexual Encounters Questionnaire and a Confidential Biographical Questionnaire. On both the informed consent forms and the cover sheets of the questionnaire packets, it was stated that participants could skip any questions or leave the session early with no penalty. No identification was sought on any questionnaire to ensure the participants that their responses were anonymous. Data were collected during the fall semester of the 1991 academic year.

The Effectiveness of Tactics Questionnaires were comprised of the acts generated in the preliminary study. Each version of the questionnaire contained the 122 acts in the same random order. (The tactic headings shown in the Appendix were not part of the questionnaires.) The acts were worded in the third person, past tense. The male and female versions were identical except in the few instances when a word needed to be changed to make the sex act appropriate (e.g., He acted like a gentleman; She acted like a lady).

The effectiveness forms contained the following instructions:

Below are listed acts that someone might perform to promote an initial sexual encounter with a member of the opposite sex. In this study, we are interested in *how effective* you think each act is at achieving this goal. Please read each act carefully, and think about its *consequences*. Then rate

each act on how likely the act is to be effective at successfully promoting a sexual encounter between two people who have not previously had sex with each other.

Ratings were made using a seven-point scale. A 7 means the act will be very likely to be effective, 4 means the act will be moderately effective, and 1 means that the act is not very likely to be effective.

The first questionnaire that the participants completed was the Confidential Biographical Questionnaire, which requested information about participants' past experiences with, and attitudes about, engaging in sexual intercourse. Next, participants completed the Effectiveness of Tactics Questionnaires. The participants were not provided with an explicit definition of a sexual encounter.

Tactic scores. The participants' responses were made at the act level. To test the relative effectiveness of tactics, tactic scores were computed. To compute the tactic-effectiveness score, each of the mean frequency scores of the corresponding acts was summed and then divided by the total number of acts under that tactic heading.

Results

Reliability of judges' ratings of effectiveness. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were computed for each cell of the 2 x 2 matrix design. Reliability coefficients for female participants' ratings of male and female act effectiveness were .93 and .95, respectively. The reliability coefficients for male participants' ratings of male and female act effectiveness were .90 and .94, respectively. Using all raters (both male and female), the alpha reliability coefficients were .95 for male-as-actor judgments and .97 for the female-as-actor judgments. These results indicated that high overall levels of reliability existed for identifying which acts were more or less effective at promoting a sexual encounter.

Table 1

Acts Rated Most Effective for Promoting Sexual Encounters

Female acts	Male raters (<i>N</i> = 25)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
She asked him if he wanted to sleep with her.	6.56	1.04
She guided his hands to her genital area.	6.44	1.19
She talked him into having sex with her.	6.42	0.97
She told him directly that she wanted to have sex with him.	6.40	1.08
She undressed in front of him.	6.36	1.00
She started to undress him.	6.12	1.39
She invited him to her bedroom.	6.12	0.97
She asked if he had a condom.	6.00	1.16
She told him she had birth control.	5.88	1.24
She put her hand on his thigh.	5.80	0.96
She invited him to her house/room/apartment.	5.80	1.08
She told him that she was sexually attracted to him.	5.80	1.47
She invited him to go to a hot tub.	5.76	0.97
She took him to a private or secluded area.	5.64	1.11
She offered to give him a massage.	5.60	1.08
Male acts	Female raters (<i>N</i> = 25)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
He told her that he really loved her.	5.48	1.42
He implied that he was really committed to her.	5.36	1.15
He took her to a private or secluded area.	5.36	1.15
He told her that he really cared about her deeply.	5.36	1.29
He offered to give her a massage.	5.28	1.06
He treated her with respect.	5.24	1.54
He made her a gourmet meal with wine and candlelight.	5.20	1.32
He invited her to go to a hot tub.	5.08	1.53
He invited her to his house/room/apartment.	5.04	1.10
He invited her over for a romantic dinner.	5.04	1.14
He talked her into having sex with him.	5.04	2.31
He got her to drink a lot of alcohol.	5.00	1.29
He told her he didn't do "one-night stands" because he liked relationships that lasted.	4.96	1.27
He lavished attention on her.	4.96	1.34
He acted genuinely caring and kind.	4.96	1.43
He started to undress her.	4.96	1.57

Note: For all means, 1 means the act is very likely to be ineffective, 4 means the act is likely to be moderately effective, and 7 means the act is very likely to be effective.

Analysis of Variance. A 2 x 2 sex of actor by sex of rater multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed across the sum of all 122 acts. The MANOVA yielded a main effect for actor (male $M = 3.83$, female $M = 4.25$) $F(1,97) = 7.61$, $p < .01$, no main effect for rater ($p = .368$), and no interaction ($p = .727$). Two-by-two ANOVAs were also run on each of the 34 tactics. There were main effects of actor on 21 of the 34 tactics (all $p < .05$), whereas only 1.5 would be expected by chance alone. Only one tactic showed a main effect of rater that can be attributed to chance, given that 34 analyses were performed. Male raters rated tactic "exploit friendship network" more

effective for both men and women to use than did female raters ($p < .01$). There were two significant interactions, approximately what would be expected by chance alone.

Most effective female acts and tactics. The 10 most effective tactics for women to perform were these: directly request sex (6.57), verbalize desire for sexual contact (5.62), sexual-miscellaneous (5.51), increase sexual contact (5.50), indicate sexual attractiveness of target (5.33), go to private or secluded area (5.16), dress seductively (5.13), act seductively (4.74), increase non-sexual contact (4.70), and create romantic atmosphere (4.58).

Table 1 shows the 15 female acts rated highest by the male partici-

pants and the 15 male acts rated highest on effectiveness according to female participants. The most effective female act was to ask a man to have sex with her. Nearly all acts men rated most effective for women to perform were about signaling sexual accessibility.

Most effective male acts and tactics. The top 10 male tactics, each followed by its mean rating, were these: verbalize desire for sexual contact (4.98), imply commitment (4.78), directly request sex (4.78), increase sexual contact (4.64), indicate sexual attractiveness of target (4.63), act nice (4.60), treat to a romantic dinner (4.50), increase attention (4.50), go to private or secluded area (4.48), and get target drunk (4.45).

The acts perceived as most effective for men to perform were these: telling a woman he loved her, was committed to her, cared about her deeply, and taking her to a private or secluded area (see Table 1).

Sex differences in actor effectiveness. Overall, fewer acts were rated as highly effective (i.e., a mean rating of 5.0 or higher) for men to perform than were rated highly effective for women to perform. Respectively, male and female participants rated 9 (7%) and 12 (10%) of the acts as highly effective when performed by men. In contrast, they rated 27 (22%) and 30 (25%) of these same acts as highly effective for women to perform.

