

Stilovi privrženosti i seksualnost: doprinos roda, dobi i statusa partnerske veze

/ Attachment Styles and Sexuality: the Contribution of Gender, Age and Relationship Status

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Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je utvrditi pojedinačni i zajednički doprinos roda, dobi i statusa veze razlikama u stilovima privrženosti i aspektima seksualnosti (seksualno samopoštovanje i seksualno zadovoljstvo). U istraživanju su sudjelovali članovi opće populacije (N=632). Za ispitivanje stilova privrženosti i aspekata seksualnosti korišteni su sljedeći upitnici: Modificirani inventar iskustava u bliskim odnosima, Ljestvica seksualnosti i Nova ljestvica seksualnog zadovoljstva. Utvrđene rodne razlike ukazuju na izraženiju anksioznu privrženost i niže seksualno samopoštovanje žena u odnosu na muškarce, bez obzira na status veze. Dob je negativno povezana sa seksualnim zadovoljstvom. Osobe koje u vrijeme ispitivanja nisu bile u vezi imale su više stupnjeve izbjegavajuće privrženosti, osobito u najmlađoj i najstarijoj dobnoj skupini. Samci su također imali niže seksualno samopoštovanje i seksualno zadovoljstvo u odnosu na sudionike koji su u vezi. Autorice zaključuju da rod, dob i status veze pojedinačno i zajednički doprinose individualnim razlikama u stilovima privrženosti i seksualnom samopoštovanju.

/ **Objective.** The aim of this study was to determine the separate and combined contribution of gender, age and relationship status to the differences in attachment styles and aspects of sexuality (sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction). **Methods.** The sample included members of the general population (N=632). The following measures were used to examine attachment styles and aspects of sexuality: Modified Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships, The Sexuality Scale and The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale. **Results.** Gender differences were established, indicating more pronounced anxious attachment and lower sexual self-esteem in women compared with men, regardless of relationship status. Age was negatively associated with sexual satisfaction. Single participants had higher levels of avoidant attachment especially in the youngest and the oldest age group. They also had lower sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction compared with coupled participants. **Conclusion.** Gender age and relationship status contributed individually and jointly to individual differences in attachment styles and sexual self-esteem.

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Stilovi privrženosti utječu i na očekivanja i ciljeve u partnerskim vezama, pa tako i seksualnosti, kao važnog aspekta partnerskih veza (1,2). Ranija istraživanja su pokazala da osobe s višim stupnjevima anksiozne privrženosti češće pristaju na neželjeni seks, rjeđe koriste kontracepciju te su češće preokupirane seksom u odnosu na osobe sa sigurnim stilom privrženosti (3,4). Pomoću takvih ponašanja oni nastoje održati sigurnost koju im pruža intimnost s partnerom. S druge strane, osobe s višim stupnjevima izbjegavajuće privrženosti odabiru neformalne seksualne odnose bez emocionalnog vezivanja, češće se upuštaju u seksualne odnose s nepoznatim osobama, seksualni život započinju u kasnijoj dobi te češće masturbiraju u odnosu na sigurno privržene osobe. Njihov glavni cilj je zadržati emocionalnu udaljenost i osjećaj kontrole u partnerskim odnosima (3,4). U oba slučaja (anksiozno i izbjegavajuće privrženih osoba) ishodi su lošije seksualno funkcioniranje (5) i manje seksualno zadovoljstvo (2,6). Iako su, prema izvornoj teoriji privrženosti, rodne i dobne razlike u privrženosti male (7), u velikom je broju istraživanja utvrđeno postojanje rodni razlika u seksualnosti (8) te promjene u seksualnim ponašanjima/zadovoljstvo u funkciji dobi (9). Stoga je u studiji ispitivan doprinos roda, dobi i statusa veze razlikama u stupnjevima privrženosti.

Rodne razlike u privrženosti i seksualnosti

U brojnim je istraživanjima pronađeno da žene postižu više rezultate na ljestvicama anksiozne privrženosti, dok muškarci postižu više rezultate na ljestvicama izbjegavajuće privrženosti (10-16). Jedno od postojećih objašnjenja postojanja rodni razlika u privrženosti i seksualnosti naglašava značenje postojanja emocionalno-interpersonalne seksualne orijentacije žena, dok muškarci razvijaju rekreacijsku orijentaciju

