Affective touch in young adult couples

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Abstract

In adulthood, partners are the most frequent and desired touch givers. Studies have highlighted the importance of partner touch in stress reduction, personal well-being and relationship satisfaction. However, basic information about partner touch is still lacking. Surprisingly, we do not know how often partners touch each other and how this relates to individual and relationship factors. Previous studies have been limited by survey character and short observation periods. Therefore, we used an ecological-momentary assessment method to follow more than 100 young adult couples for 7 days. Subjects (18-35 years) documented the touches they received from their partner with a mechanical counter. Beforehand, subjects were asked about relationship and individual characteristics. At the end of the week, they reported details about the most positive and the most negative touching event. Preliminary results showed that young adults received an average of about 50 touches per day from their partners. This correlated positively with their touch wish and relationship satisfaction and negatively with relationship duration and individual age. Final results will be presented at the conference.

Keywords: affective touch, relationship satisfaction, EMA

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