Table 2 shows the effectiveness ratings made by male and female participants combined for all 34 tactics for male versus female actors. Significant differences were found between the relative effectiveness of the tactics when used by men and when used by women on 21 of the 34 tactics. Fifteen tactics were rated more effective for women to use, and six tactics were rated more effective for men to perform.

Discussion

This study yielded support for each of our predictions. There was

Table 2

Sex of Actor Differences in Perceived Tactic Effectiveness (N = 50)

	Male Effectiveness		Female Effectiveness		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
<u>Tactics more effective for men to use</u>						
Imply commitment	4.78	1.04	3.94	0.99	16.24	***
Display strength	2.81	1.22	1.95	0.87	16.00	***
Act nice	4.60	1.20	3.81	1.12	11.22	***
Derogate competitors	3.09	1.14	2.45	1.00	8.99	**
Display sense of humor	4.33	1.19	3.64	1.15	8.41	**
Give gifts	3.82	1.16	3.33	1.12	4.35	*
<u>Tactics more effective for women to use</u>						
Dress seductively	2.84	1.22	5.10	1.18	93.72	***
Act seductively	2.95	1.02	4.76	1.07	78.77	***
Sexual—miscellaneous	3.76	1.11	5.53	0.93	73.18	***
Drop sexual hints in conversation	2.49	1.05	4.41	1.27	70.46	***
Directly request sex	4.73	1.65	6.57	0.82	50.13	***
Enhance physical attractiveness	3.04	0.89	4.16	1.16	29.47	***
Go to private or secluded area	4.48	0.96	5.16	0.85	13.94	***
Increase sexual contact	4.64	1.04	5.49	0.97	12.69	***
Verbally desire sexual contact	4.98	1.15	5.63	0.83	11.13	***
Indicate sexual attractiveness of target	4.63	1.35	5.32	1.05	7.93	**
Increase proximity	3.30	0.93	3.89	1.17	7.77	**
Increase eye contact	3.95	1.12	4.55	1.13	7.14	**
Ask for date	3.53	1.34	4.08	1.26	4.39	*
Flirt	3.50	0.95	3.92	1.08	4.19	*
Increase perceived mate value through flirting with others	2.57	1.25	3.12	1.46	3.95	*
<u>Tactics equally effective for men and women to use</u>						
Increase non-sexual contact	4.36	1.03	4.70	1.07	2.68	ns
Create romantic atmosphere	4.31	1.12	4.58	1.07	1.51	ns
Increase attention	4.50	1.15	4.26	1.15	1.13	ns
Utilize friendship network	3.59	1.30	3.77	1.26	.49	ns
Dance or dance closer	4.15	1.11	4.29	1.07	.39	ns
Act masculine/feminine	3.86	1.26	3.72	1.19	.34	ns
Enhance smell	3.47	1.61	3.64	1.53	.29	ns
Treat to a romantic dinner	4.50	1.01	4.39	1.15	.27	ns
Get target drunk	4.45	1.25	4.50	1.20	.06	ns
Practice good hygiene	3.89	1.32	3.84	1.38	.04	ns
Compliment on appearance	4.29	1.30	4.25	1.34	.03	ns
Mislead about interest in sex	3.84	1.08	3.86	0.90	.01	ns
Display status cues	2.70	1.23	2.69	1.07	.00	ns

Note: For all means, 1 means the act is very likely to be ineffective, 4 means the act is likely to be moderately effective, and 7 means the act is very likely to be effective.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, ns = $p > .05$

agreement between men and women in rating female act effectiveness, with only one significant sex-of-rater difference emerging at each act or tactic level. Among the acts and tactics perceived to be most effective for women to perform were those that clearly indicate sexual accessibility or willingness. These acts and tactics were also perceived to be more effective when performed by women than when performed by men. Because men desire more sexual partners than do women and historically have faced

the problem of gaining access to fertile women, women who present themselves as both sexually willing and available essentially solve both problems.

Overall, more acts were perceived effective for women than for men in promoting sexual encounters. Indeed the most effective male act received a lower effectiveness rating than the fifteenth most effective female act (see Table 1). Men were perceived as more effective than women when acting nice, committed, and funny and when giving

gifts. Furthermore, men were perceived as most effective when they perform behaviors *not* directly about sex, but about expressing love or commitment to a woman and treating her nicely and with respect. These behaviors were predicted to be effective for men precisely because, in performing them, a man conveys that sex is not all that he desires from a woman, but that he is willing to invest in her as well. In using these behaviors, men mimic women's mate preferences.

Study 2: Self-Reported and Recipient-Reported Act and Tactic Performance

The goals of Study 2 were to assess how often men and women tried to promote sexual encounters using different tactics and to discover how often men and women felt they were the target of each act as a sexual advance. To this end a study was designed to obtain self-reports of how often participants *performed* each act for starting a sexual encounter. Participants also indicated how often they were the *recipient* of each act by a member of the other sex.

Predictions

Predictions 5 and 7 were made to test Hypotheses 5 through 7. Predictions 8 and 9 were based on the finding that men appear to have a lower threshold than women for reading sexual interest into the friendly behavior of members of the other sex (Shotland & Craig, 1988) and thus are more likely than women to feel they are approached more often than they are.

Prediction 5—Overall performance. Men would report more frequent performance than women of tactics used to promote sexual encounters. This prediction was a direct test of Hypothesis 5 (i.e., that men outperform women in the use of acts or tactics for promoting sexual encounters in part because of their greater motivation for short-term sexual encounters and in part

because they are reacting to what they perceive as sexual interest in the women in whom they are interested).

Prediction 6—Appearance enhancement. Women would use the acts comprising the tactics *enhance physical attractiveness* and *dress seductively* to promote a sexual encounter more frequently than men. This prediction tested Hypothesis 6 (i.e., that women would use tactics and perform acts that would enhance their perceived reproductive value). Because reproductive value is closely related to health and youth, women would act so as to appear healthy and young (often this means "attractive").

Prediction 7—Resources and commitment. Men were predicted to perform the following tactics (and the corresponding acts) more often than would women: (a) display status cues, (b) give gifts, (c) treat to a romantic dinner, (d) increase attention, (e) imply commitment, (f) mislead about interest in sex, and (g) display strength (a signal of the resource of protection).

This prediction tested Hypothesis 7 (i.e., that men would outperform women in tactics that indicate an ability and a willingness to invest resources of energy, attention, and money or possessions in a partner). The first three tactics indicate an ability to invest materially in a woman, whereas the third and fourth indicate a willingness to invest time and attention in a woman. The next two tactics are cues to commitment. They each speak to an interest in someone that is other than, or more than, sexual; imply an interest in establishing an emotional relationship; and signal a high investing man. The final tactic indicates an ability to provide physical aid.