Attachment styles affect expectations and objectives in partner relationships, including sexuality, as important aspects of partner relationships (1,2). Previous research have found that people high on attachment anxiety more often accept unwanted sex, have earlier initiation of sexual intercourse, less frequent use of contraception, and are also more often preoccupied with sex compared with securely attached people (3,4). By such sexual behaviours, they try to maintain security that permits intimacy with their partner. On the other hand, people high on attachment avoidance prefer casual sex without emotional involvement, participation in informal sexual activities with strangers, have later initiation of sexual intercourse and more often use masturbation compared with securely attached people. Their main attachment-related goal is to maintain emotional distance and control in partner relationships. In both cases (anxiety and avoidance), the outcomes are poorer sexual functioning (5) and lower sexual satisfaction (2,6). However, according to the original attachment theory, the age and gender differences in attachment are small (7), and many studies have shown that there are general gender differences in sexuality (8) as well as that sexual behaviours/satisfaction may vary as a function of age (9). Therefore, in the present study, the contribution of gender, age and relationship status to the differences in attachment styles were investigated.

Gender differences in attachment and sexuality

Numerous studies have indicated that women generally score higher on anxiety and men generally score higher on avoidance (10-16). One of the current explanations of gender specificities in attachment and sexuality emphasizes the existence of the emotional-interpersonal

prema seksualnosti, više pažnje poklanjaju izražavanju svojih seksualnih potreba (17). Istraživanja rodni razlika u seksualnom samopoštovanju i seksualnom zadovoljstvu rijetka su i nejednoznačna. Neki istraživački nalazi ukazuju na više seksualno samopoštovanje (18-20) i seksualno zadovoljstvo (8,21) muškaraca u odnosu na žene pri čemu žene izražavaju više negativnih osjećaja spram seksualnosti u odnosu na muškarce (22). Rodne razlike u seksualnom samopoštovanju nisu potvrđene u drugim istraživanjima (23,24). Temeljem ovih nalaza, u ovom istraživanju se očekuje izraženija anksiozna privrženost žena i izraženija izbjegavajuća privrženost muškaraca. Također se očekuje utvrđivanje višeg seksualnog samopoštovanja i seksualnog zadovoljstva muškaraca u odnosu na žene.

Dobne razlike u privrženosti i seksualnosti

Fluktuacije u postojanosti stilova privrženosti mogu se pojaviti za vrijeme odrasle dobi što ukazuje na mogući utjecaj osobnih i okolinskih čimbenika (25). U prijašnjim istraživanjima nije pridavana dovoljna pozornost ispitivanju privrženosti iz cjeloživotne perspektive koja uključuje srednju i stariju životnu dob (26). Neki istraživački dokazi ukazuju na postojanje dobnih razlika u privrženosti pri čemu su stupnjevi anksiozne privrženosti u mlađoj odrasloj dobi općenito viši u odnosu na stariju odraslu dob (27-30). U drugim istraživanjima su utvrđeni viši stupnjevi izbjegavajuće privrženosti u srednjim dobnim skupinama u odnosu na mlađe i starije dobne skupine (30,31). U većem broju istraživanja pronađena je negativna povezanost između dobi i seksualnog zadovoljstva kao rezultat manje učestalosti seksualnih aktivnosti koja nastupa sa starenjem (32), manje učestalosti seksualnih fantazija (33) i povećanja seksualnih disfunkcija (34-36). U skladu s navedenim pregledom postojećih istraživačkih nalaza, u ovom istraživanju očekujemo smanjenje seksualnog zadovoljstva u funkciji povećanja dobi.

sexual orientation of women, while men more often develop a recreational orientation toward sexuality and afford greater attention to the expression of their sexual needs (17). Studies on gender differences in sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction are few in number and lack uniformity. Some research findings indicate that men have higher sexual self-esteem (18-20) and sexual satisfaction (8,21) than women, whereas women report more negative affect related to their sexuality than men (22). Gender differences in sexual self-esteem were not confirmed in other studies (23,24). Based on these findings, this study was expected to show more pronounced anxious attachment in women and more pronounced avoidant attachment in men. We also expected greater sexual self-esteem and greater sexual satisfaction in men compared with women.

Age differences in attachment and sexuality

The fluctuation in stability of attachment styles may appear during adulthood, indicating that change is possible in later years given certain personal and environmental influences (25). Previous research has been paid little attention to attachment processes from a life span perspective – one that includes middle and older adulthood (26). There is some evidence for age-related differences in attachment orientation, particularly in early adulthood, in that that anxiety is generally higher in younger compared with older adults (27-30) and, in some studies, avoidance is higher in middle-aged compared with younger and older adults (30,31). A large number of studies have also found a negative association between age and sexual satisfaction as a result of less frequent sexual activity (32), lower frequency of sexual thoughts (33) and increased sexual dysfunction (34-36). Accordingly, we anticipated a decline in sexual satisfaction from younger to older age categories.

