

# Depression and Romantic Relationships: Two Views

Because it's there?

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# Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Two Approaches
- 3 Two Conclusions
- 4 Reconciliation
- 5 Conclusion
- 6 Bibliography

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# What is Depression

## Cause

Depression is a disorder of unknown cause. It may be neurological in nature, psychological, genetic, or behavioral. It is related to migraines, but the nature of the relationship is poorly understood.

## Symptoms

- Chronic negative feelings: sadness, guilt, shame
- Chronic negative self talk
- Suicidal thoughts or actions

# The No Brainer

## Effect

It seems obvious that depression **must** have an effect on patterns of communication in interpersonal relationships, esp. romantic ones.

Intuitively, we expect an increase in negative communication.

# The Brainer

## Research Question

How does depression effect patterns of communication in couples?

# Approach

- Examine two papers
- Compare the Design
- Compare the Results
- Discuss findings

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# Men vs. Women

## Duggan 2007

Sex differences in communicative attempts to curtail depression: An inconsistent nurturing as control perspective.

### Sample Design

- interview
- 68 couples
- All with one depressed member

### Hypothesis: Over time

- 1 Male partners
  - start negative
  - become 'helpful'
  - end in the middle
- 2 Female partners
  - start positive
  - go to the middle
- 3 Women less negative

# Depressive vs. ... not

Baucom, et al 2007

## Relative Contributions of Relationship Distress and Depression to Communication Patterns in Couples

### Sample Design

- interviews
- 3 Studies
  - 134 couples
  - 60 couples
  - 135 couples
- Mix of depressive couples and non-depressive

### Hypothesis

- Satisfaction Relates to Depression
- Depression affects interaction patterns
- Marital satisfaction relates to deportation
- Depression uniquely contributes to interaction patterns.

# Comparison

- Are these studies looking at the same questions?
- The first study assumes the hypotheses of the second!
- Significant overlap in communication behaviors studied
  - Withdraw behaviors
  - Problem solving/helping behaviors
  - Overall positivity/negativity

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# Men Vs. Women

## Findings

Significant differences exist, largely following the predicted pattern. However, it is not the case that functional women are generally less negative than functional men

# Depressive vs. SHF

## Findings

- Hypothesis 2 was not supported.  
Depression does not affect interaction
- Hypothesis 4 was not supported.  
Depression does not uniquely affect interaction patterns

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# Comparison

## First Study:

- 1994
- Small cohort
- Bias

*Baucom* is the stronger study.

## Second study:

- Larger cohort
- Control group analyzed
- Broader cross section

# Reconciliation

What did Duggan study?

- Universal behaviors?
- Common CODA behaviors?
- False positives?

Other contradictions:

- “helping” behaviors aren’t
- withdrawal, problem solving, or husband demand/wife withdraw

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# Everybody Got Issues

## Question

Do the finding in *Baucom* negate the findings in *Duggan*? Or is it made clear that *satisfaction* is the variable being studied by *Duggan*?

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B. Baucom, K. Eldridge, J. Jones, M. Sevier, M. Clements, H. Markman, S. Stanley, S. L. Sayers, T. Sher, and A. Christensen.

Relative contributions of relationship distress and depression to communication patterns in couples..

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