Prediction 8. Because men seem to have a lower threshold for perceiving signs of sexual interest in friendly behavior than do women (Shotland & Craig, 1988), we pre-

dicted that men would report receiving sexual advances more than women would report making sexual advances.

Prediction 9. Conversely, we predicted that women would report receiving sexual advances less frequently than men would report making sexual advances.

Method

Participants. Participants in this study were 50 male and 50 female undergraduates at a large Midwestern university. They ranged in age from 17 to 22 years ($M = 18.61$). The participants received credit toward their introductory psychology course research participation requirement. None had participated in the preliminary study or Study 1.

Measures. All participants completed the Self-Reported Performance Questionnaire, the Recipient-Reported Performance Questionnaire, and a Confidential Biographical Questionnaire. Participants were tested in groups by one male and one or two female experimenters during the fall semester of the 1991 academic year. As in Study 1, the voluntary and anonymous nature of their responses was stressed to the participants.

The Self-Reported Performance Questionnaire included the items generated in the preliminary study. Each version of the questionnaire listed the 122 acts in the same random order. The tactic headings shown in the Appendix were not part of the questionnaires. The items on the self-report forms were worded in the first person, past tense. The acts on the male and female versions were identical except where minor changes were necessary to make the act gender appropriate (e.g., I acted like a gentleman; I acted like a lady).

The self-report forms contained the following instructions:

Below are listed acts that someone might perform to promote a sexual encounter with a member of the opposite sex. In this study,

we are interested in *how frequently* you have performed each act in the past month in order to promote a sexual encounter. Please write the number that represents your most accurate estimate of *how often you have performed each act in the past month* while trying to promote a sexual encounter. Please note: Some acts you may have performed for reasons other than to promote a sexual encounter. In this study, we are *only* interested in how often you have performed each act *for the purpose* of promoting a sexual encounter.

A seven-point scale was provided for the participants (0 = zero times, 1 = once, 2 = twice, 3 = 3-5 times, 4 = 6-10 times, 5 = 11-15 times, 6 = 16-20 times, 7 = 21 or more times).

The Recipient-Report Act Frequency Questionnaire asked participants to rate how often in the past month they had been the recipient of each act by a member of the other sex. The items were worded in the third person, past tense (e.g., He acted like a gentleman; She acted like a lady). The instructions were worded similarly to the one for the self-report questionnaire, and the scale was identical. As in the self-report instructional set, this set of instructions emphasized that many acts might have been performed for reasons other than to promote a sexual encounter, but that participants were to indicate how often they thought a member(s) of the other sex had directed each act toward them in order to promote a sexual encounter.

We asked that subjects restrict their behavioral reports to one month for two reasons. First, we wanted a span of time long enough that many of our participants would have had an opportunity to use, or be the target of, some acts for promoting a sexual encounter. Second, we asked about very specific acts. We hoped that by limiting the reports to one month, participants' memories would be reasonably fresh, and participants would be

Table 3

Twenty Most Frequently Performed Male and Female Acts

Rank	Male acts	Self-Reported Frequency	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	He practiced good hygiene.	3.27	2.96
2.	He displayed a good sense of humor.	3.06	2.25
3.	He sat by her.	3.00	2.47
4.	He acted like a gentleman.	2.94	2.81
5.	He groomed himself well.	2.92	2.62
6.	He stood close to her.	2.90	2.19
7.	He smiled warmly at her.	2.88	2.32
8.	He treated her with respect.	2.80	2.70
9.	He dressed nicely.	2.76	2.36
10.	He put his arm around her.	2.64	2.09
11.	He laughed easily in a relaxed manner.	2.62	2.58
12.	He acted with solid self-confidence.	2.44	2.37
13.	He French-kissed her.	2.43	2.42
14.	He increased the amount of attention he paid to her.	2.30	1.93
15.	He told her jokes to make her laugh.	2.30	2.29
16.	He acted interested in what she had to say.	2.30	2.53
17.	He acted genuinely caring and kind.	2.30	2.71
18.	He leaned over and kissed her.	2.29	2.43
19.	He held her hand.	2.24	2.41
20.	He flirted with her openly.	2.22	2.36
Rank	Female acts		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	She practiced good hygiene.	3.43	3.06
2.	She dressed nicely.	2.96	2.50
3.	She groomed herself well.	2.90	2.80
4.	She applied makeup to enhance her appearance.	2.82	2.78
5.	She laughed easily in a relaxed manner.	2.76	2.70
6.	She acted interested in what he had to say.	2.76	2.93
7.	She sat by him.	2.66	2.49
8.	She French-kissed him.	2.62	2.40
9.	She displayed a good sense of humor.	2.58	2.61
10.	She acted like a lady.	2.55	2.76
11.	She acted in a feminine manner.	2.51	2.52
12.	She treated him with respect.	2.50	2.57
13.	She smiled warmly at him.	2.48	2.09
14.	She wore perfume or cologne.	2.43	2.52
15.	She put her arm around him.	2.28	2.19
16.	She acted with solid self-confidence.	2.18	2.24
17.	She acted genuinely caring and kind.	2.16	2.63
18.	She stood close to him.	2.08	1.96
19.	She held his hand.	2.06	2.33
20.	She leaned over and kissed him.	1.98	2.29

Note: For all performance means, 0 = not performed, 1 = performed once, 2 = performed twice, 3 = performed 3-5 times, 4 = performed 6-10 times, 5 = performed 11-15 times, 6 = performed 16-20 times, 7 = performed 21 or more times.

able to report accurately on their behavior. We did not provide participants with an explicit definition of "sexual encounter."

Tactic scores. All self- and recipient-reports ratings were made at the act level. To test our predictions at the tactic level, tactic-frequency scores were computed. As in Study 1, each tactic score was computed as the mean of all acts that fall under it. Four types of tactic frequencies were computed: male self-

reports, female self-reports, male recipient-reports, and female recipient-reports.

Results

Most frequently performed acts. The 20 acts most frequently performed by both men and women are shown in Table 3. Two important points need to be made about these acts. The first is that there is considerable overlap between what the men reported having done versus

what women reported having done to promote a sexual encounter. Indeed, the same 17 acts appeared on each sex's lists. The second is that many of these acts are performed regularly (e.g., practicing good hygiene or grooming oneself well) and thus are often performed independently of one's desire to engage in sexual activity.

Sex differences in performance. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to check for differences in mean performance. Mean performance scores are the mean of each sex's act use across all acts. These scores provide a rough overview of how often men and women performed acts to promote sexual encounters. Men's mean performance score was 1.15 ($SD = 0.99$); women's mean performance score was 0.92 ($SD = 0.75$). There was no significant difference between these scores, $F(1,98) = 1.82$, $p = .18$. At this overall performance level, Prediction 5 was not supported.