Privrženost, seksualnost i status veze u različitim životnim razdobljima

U posljednjem desetljeću postoji povećani istraživački interes prema istraživanju povezanosti između statusa veze i privrženosti. Postojeća istraživanja ukazuju na značenje partnerske veze za održavanje sigurne privrženosti (30). Fraley i suradnici (37) pronalaze da su razine sigurne privrženosti u odrasloj dobi više kod osoba koje se nalaze u dužim partnerskim vezama. U stupnjevima sigurne privrženosti nisu utvrđene razlike između samaca i osoba koje su u vezi, iako su samci iskazivali više razine seksualnog nezadovoljstva (38). Ovi nalazi ukazuju da osobe u partnerskim vezama mogu imati niže razine anksiozne i izbjegavajuće privrženosti u odnosu na samce (38,39), dok je povezanost između dobi i sigurne privrženosti u različitim dobnim kategorijama još uvijek otvoreno pitanje (30). U ovom istraživanju očekujemo utvrđivanje prediktivnog značenja statusa veze na anksioznu i izbjegavajuću privrženost. Samci će imati više razine nesigurne (anksiozne i izbjegavajuće) privrženosti.

CILJ ISTRAŽIVANJA

Cilj istraživanja je utvrditi pojedinačni i zajednički doprinos rodnih i dobnih obilježja te statusa veze na razlike u stilovima privrženosti i u aspektima seksualnosti (seksualno samopostovanje i seksualno zadovoljstvo).

METODOLOGIJA

Sudionici i postupak

Istraživanjem su obuhvaćeni članovi opće populacije na sljedeći način: početni uzorak sačinjavalo je 139 studenata oba roda (Nm=69; Nž=70). Nakon primjene, studenti su zamo- ljeni da pronađu po 4 osobe različitog roda

Attachment, sexuality and relationship status at different points in the life span

In recent years, increased research interest focused towards examining links between relationship status and attachment orientation. Previous research supports the claim that relationships serve a security-enhancing function (30). Fraley et al. (37) found that the overall levels of stability in adult attachment were higher among people who had been involved with their partners for a longer period of time. Somewhat different results were obtained in another study wherein single participants were as likely as coupled ones to exhibit attachment security and rely on attachment figures; they reported higher levels of sexual dissatisfaction (38). These findings suggest that coupled individuals have lower levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance (38,39), but the association between age and security at different points in the life span is still an open question (30). Based on the above empirical evidence, we expected that relationship status will be predictive of both attachment dimensions (anxious and avoidant). Single persons will have higher levels of anxious and avoidant attachment.

AIM

The aim of this study was to determine the separate and combined contribution of gender, age and relationship status to the differences in attachment styles and aspects of sexuality (sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction).

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The study sample included members of the general population, as follows: the initial sample consisted of 139 students of both sex-

među svojim poznanicima u dobnom rasponu 25-65 godina života koje bi pristale sudjelovati u istraživanju. Također su zamoljeni da na taj način odabrane osobe navedu nekoliko svojih poznanika, u istim dobnim rasponima, koji bi bili voljni sudjelovati u istraživanju. Proces je nastavljan sve dok više nije bilo novih veza. Konačni broj sudionika sakupljenih na taj način iznosio je $N = 632$ (323 žene i 309 muškaraca). Prosječna dob sudionika iznosila je $34,1 \pm 10,68$ za žene i $35,4 \pm 10,47$ za muškarce, u rasponu od 20 do 65 godina. U svrhu odgovaranja na istraživački cilj sudionici su podijeljeni u tri dobne kategorije (najmlađa 20-26 godina, srednja 27-39 godina i najstarija 40-65 godina). Većina sudionika bila je u vezi ($n=512$), dok su ostali bili samci ($n=120$). Najveći broj sudionika u vezama bili su u bračnim vezama (48,1 %), dok je 32,9 % sudionika bilo u izvanbračnim zajednicama. Prosječna dužina trajanja veze iznosila je $11,2 \pm 9,29$ godina, s trajanjem od 6 mjeseci do 45 godina. Nisu utvrđene statistički značajne razlike u trajanju veze između muškaraca i žena ($t=0,14$; $p>0,05$). Većina sudionika imala je završeno srednjoškolsko obrazovanje (54 %) ili su bili studenti (22 %), dok je 22 % imalo završenu visoku stručnu spremu. Ovo istraživanje odobreno je od Etičkog povjerenstva Odsjeka za psihologiju Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu.