Next, one-way ANOVAs were computed to check for sex differences in the mean use of the 34 tactics. The results are displayed in Table 4. Of the 34 tactics, men performed 12 significantly more often than did women. Women performed two tactics more frequently than men. This trend also appeared at the act level, with men significantly outperforming women on 28 of the 122 acts (24%), whereas women outperformed men on 6 (5%) of the acts.

Women were significantly more likely to dress seductively and enhance their physical attractiveness than were men. For the tactics predicted to be used more often by men than women, relative use was in the predicted direction. Two of those differences were significant, $p < .05$. These findings lend support for Predictions 6 and 7.

Although the tactics *display strength*, *give gifts*, and *treat to a romantic dinner* were performed significantly more often by men

Table 4

Sex Differences in Tactic Use

Tactic	Men (<i>N</i> = 50)		Women (<i>N</i> = 50)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<u>Tactics women use more often</u>						
Enhance physical attractiveness	1.35	1.63	2.42	1.95	10.29	**
Dress seductively	0.45	0.92	1.01	1.33	6.03	*
<u>Tactics men use more often</u>						
Get target drunk	0.65	1.04	0.10	0.32	12.92	***
Go to private or secluded area	1.00	1.11	0.43	0.65	9.66	**
Indicate sexual attractiveness of target	1.39	1.66	0.54	1.30	8.05	**
Directly request sex	1.04	1.60	0.35	0.92	7.00	**
Create romantic atmosphere	0.88	1.27	0.34	0.70	6.82	**
Give gifts	0.27	0.54	0.06	0.28	6.03	*
Compliment on appearance	1.80	1.72	1.06	1.31	5.89	*
Ask for date	1.11	1.34	0.55	0.95	5.83	*
Verbalize desire for sexual contact	0.81	1.17	0.34	0.73	5.81	*
Display strength	0.34	0.60	0.12	0.37	4.84	*
Dance or dance closer	1.31	1.64	0.73	0.98	4.63	*
Sexual—miscellaneous	0.66	0.92	0.36	0.47	4.32	*
<u>Tactics used equally often by women and men</u>						
Treat to a romantic dinner	0.39	0.72	0.15	0.59	3.39	<i>ns</i>
Utilize friendship network	0.74	1.00	0.43	0.68	3.19	<i>ns</i>
Mislead about interest in sex	0.83	1.19	0.49	0.70	2.96	<i>ns</i>
Act masculine/feminine	1.57	1.55	2.13	1.99	2.46	<i>ns</i>
Drop sexual hints in conversation	0.42	0.74	0.24	0.50	2.02	<i>ns</i>
Increase eye contact	1.47	1.62	1.07	1.19	1.92	<i>ns</i>
Derogate competitors	0.42	0.75	0.25	0.51	1.81	<i>ns</i>
Imply commitment	0.92	1.66	0.55	1.17	1.70	<i>ns</i>
Increase proximity	1.86	1.57	1.48	1.43	1.58	<i>ns</i>
Increase perceived male value through flirting with others	0.44	0.85	0.66	1.05	1.34	<i>ns</i>
Increase sexual contact	1.87	2.05	1.52	1.49	0.96	<i>ns</i>
Flirt	2.12	1.71	1.82	1.51	0.86	<i>ns</i>
Display humor	2.66	2.17	2.29	2.12	0.73	<i>ns</i>
Increase non-sexual contact	1.71	1.73	1.47	1.50	0.52	<i>ns</i>
Enhance smell	2.08	2.33	2.43	2.52	0.49	<i>ns</i>
Increase attention	1.73	1.60	1.57	1.69	0.26	<i>ns</i>
Act nice	2.50	2.25	2.38	2.29	0.07	<i>ns</i>
Display status cues	0.19	0.69	0.17	0.46	0.04	<i>ns</i>
Practice good hygiene	3.13	2.68	3.15	2.82	0.00	<i>ns</i>
Act seductively	0.48	0.89	0.49	0.94	0.00	<i>ns</i>

Note: For all performance means, 0 = not performed, 1 = performed once, 2 = performed twice, 3 = performed 3-5 times, 4 = performed 6-10 times, 5 = performed 11-15 times, 6 = performed 16-20 times, 7 = performed 21 or more times.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, *ns* = $p > .05$

than women and the tactic *display status cues* followed this pattern of use, they were the least frequently performed of all the male tactics. For women, *give gifts*, *get target drunk*, *display strength*, *treat to a romantic dinner*, and *display status cues* were the least frequently used tactics. Men and women were equally likely to imply commitment, increase attention, and display status cues to promote a sexual encounter (see Table 4).

Correlation between effectiveness and frequency. To check for a rela-

tionship between act performance frequency and act effectiveness, correlations were computed between the 122 self-report frequency means and the 122 mean perceived effectiveness ratings for one's own sex. The correlation between male performance and male participants' ratings of male act effectiveness was .29 ($p < .001$), and the correlation between female performance and ratings of female act effectiveness was $-.11$ ($p > .05$).

We were also interested in whether prior sexual experience

would be related to the performance-effectiveness correlations. We computed correlations between performance and perceived effectiveness using the performance reports of participants with sexual experience. The correlation for men ($n = 39$) was .43 ($p < .001$), and the correlation for women ($n = 28$) was $-.01$ (ns). Both sets of correlations suggest that, whereas men tend to perform acts judged to be effective at promoting sexual encounters, there is no relationship between effectiveness for women and the acts women perform.

Most frequently reported recipient acts. The acts that participants reported being the target of most often are presented in Table 5. Thirteen acts appear on the lists for both men and women. A comparison of the acts on Tables 3 and 5 show that there is considerable overlap between the self-reports of one sex and the recipient-reports of the other. Men's self-reported top 20 and women's recipient-reported top 20 have 18 items in common. There are 14 acts in common between the female self-report and male recipient-report performance lists.

Sex differences in recipient reports. Men and women were similarly likely to report being the target of sexual advances. In only three instances did the sexes differ significantly on how often they believe they were the recipient of tactics for initiating sexual encounters. Women gave higher mean ratings than men to *asked for date* ($M = 1.30$ and $M = .76$, respectively; $p < .05$). Men more than women felt they were the recipient of the tactics *acted seductively* ($M = .94$ and $M = .37$, respectively; $p < .001$) and *dressed seductively* ($M = 1.33$ and $M = .14$, respectively; $p < .001$). The ANOVA for overall sex differences in recipient-report overall scores was nonsignificant. For men and women, respectively, the mean recipient scores were 1.10 ($SD = .92$) and 1.07 ($SD = .82$), $F(1,98) = .02$, $p = .88$.

Table 5

Twenty Most Frequently Reported Recipient Acts

Rank	Male Acts	Recipient Reported Frequency	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	She smiled warmly at me.	2.84	2.10
2.	She sat by me.	2.80	2.10
3.	She stood close to me.	2.52	1.94
4.	She practiced good hygiene.	2.52	2.56
5.	She dressed nicely.	2.50	2.44
6.	She French-kissed me.	2.44	2.92
7.	She acted interested in what I had to say.	2.40	2.47
8.	She wore a sexually provocative outfit.	2.38	2.10
9.	She acted in a feminine manner.	2.38	2.25
10.	She groomed herself well.	2.38	2.33
11.	She flirted with me openly.	2.27	1.85
12.	She increased the amount of attention she paid to me.	2.22	1.84
13.	She laughed easily in a relaxed manner.	2.20	2.25
14.	She treated me with respect.	2.20	2.31
15.	She leaned over and kissed me.	2.18	2.30
16.	She told me that I really looked good.	2.14	1.97
17.	She arranged her hair in an attractive style.	2.14	2.07
18.	She looked intently in my eyes.	1.98	1.99
19.	She applied makeup to enhance her appearance.	1.98	2.09
20.	She held my hand.	1.92	2.07
Rank	Female Reports		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	He practiced good hygiene.	3.06	2.43
2.	He sat by me.	2.86	2.26
3.	He acted like a gentleman.	2.83	2.36
4.	He treated me with respect.	2.81	2.46
5.	He leaned over and kissed me.	2.74	2.41
6.	He laughed easily in a relaxed manner.	2.70	2.47
7.	He French-kissed me.	2.69	2.48
8.	He put his arm around me.	2.68	2.04
9.	He smiled warmly at me.	2.56	1.96
10.	He displayed a good sense of humor.	2.54	2.29
11.	He acted genuinely caring and kind.	2.52	2.23
12.	He acted interested in what I had to say.	2.44	2.30
13.	He stood close to me.	2.42	1.88
14.	He held my hand.	2.42	2.40
15.	He groomed himself well.	2.41	2.30
16.	He told me jokes to make me laugh.	2.34	2.49
17.	He told me that I really looked good.	2.20	1.88
18.	He increased the amount of attention he paid to me.	2.06	1.83
19.	He called me frequently.	2.04	2.56
20.	He dressed nicely.	2.02	2.04

Note: For all means, 0 = not performed, 1 = performed once, 2 = performed twice, 3 = performed 3-5 times, 4 = performed 6-10 times, 5 = performed 11-15 times, 6 = performed 16-20 times, 7 = performed 21 or more times.

Self-reports versus recipient reports. To test our prediction that women would report performing the acts and tactics less frequently than men would report being the recipient of the same acts and tactics, a comparison was first made of the mean performance and mean recipient scores for each sex. Women's mean performance score of .92 ($SD = .75$) was not significantly different from men's mean recipient-score of 1.10 ($SD = .92$), $F(1,98) =$

1.21, $p = .27$. This examination did not support our prediction.

Prediction 8 received some support at the act and tactic levels of analyses. Men reported being the recipient of nine tactics significantly more frequently than women reported performing them (all $ps < .05$). These tactics, each followed respectively by its mean male recipient report rating and female self-reports rating, were *got target drunk* (.41; .10), *went to a private or*

Table 6

Differences Between Self-Report and Recipient-Report Act Frequencies

Act	Sex of Rater				<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male (<i>N</i> = 50)		Female (<i>N</i> = 50)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Male Recipient-Report v. Female Self-Report						
She cornered him to get him alone.	0.54	0.86	0.04	0.28	15.18	***
She hinted constantly about sexual things.	1.28	1.81	0.36	0.92	10.29	**
She led him away from the others.	1.18	1.42	0.42	0.97	9.72	**
She suggested he come home with her to see some of her things.	0.70	1.27	0.10	0.47	9.65	**
She guided his hands to her genital area.	1.18	1.63	0.34	1.08	9.26	**
She showed an increasing amount of skin by unbuttoning or removing her shirt.	1.50	1.89	0.53	1.29	8.86	**
She asked him if he wanted to walk her home.	1.00	1.50	0.30	0.81	8.42	**
She got him to drink a lot of alcohol.	0.70	1.23	0.14	0.61	8.30	**
She said she just wanted to come over and pretended that she did not have sex on her mind.	0.64	1.16	0.14	0.45	8.11	**
She told him she was sexually attracted to him.	1.51	2.16	0.49	1.33	7.94	*
She stuck out her chest.	0.69	1.12	0.16	0.77	7.68	*
She turned out the lights.	1.10	1.78	0.36	1.05	6.45	*
She told sexual jokes.	0.34	0.80	0.04	0.28	6.27	*
She asked him to dance.	1.14	1.46	0.56	0.99	5.41	*
She told him she had birth control.	0.48	1.17	0.08	0.44	5.15	*
She arranged for them to be casually introduced by some of his friends.	0.42	1.01	0.08	0.34	4.92	*
She invited him to her bedroom.	1.32	1.68	0.66	1.29	4.84	*
She arranged to stay out late with him so that she could not go home that night.	0.80	1.20	0.32	0.98	4.83	*
She sat in a sexy, provocative pose.	1.20	1.57	0.56	1.47	4.43	*
She wore revealing clothing.	1.20	1.59	0.63	1.17	4.08	*
She told him that he looked really good.	2.14	1.97	1.40	1.69	4.02	*
She showed him she had high status and power.	0.06	0.24	0.33	0.88	4.30	*
Female Recipient-Report v. Male Self-Report						
He talked her into having sex with him.	0.44	1.22	0.00	0.00	6.56	*
He asked her if she wanted to sleep with him.	0.98	1.62	0.38	0.81	5.49	*
He arranged for them to be casually introduced by some of her friends.	0.46	1.15	0.08	0.34	5.05	*

Note: For all means, 0 = not performed, 1 = performed once, 2 = performed twice, 3 = performed 3-5 times, 4 = performed 6-10 times, 5 = performed 11-15 times, 6 = performed 16-20 times, 7 = performed 21 or more times.

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .005

secluded area (.93; .43), dropped sexual hints in the conversation (.65; .24), danced or danced closer (1.23; .73), complimented on appearance (1.67; 1.06), indicated sexual attractiveness of target (1.34; .54), acted seductively (.94; .49), misled target about interest in sex (.83; .49), and sexual—miscellaneous (.73; .36). Furthermore, men reported being the recipient or target of 21 acts

more often than women reported performing those acts. Women self-reported performing only one act more frequently than men reported being its recipient (see Table 6).