Mjerni instrumenti

Modificirani inventar iskustava u bliskim odnosima (40) korišten je za mjerenje stilova odnosno dimenzija privrženosti. To je hrvatski oblik izvorne ljestvice *Experiences in Close Relationships* (ECR) (14). Ljestvica sadrži 18 čestica (9 čestica za ispitivanje anksiozne privrženosti (primjerice: „Mnogo brinem zbog svoje partnerske veze“), a 9 čestica za ispitivanje izbjegavajuće privrženosti (primjerice: „Pokušavam izbjeći preveliko zbližavanje s partnerom/partnericom“). Rezultati sudionika su iskazani sumom odgovora na podljestvicama anksiozne i izbjegavajuće privrženosti. Sudionici su odgo-

es ($N_m=69$, $N_w=70$). After the instruments were applied to students, they were asked to find four more persons of different sexes among their acquaintances between 25 and 65 years of age who would agree to participate in the study. The persons chosen in this way were then asked to find several of their acquaintances of the same age who would be willing to participate in the study. The process continued until there were no more new connections. The final number of participants chosen in this way was 632 (323 women; 309 men). Participant mean age was 34.1 ± 10.68 for women and 35.4 ± 10.47 for men, ranging from 20-65 years. In keeping with the research aim, participants were divided into three age categories (younger age 20-26 years, middle age 27-39 years and older age 40-65 years). The majority of the participants were in a relationship ($n=512$) and the others were single ($n=120$). Most of the coupled participants were in a marriage (48.1%), while 32.9% were in non-marital relationships. The average duration of the relationships was 11.2 ± 9.29 years, ranging from 6 months to 45 years. Statistically significant differences between the results of men and women in a relationship were not found for the average duration of the relationships ($t_{(630)}=0.14$; $p>0.05$). Most participants had completed secondary and post-secondary education (54%) or were students (22%), and 22% had a university degree.

The present study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb.

Instruments

Modified Inventory of Close Relationships (40): This is the Croatian form of the original *Experiences in Close Relationships* (ECR) (14). The scale consists of 18 items: 9 items

varali na samoprocjenskoj ljestvici od 7 stupnjeva (od 1 - u potpunosti se ne slažem do 7 - u potpunosti se slažem). Viši rezultat ukazuje na viši stupanj anksiozne odnosno izbjegavajuće privrženosti. Pouzdanost ljestvice anksiozne privrženosti iznosi $\alpha=0,82$, dok za ljestvicu izbjegavajuće privrženosti ona iznosi $\alpha=0,81$.

Ljestvica seksualnosti (41) namijenjena je mjeranju seksualnoga samopoimanja. Za potrebe ovog istraživanja preuzet je izvorni oblik ljestvice na engleskom jeziku koja je metodom povratnog prijevoda prevedena na hrvatski jezik. Ova se ljestvica sastoji od 30 čestica i sadrži tri podljestvice: seksualno samopoštovanje, seksualna depresija i preokupiranost seksom. Ljestvica sadrži 30 čestica. Seksualno samopoštovanje određeno je kao pozitivno mišljenje i samoučinkovitost u seksualnim iskustvima (primjerice: „Razmišljam o sebi kao o vrlo dobrom seksualnom partneru“ (41)). Svaka čestica se procjenjuje na ljestvici Likertovog tipa od 5 stupnjeva, od 1 - u potpunosti se slažem, do 5 - u potpunosti se ne slažem. Više pozitivne vrijednosti na svakoj podljestvici ukazuju na viši stupanj seksualnog samopoštovanja, seksualne depresije ili preokupiranosti seksom. Analizom pouzdanosti utvrđeni su sljedeći koeficijenti pouzdanosti: seksualno samopoštovanje $\alpha=0,84$; seksualna depresija $\alpha=0,83$ i seksualna preokupiranost $\alpha=0,84$

Nova ljestvica seksualnoga zadovoljstva (Štulhofer i Buško, 2008) instrument je za procjenu seksualnog zadovoljstva. Sastoji se od 20 čestica koje mjere različite aspekte seksualnog zadovoljstva: seksualne osjete i doživljaje, seksualnu razmjenu, seksualnu usredotočenost, emocionalnu povezanost i raznolikost, te učestalost i trajanje seksualnih aktivnosti. U ovom istraživanju je korištena kraća verzija ljestvice (12 čestica) čija pouzdanost iznosi $\alpha=0,85$. Sudionici su odgovarali na ljestvici od 5 stupnjeva pri čemu 1 znači nimalo zadovoljan/na, a 5 potpuno zadovoljan/na. Stupanj seksualnog zadovoljstva određivan je ukupnim rezultatom

for investigating anxious attachment (e.g., “I worry a lot about my relationships”) and 9 for investigating avoidant attachment (e.g., “I try to avoid getting too close to my partner”). The results for the participants are expressed as the sum of the responses on subscales of anxious and avoidant attachment. The participants responded on a self-evaluation scale of 7 (from 1: “I disagree completely” to 7: “I agree completely”). Higher results indicate a higher degree of anxious or avoidant attachment. The reliability of the scale of anxious attachment was $\alpha=0.82$ and $\alpha=0.81$ for the scale of avoidant attachment.