Male self-reports and female recipient reports are more consistent with each other. There were no significant differences between men's mean performance score (1.15, *SD* = .99) and women's mean

recipient report score (1.07, *SD* = .82), *F*(1,98) = .19, *p* = .66. At the tactic level, two significant differences between men's self-reports and women's recipients reports were found. Tactics receiving higher ratings by men than by women were these: *directly requested sex* (means were 1.04 and .48, respectively; *p* < .03) and *dressed seductively* (means were .45 and .14, respectively; *p* < .03). There were significant differences on only 3 of the 122 acts, with men reporting performing the acts more frequently than women reported being the recipient of them (see Table 6). Although there were few significant differences between male self-reports and female recipient reports, those that emerged support Prediction 9.

Also of interest were comparisons of how often someone reported performing the acts for promoting sex compared with how often he or she felt he or she was the recipient of promoting sex behaviors. Men's average mean performance score was 1.15 (*SD* = .99), nearly identical to their mean recipient report score of 1.10 (*SD* = .92) (*p* = .95). Women reported being the target of the acts for promoting sex more often than they reported trying to promote sex. Their mean recipient report score was 1.07 (*SD* = .82), whereas their mean performance score was .92 (*SD* = .75) (*p* < .01).

Discussion

Our predictions were largely supported by the data. The men in our sample used a variety of tactics to promote sexual encounters more often than did the women. Women were more likely than men to enhance their physical attractiveness and dress seductively to promote a sexual encounter. Men, more than women, performed acts that indicated their willingness to spend time, energy, and resources on a partner. On average, the men in our sample judged that they promoted sexual encounters about as often as

they were the targets of sexual come-ons. Women were significantly more likely to judge that they were the targets of sexual advances than the initiators.

The modest but significant positive correlation for men and the nonsignificant negative correlation for women between act performance and effectiveness may result from a number of factors. If men are so interested in having sex, as a number of researchers suggest and show, why is the correlation not greater? One reason may be the potential costs incurred through performing the acts, among them emotional, monetary, physical, and reputational costs. Using deception to convince a woman she is loved so that she is more willing to engage in sexual relations may tax a man's social skills, be emotionally draining, and trigger reputational damage. Thus, if a man is seeking only a sexual relationship, it is more economical to try to attract a woman with similar expectations and desires or a woman who is deceived with relatively little effort. Nonetheless, the modest positive correlation suggests that men do tend to perform acts that are consensually viewed as effective in promoting a sexual encounter.

For women, the lack of a significant relationship between performance and effectiveness may exist primarily because sex is much more costly for women than for men, particularly when it occurs outside of a committed relationship. Men value sexual fidelity in a mate more highly than do women, and women often go to great pains to avoid being labeled promiscuous (Buss, 1994). A woman who incurs such damage to her reputation may find that men view her as primarily suitable as a short-term mate rather than as a long-term mate. Also, because there is always the risk of becoming pregnant, a woman must give some consideration to how a potential sexual partner would react, should this happen. Another

reason for the lack of a significant correlation may be that there are many acts perceived as effective at promoting sexual encounters for women to use. A woman who wishes to promote a sexual encounter may choose from a wide variety and number of acts—all of which may be effective enough to communicate her desires to a man. In some cases, it may be enough for a woman simply not to resist a man's advances to have sex with him or, as indicated previously, communicate her receptiveness and let him make an advance. Finally, women often need to do nothing to promote a sexual encounter. Simply existing in time and space and being naked under their clothes is often enough to trigger approach attempts by men (D. Symons, personal communication, 21 January 1994).

We intentionally left the situational variables undefined because we were interested in the overall use of these behaviors in a sample. However, context is undoubtedly important. Had we instructed our subjects to consider promoting sex within the confines of a specific type of relationship (e.g., a potential "one-night stand"), greater correlations might have emerged between performance and effectiveness. For example, if a woman is seeking only a short-term sexual relationship, it makes sense for her to provide clear signals that she is sexually accessible. Prostitution is a perfect example, because sexual access is signaled by how a prostitute behaves, dresses, or approaches a man. The correlation will be high because she is consistently performing the most effective acts. However, within a long-term committed relationship, both partners may know each well enough that it is no longer necessary to perform those behaviors that are most "effective." The important factor is that each partner interprets the behaviors correctly.

The importance of specifying the goals of behavior is illustrated by

findings by Tooke and Camire (1991) and Buss (1988). Tooke and Camire (1991) found significant correlations between the perceived effectiveness and performance of acts of deception used to attract a mate (correlations were .50 and .48 for women and men, respectively). In examining what people do to appear more attractive to members of the other sex, Buss found effectiveness-frequency correlations ranging from .70 to .75 for women and .69 to .73 for men. It appears that, when the emotional and reputational stakes are relatively low (e.g., looking attractive or being noticed), we are willing to perform effective behaviors. However, when a person's reputation is at stake and when there are long-term physical and life-altering implications of his or her behavior (e.g., pregnancy, childrearing), people behave much more cautiously (Greer & Buss, 1992).

Men and women show much agreement about what types of acts they most often perform for and receive from the other sex. The conflict seems to revolve around how often people believe these behaviors are directed toward them by someone who is interested in them sexually. Men may overestimate women's sexual interest as being more like their own than it may be. Thus, some men may choose to ignore or de-emphasize women's attempts to slow or prevent sexual activity because these preventive behaviors are presented at the same time a woman may be giving off signals that a man interprets as indicative of her romantic interest.

General Discussion

This research makes several contributions to knowledge about the tactics people use to promote sexual encounters. The first is the descriptive. The three empirical studies provide a rich description of the many tactics that men and women use to promote sexual encounters, a

preliminary indication of the relative effectiveness of each tactic, and an indication of the relative frequency with which the different tactics are performed. The taxonomy of tactics is clearly limited and incomplete, in part because of the single college population on which the data were collected and in part because of the limitations of questionnaire methodology. Future researchers could profitably examine other populations, particularly other cultures, and additional data sources to explore the generality of the current taxonomy of tactics and the scaling of relative effectiveness and performance.

It is useful to compare and contrast the current taxonomy of tactics to promote sexual encounters with the taxonomies generated by other researchers such as Moore (1985) and Perper and Weis (1987). The Moore (1985) taxonomy is based on observations of nonverbal behavior used for flirtation, attraction, or solicitation. As such, the resulting taxonomy represents very specific behaviors (e.g., head toss, eyebrow flash, hair flip) that are readily observable but may not be consciously performed by the actor. In contrast, our taxonomy is based on more molar actions that are *intentionally* performed by women and men *to promote a sexual encounter*, as opposed merely to flirt or attract. Thus, although there are a few overlaps between Moore's taxonomy and ours—notably, kissing, smiling, eye contact, and dancing—the two taxonomies are largely independent of one another. It is further worth noting that Moore's work is based solely on women's tactics, whereas ours involves the tactics used by both sexes.

The taxonomy generated by Perper and Weis (1987) is based on essays written by American and Canadian women explaining how they would go about seducing a man. As such, the intent of our study and that of Perper and Weis is closer. Correspondingly, there is

greater overlap between the two taxonomies. Both taxonomies include tactics revolving around dress, drinking alcohol, directly requesting sex, creating a romantic atmosphere, dancing, complimenting, increasing eye contact, moving closer, and touching. This overlap is noteworthy in that the two methods of arriving at the tactics—essay writing about seduction strategies and nominations of specific acts used to promote sexual encounters—are different from one another.

Despite this overlap, however, the current taxonomy appears to be more comprehensive than that outlined by Perper and Weis (1987). In particular, our study involved tactics used by *both sexes*, whereas the Perper and Weis study examined *only tactics used by women*. Perhaps for this and other reasons, many tactics discovered in our study—such as *giving gifts* (e.g., flowers, jewelry, expensive dinners), *displaying strength* (e.g., flexing muscles, opening jars), *increasing attention* (e.g., frequent phone calls), *displaying status cues* (e.g., mentioning money, showing prestige possessions), *increasing perceived mate value through flirting with others* (e.g., encouraging the advances of others to enhance perceptions of desirability), *acting nice* (e.g., treating others with respect), *enhancing smell* (e.g., wearing perfume), *implying commitment* (e.g., expressing feelings of love and devotion), *derogating competitors* (e.g., putting down the insensitive behavior of same-sex rivals), and *misleading about interest in sex* (e.g., wanting to be together but pretending not to be interested in sex)—are entirely missing from the Perper and Weiss taxonomy.

We do not claim that our taxonomy of tactics for promoting sex is comprehensive. Nonetheless, based on comparisons with existing taxonomies, it appears to be the most comprehensive one to date. Thus, future researchers might profitably

use this taxonomy as a starting point for further explorations of the tactics women *and men* use to promote a sexual encounter.

The current research contributes to a growing body of literature that suggests sex differences in the tactics men and women use in the sexual and mating domains (Buss, 1994). In particular, short-term sexual strategies loom larger in men's repertoire of strategies, and so the most effective tactics for women for promoting a sexual encounter involve playing to men's desire for immediate short-term sex by signaling sexual availability (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Women, in contrast, tend to resist purely sexual encounters that are devoid of emotions, investment, or longer-term prospects. Therefore, men whose tactics convey cues to emotional involvement, long-term interest, and resource investment are most successful at promoting sexual encounters. Men who embody women's desires and women who embody men's desires are most effective at achieving their sexual goals. Because the desires of men and women differ, however, the tactics that are most effective for men and women differ.

These sex differences in tactic effectiveness do not imply a direct translation into action or performance. The performance of tactics to promote sexual encounters is undoubtedly influenced by many factors other than perceived effectiveness. Many women, for example, do not pursue encounters that are exclusively sexual and so may refrain from performing acts that would be highly effective if that were their sole goal. Furthermore, even those women who do seek sexual encounters may refrain from performing acts that would be reputationally costly, such as overtly sexual tactics that might signal to a man promiscuous proclivities or low mate value (Buss, 1994). Similarly, men may refrain from using commitment cues, despite their effectiveness, to avoid becoming

entangled in an unwanted relationship. Perhaps it is not surprising that the acts performed most frequently by both men and women are sexually neutral (see Table 3).

Despite these complexities, men and women differed in the tactics they reported using to promote a sexual encounter. Women use appearance enhancement more than men. Men more than women use a variety of tactics to promote sexual encounters, including getting a woman drunk, going to a secluded area, complimenting a woman on her attractiveness, giving gifts, creating a romantic atmosphere, displaying strength, dancing closely, treating a woman to a romantic dinner, and deceiving a woman about their interest in sex. The nature of these sex differences suggests that when trying to promote a sexual encounter, women strive to embody men's desire for physical attractiveness (Buss, 1989; Symons, 1979), but they tend not to use the overtly sexual tactics that might cause reputational damage or hinder the chances of converting the encounter into a long-term relationship.

Although men use tactics such as creating a romantic atmosphere and giving gifts, it is interesting to note that they do not report implying commitment significantly more often than women, despite the perceived effectiveness of this tactic. This may be due to women's use of emotional cues when promoting relationships to ensure that those relationships will not be purely sexual and to men's reluctance to use commitment cues to avoid entangling relationships.

A likely key to interpreting these sex differences in perceptions of effectiveness resides in the distinction between short-term and long-term sexual strategies. Buss and Schmitt (1993) found that in purely short-term as compared with long-term mating contexts, women shift their preferences to focus more on a man's immediate resources, his

physical appearance, and his bravado (as contrasted with long-term resource potential). Men see tactics that fulfill these preferences to be moderately effective in promoting a sexual encounter because men are more likely than women to equate sexual encounters with short-term mating. But because women tend not to view sexual encounters as purely short term and instead often seek some degree of emotional involvement or commitment, they evaluate men's use of these obviously short-term tactics as relatively ineffective. In short, the differences between men and women in their perceptions of effectiveness may be due to differences in their perceptions of the nature of the sexual encounters. Men are more likely to view opportunistic short-term sexual encounters as desirable goals to be pursued for their own sake. Women, in contrast, are more likely to view sexual encounters as linked with, or leading to, a more enduring relationship.

One concern, however, is that because men are more inclined than women to see short-term sex as desirable, men may overreport their tactic use. On the other hand, some women may be reluctant to admit the degree to which they have sexual goals or pursue sex. Although measuring intent is fraught with difficulties, future researchers could try to measure whether, and to what extent, women actually underreport and men overreport performing tactics to promote sexual encounters.

One final result is worth discussing—men reported being the recipients of far more tactics of promoting sexual encounters than women reported performing. Men reported that women corner them to get them alone, hint constantly about sexual things, lead them away from others, show a lot of skin, stick out their chests, and sit in a sexy, provocative pose to promote a sexual encounter more than women reported performing such

actions. One interpretation of these results pertains to men's lower threshold for inferring sexual intent. These results may simply be another reflection of the sex difference in threshold for inferring sexual intent (Abbey, 1982; Abbey & Melby, 1986; Saal et al., 1989). Women may perform actions such as sitting in provocative poses and leading a man away from others as much as men say women do, yet women may not perform these behaviors with the intent of promoting a sexual encounter. Perhaps dissemination of knowledge that men and women differ in their perceptions of sexual intent, and in their experience of tactics to promote sexual encounters performed by the other sex, may provide one small step toward reducing the conflict between the sexes that may result from these incompatible perceptions.