The Sexuality Scale (41) is intended to measure sexual self-concept. For the purposes of this study, the original English scale was translated into Croatian using a back-translation method. This 30-item measure includes three subscales: sexual self-esteem, sexual depression and sexual preoccupation. Sexual self-esteem is defined as a positive opinion and self-efficacy in sexual experiences (e.g. “I think of myself as a very good sexual partner”) (41). Each item is evaluated on a Likert-type scale of 5, from 1: “I agree completely” to 5: “I disagree completely.” Higher positive values indicate a higher level of sexual self-esteem. Using reliability analysis, the reliability coefficient of the subscale was $\alpha=0.84$.

The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (42): This instrument is used for measuring sexual satisfaction. It consists of 20 items that assess various aspects of sexual satisfaction: sexual sensations and experiences, sexual exchange, sexual focus, emotional closeness and diversity and the frequency and duration of sexual activities. In this study, the short version of the scale (12 items) was used, which had a reliability of $\alpha=0.85$. The participants responded on a scale of 5, on which 1 means “not at all satisfied” and 5 means “completely satisfied.” A higher score indicates a higher degree of sexual satisfaction.

na ljestvici. Viši rezultat upućuje na viši stupanj seksualnoga zadovoljstva.

Upitnik općih podataka sadržavao je pitanja o dobi, rodu, stupnju obrazovanja, seksualnoj orijentaciji i zdravstvenom stanju. Upitnik je sadržavao i pitanja o tome je li sudionik/ca sada u partnerskoj vezi i, ako jest, koliko dugo traje ta veza, te kakve je vrste (bračna, izvanbračna).

REZULTATI

Opada li seksualno zadovoljstvo starenjem? Rezultati ovog istraživanja upućuju na potvrđan odgovor [$r(630) = -0.1$; $p < 0,01$], iako je povezanost niska. Odnos između starenja i seksualnog zadovoljstva dodatno je ispitan analizom varijance, pri čemu su razlike između pojedinih dobnih kategorija ispitivane Scheffeovim testom (tablica 1).

Utvrđen je značajan doprinos dobi $F(2, 629) = 3,84$; $p < 0,05$] seksualnom zadovoljstvu. Scheffeov test pokazuje da sudionici u srednjoj (27 do 39 godina) ($p = 0,01$) i najmlađoj (20-26 godina) ($p < 0,05$) imaju značajno više seksualno zadovoljstvo, u odnosu na sudionike u najstarijoj dobnj kategoriji (40-65 godina). Između najmlađe (20-36 godina) i srednje (27 do 39 godina) dobnj kategorije nema značajne razlike ($p > 0,05$) (tablica 1).

Osim dobi, i partnerski status doprinosi stilovima privrženosti, seksualnom samopoimanju i seksualnom zadovoljstvu. S obzirom da je skupina sudionika koji su u vezi značajno starija od skupine koja nije u vezi [$t(630) = 6,99$, $p < 0,01$]

A general information questionnaire contained questions on age, gender, educational level, sexual orientation and health. The questionnaire also contained questions about whether the participant was currently in a relationship and, if yes, what type (marital, non-marital).

RESULTS

Does sexual satisfaction decline with age? The results of this study suggested an affirmative answer ($r(630) = -0.1$; $p < 0.01$), although the correlation was low. The relationship between aging and sexual satisfaction was further studied by ANOVA, in which the differences among age categories were investigated using Scheffe's test (see Table 1).

A significant contribution by age ($F(2,629) = 3.84$; $p < 0.05$) to the degree of sexual satisfaction was established. Scheffe's test showed that the participants in the middle age category (27-39 years) ($p = 0.01$) and the youngest age category (20-26 years) ($p < 0.05$) had significantly greater sexual satisfaction in comparison with the participants in the oldest age category (40-65 years). Between the youngest (20-36 years) and middle (27-39 years) age categories, the difference was not significant ($p > 0.05$) (Table 1).

In addition to age, relationship status also contributed to attachment dimensions, sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction. Since the group of coupled participants was significantly older than the group of

TABLE 1. Differences in sexual satisfaction within age categories

Criteria: sexual satisfaction					
Age category (in years)	M	F	p	Scheffe	p
20-26 (n=211)	47.6	3.84	0.021	20-26 vs. 27-39	0.891
27-39 (n=210)	48			20-26 vs. 40-65	0.042*
40-65 (n=211)	44.8			27-39 vs. 40-65	0.01*

razlike su ispitane analizom kovarijance, uz kontrolu dobi (tablica 2).

Rezultati ukazuju na porast seksualne depresivnosti u funkciji dobi [$F(1, 629)=10,82, p=0,001$], te na opadanje seksualnoga zadovoljstva [$F(1,629)=14,65, p<0,001$] u funkciji dobi. Međutim, bez obzira kojoj dobnoj kategoriji pripadaju, samci imaju izraženiju izbjegavajuću privrženost [$F(1,629)=38,58, p<0,001$], manje seksualno samopoštovanje [$F(1,629)=5,48, p<0,05$], veću seksualnu depresivnost [$F(1, 629)=36,1, p<0,001$] i manje seksualno zadovoljstvo [$F(1,629)=23,88, p<0,001$], u odnosu na osobe koje su u partnerskoj vezi (tablica 2).

Pojedinačni i zajednički doprinosi rodni i dobnih razlika te statusa veze na seksualno samopoimanje i seksualno zadovoljstvo provjeren je dvosmjernim ANOVA-ma na sljedeći način: rod, dob i sadašnja veza korištene su kao nezavisne, a aspekti privrženosti i seksualnosti kao zavisne varijable. Kao *post-hoc* test (za dob, jer ima više od dvije kategorije) korišten je Schefféov test (tablica 3).

Muškarci imaju višu izbjegavajuću privrženost [$F(1,626)=23,68; p<0,001$], više seksualno samopoštovanje [$F(1,626)=7,96; p<0,05$] i više su preokupirani seksom [$F(1,626)=115,07; p<0,001$] u odnosu na žene. Žene imaju višu anksioznu privrženost u odnosu na muškarce [$F(1,626)=6,48; p=0,011$]. Seksualno zadovoljstvo opada u funkciji dobi [$F(2,626)=3,54; p<0,05$]. Osobe koje su u vezi općenito imaju manju izbjegavajuću privrže-

singles ($t(630)=6.99, p<0.01$), differences were investigated through analysis of covariance, with control for age (Table 2). The results indicated decrease in sexual satisfaction ($F(1,629)=14.65, p<0.001$) as a function of age. However, whatever age category singles belonged to, they had markedly more pronounced avoidant attachment ($F(1,629)=38.58, p<0.001$), lower sexual self-esteem ($F(1,629)=5.48, p<0.05$) and lower sexual satisfaction ($F(1,629)=23.88, p<0.001$), in comparison with individuals in a partner relationship (Table 2).

Separate and combined contributions of gender, age and relationship status on attachment, sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction were confirmed by a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in the following manner: gender, age and relationship status were used as independent variables, and aspects of attachment and sexuality as dependent variables (Table 3).

Men had higher avoidant sexual attachment ($F(1,626)=23.68; p<0.001$) and higher sexual self-esteem ($F(1,626)=7.96; p<0.05$) in comparison with women. Women had greater anxious attachment in comparison with men ($F(1,626)=6.48; p=0.011$). Sexual satisfaction declined as a function of age ($F(2,626)=3.54; p<0.05$). Coupled people generally had lower avoidant attachment ($F(1,626)=40.42; p<0.001$), higher sexual satisfaction ($F(1,626)=20.17; p<0.001$) and

TABLE 2. The effects of age and current relationship status (with control for age) on attachment dimensions, sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction in single ($n=121$) and coupled ($n=511$) participants

Attachment styles and aspects of sexuality	Age and partner status	F	p
Anxious Attachment	Age	0.01	0.922
	Partner status	1.29	0.256
Avoidant Attachment	Age	2.39	0.123
	Partner status	38.58	<0.001*
Sexual Self-Esteem	Age	1.86	0.173
	Partner status	5.48	0.020*
Sexual Satisfaction	Age	14.65	<0.001*
	Partner status	23.88	<0.001*

nost [$F(1,626)=40,42$; $p<0,001$], manju seksualnu depresiju [$F(1,626)=28,45$; $p<0,001$], veće seksualno zadovoljstvo [$F(1,626)=20,17$; $p<0,001$] i granično veće seksualno samopoštovanje [$F(1,626)=3,6$; $p=0,058$] u odnosu na osobe koje nisu u vezi (tablica 3).