In a broader sense, the results of these studies contribute to our knowledge of the specificity of the tactics that men and women use to achieve their sexual desires. Not all sexual desires, however, involve promoting a sexual encounter. For example, another desire that women and men sometimes express is to delay a sexual encounter to a later time or to stop it from occurring entirely. Thus, future researchers could profitably focus on a variety of other desires in the sexual realm, identify the tactics used to achieve those desires, and explore how they differ from the tactics used specifically in the context of promoting a sexual encounter.

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3. Increase Sexual Contact
1. He leaned over and kissed her.
 2. He put his hand on her thigh.
 3. He French-kissed her.
 4. He guided her hands to his genital area.
4. Increase Non-Sexual Contact
1. He put his arm around her.
 2. He held her hand.
 3. He offered to give her a massage.
 4. He tickled her.
 5. He asked if they could cuddle for a while.
5. Get Target Drunk
1. He got her to drink a lot of alcohol.
 2. He bought her drinks.
 3. He got her high on drugs (e.g., on marijuana).
6. Go to Private or Secluded Area
1. He took her to a private or secluded area.
 2. He invited her to his house/room/apartment.
 3. He suggested that she come home with him to see some of his things.
 4. He asked her if she wanted him to walk her home.
 5. He led her away from others.
 6. He cornered her to get her alone.
 7. He asked if she wanted to study alone together.
 8. He invited her to go to a hot tub.
 9. He invited her into his bedroom.
7. Directly Request Sex
1. He asked her if she wanted to sleep with him.
 2. He told her directly that he wanted to have sex with her.
8. Increase Eye Contact
1. He stared into her eyes and tried to mesmerize her with his passion.
 2. He looked at her intently in the eyes.
 3. He looked directly and knowingly into her eyes.
9. Dress Seductively
1. He wore sexually provocative outfits.
 2. He wore tight fitting clothes that showed off his body.
 3. He wore revealing clothing.
 4. He wore sexy underwear.
10. Drop Sexual Hints in Conversation
1. He told sexual jokes.
 2. He boasted about his sexual ability.
 3. He hinted constantly about sexual things.
 4. He talked about his past sexual experiences.
11. Give Gifts
1. He bought her flowers.
 2. He gave her jewelry.
 3. He bought her dinner at an expensive restaurant.
 4. He spent a lot of money on her.
12. Dance or Dance Closer
1. He danced closer to her.
 2. He asked her to dance.
13. Display Strength
- Appendix**
- Tactics for Promoting Sexual Encounters**
1. Flirt
 1. He smiled warmly at her.
 2. He talked with her in an animated fashion.
 3. He flirted with her openly.
 2. Increase Proximity
 1. He stood close to her.
 2. He sat by her.
 3. He brushed softly as they passed.

1. He displayed his strength by flexing his muscles.
2. He displayed his strength by opening a jar that she had trouble opening.
14. Utilize Friendship Network
 1. He let her friends know that he was interested in her.
 2. He asked her friends if she was interested in him.
 3. He arranged for them to be casually introduced by her friends.
15. Compliment on Appearance.
 1. He told her that she looked really good.
 2. He complimented her on how beautiful she looked.
 3. He told her that he found her extremely attractive.
16. Treat to a Romantic Dinner
 1. He made her a gourmet meal with wine and candlelight.
 2. He invited her over for a romantic dinner.
 3. He treated her to a dinner.
17. Increase Attention
 1. He increased the amount of attention he paid to her.
 2. He lavished attention on her.
 3. He called her frequently.
18. Indicate Sexual Attractiveness of Target
 1. He complimented her on how sexy she looked.
 2. He told her that he was sexually attracted to her.
19. Verbalize Desire for Sexual Contact
 1. He talked her into having sex with him.
 2. He told her he wanted to kiss her.
20. Display Status Cues
 1. He casually mentioned that he had a lot of money.
 2. He showed her his possessions (car, house, boat).
 3. He showed her that he had high status and power.
 4. He acted like he had a lot of money.
 5. He boasted about his accomplishments.
 6. He casually mentioned that he expected to make a lot of money.
21. Increase Perceived Mate Value Through Flirting with Others
 1. He flirted subtly with other women to make her jealous, but not so much that she lost interest.
 2. He let her know that other women were interested in him.
 3. He encouraged the advances of other women so that she could see that he was a desirable partner.
22. Enhance Physical Attractiveness
 1. He made himself "extra attractive."
 2. He applied makeup to enhance his appearance.
 3. He dressed nicely.
 4. He arranged his hair in an attractive style.
23. Practiced Good Hygiene
 1. He practiced good hygiene.
 2. He groomed himself well.
24. Ask for Date
 1. He invited her to a party.
 2. He asked her out on a date.
25. Act Masculine/Feminine
 1. He acted manly.
 2. He acted with solid self-confidence.
 3. He acted in a feminine manner.
26. Create Romantic Atmosphere
 1. He turned on romantic music.
 2. He lit some candles to create the right atmosphere.
 3. He dimmed the lights.
 4. He turned out the lights.
27. Act Nice
 1. He acted extra nice to her.
 2. He treated her with respect.
 3. He acted interested in what she had to say.
 4. He acted like a gentleman.
 5. He acted genuinely caring and kind.
28. Enhance Smell
 1. He wore perfume or cologne.
29. Display Humor
 1. He displayed a good sense of humor.
 2. He told her jokes to make her laugh.
 3. He laughed in an easy, relaxed manner.
30. Act Seductively
 1. He licked his lips seductively.
 2. He stuck out his chest.
 3. He showed an increasing amount of skin by unbuttoning his shirt.
 4. He ate his food seductively.
 5. He undressed in front of her.
 6. He walked seductively.
 7. He sat in a sexy, provocative pose.
31. Imply Commitment
 1. He told her that he didn't do "one-night stands" because he liked relationships that lasted.
 2. He told her that he really loved her.
 3. He implied that he was really committed to her.
 4. He pretended that he wanted to make a long-term commitment to her.
 5. He told her that he really liked her a lot.
 6. He told her that he really cared about her deeply.
32. Derogate Competitors
 1. He put down the insensitive behavior of other men.
 2. He said that other guys were users.
 3. He put down other guys' status (less money, less success than he has).
33. Mislead About Interest in Sex
 1. He acted upset so that she would comfort him and then capitalized on her comforting.
 2. He acted uninterested in sex, like he just wanted to talk.
 3. He arranged to stay out so late with her that he could not go home that night.
 4. He said that he just wanted her to come over and pretended that he did not have sex on his mind.
34. Sexual-Miscellaneous
 1. He rented a movie with sexual situations (e.g., *Wild Orchid*).
 2. He made himself appear vulnerable.
 3. He asked if she had a condom.
 4. He started to undress her.
 5. He told her he had birth control.

Note: Shown here are the male, third person versions of the acts. When appropriate for the questionnaires developed from this list, the sex of actor and recipient and the voice of actor (first versus third) were changed.

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