Ova analiza pruža i zanimljive podatke o zajedničkom doprinosu roda, dobi i statusa veze na izbjegavajuću privrženost, te na seksualno samopoštovanje. Na taj je način dobivena značajna interakcija dobi i statusa partnerske veze na izbjegavajuću privrženost [$F(2,626)=5,29$; $p<0,01$] (slika 1).

marginally higher sexual self-esteem in comparison with persons who were not in a relationship (Table 3). This analysis also provides information on the combined contributions of gender, age and relationship status to avoidant attachment and sexual self-esteem. In this manner, significant interaction was obtained between age and relationship status in avoidant attachment ($F(2,626)=5.29$; $p<0.01$) (see Figure 1). Furthermore, single people had a significantly higher level of avoidant attachment than coupled people in the youngest ($p<0.001$) and oldest ($p<0.001$)

TABLE 3. Results of a complex ANOVA on the differences in attachment dimensions, sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction, with regard to gender, relationship status and age

Dependent variables	Independent variables		M±SD	F	P
Anxious attachment	Gender	males	24.7±10.77	6.48	0.011*
		females	26.9±11.49		
	Currently in a relationship	Yes	25.6±11.38	1.05	0.306
		No	26.9±10.35		
	Age (in categories)	20–26	47.6	0.69	0.502
		27–39	48		
		40–65	44.8		
Gender*Currently in a relationship			1.87	0.172	
Gender*Age			0.49	0.615	
Currently in a relationship*Age			0.23	0.797	
Avoidant attachment	Gender	M	26.5±11	23.68	<0.001*
		F	22.6±9.96		
	Currently in a relationship	Yes	23.3±10.13	40.42	<0.001*
		No	29.6±11.3		
	Age (in categories)	20–26	47.6	2.06	0.128
		27–39	48		
		40–65	44.8		
Gender*Currently in a relationship			2.69	0.102	
Gender*Age			0.31	0.738	
Currently in a relationship*Age			5.29	0.005*	
Sexual self-esteem	Gender	M	38.4±7.13	7.96	0.005*
		F	36.8±7.00		
	Currently in a relationship	Yes	37.9±7,08	3.60	0.058
		No	36.4±7.1		
	Age (in categories)	20–26	47.6	0.31	0.731
		27–39	48		
		40–65	44.8		
Gender*Currently in a relationship			8.9	0.003*	
Gender*Age			0.07	0.931	
Currently in a relationship*Age			0.22	0.799	
Sexual satisfaction	Gender	M	47.4±8.64	0.61	0.436
		F	46.9±9.35		
	Currently in a relationship	Yes	47.8±9.0	20.17	<0.001*
		No	44.2±8.41		
	Age (in categories)	20–26	47.6	3.54	0.030*
		27–39	48		
		40–65	44.8		
Gender*Currently in a relationship			1.20	0.274	
Gender*Age			0.11	0.898	
Currently in a relationship*Age			0.47	0.624	

Na što ovaj nalaz zapravo ukazuje? Osobe u vezi imaju podjednaku, relativno nisku razinu izbjegavajuće privrženosti u svim dobnim skupinama. Situacija je značajno drugačija kod samaca. Kod njih je izbjegavajuća privrženost najviša u najstarijoj dobnj skupini (40 i više godina), nešto je manja u najmlađoj (do 26 godina), dok oni u srednjoj kategoriji (27-39 godina) imaju najnižu izbjegavajuću privrženost. Nadalje, samci imaju značajno viši stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti nego osobe u vezi u najmlađoj ($p < 0,001$) i najstarijoj dobnj kategoriji ($p < 0,001$), dok u srednjoj dobnj kategoriji nije utvrđena značajna razlika između samaca i osoba u vezi ($p > 0,05$). Ovaj nalaz ukazuje da, iako samci imaju izraženiju izbjegavajuću privrženost u svim dobnim skupinama, stupanj njezine izraženosti je u različitim dobnim kategorijama različit.

Zajednički učinak roda i sadašnje veze na seksualno samopoštovanje [$F(1,624)=8,9; p < 0,01$] prikazan je na slici 2.

Nalaz upućuje na drugačije čimbenike koji determiniraju seksualno samopoštovanje muškaraca i žena. Naime, seksualno samopoštovanje žena ne ovisi o tome imaju li ili nemaju partnera, dok se ono kod muškaraca mijenja u ovisnosti o sadašnjem partnerskom statusu. Žene u

age categories, while no significant difference between single and coupled people was found in the middle age category ($p > 0,05$). This finding indicates that, although single people had more pronounced avoidant attachment in all age groups, the degree varied across different age categories.

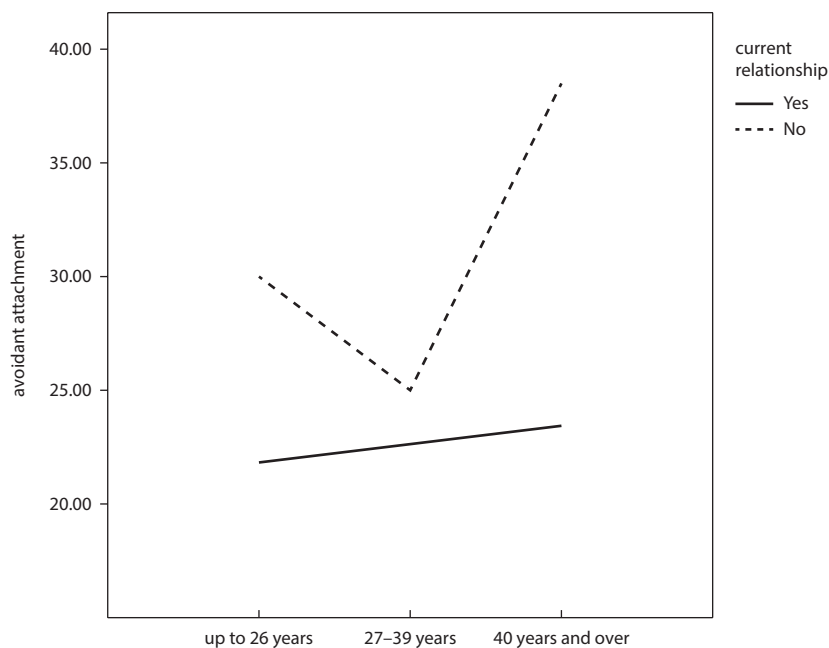
The combined effects of gender and current relationship status on sexual self-esteem ($F(1,624)=8,9; p < 0,01$) are presented in Figure 2.

The sexual self-esteem of women did not depend on whether or not they had a partner. In men, the sexual self-esteem was different in singles and coupled persons. Women in a relationship had lower sexual self-esteem than men in a relationship. However, the sexual self-esteem of single men was very low and was becoming even lower than the sexual self-esteem of women.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, the separate and combined contributions of gender, age and relationship status on attachment dimensions,

FIGURE 1. Combined contribution of age and relationship status to avoidant attachment



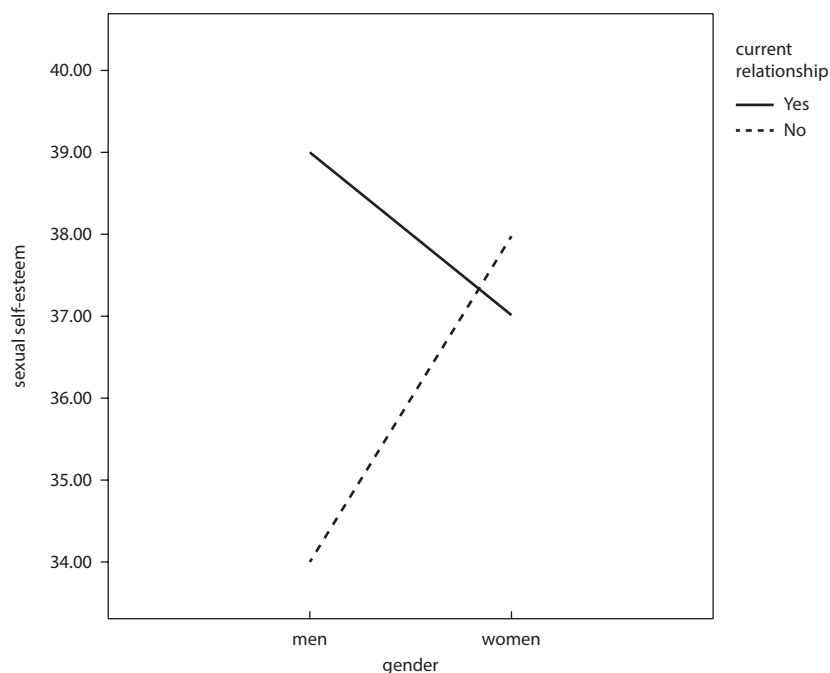


FIGURE 2. The combined contribution of gender and current relationship status to sexual self-esteem

vezi imaju niže seksualno samopoštovanje od muškaraca u vezi. Međutim, seksualno samopoštovanje muških samaca vrlo je nisko, te postaje čak i niže od seksualnog samopoštovanja žena.

RASPRAVA

U ovom istraživanju utvrđeni su posebni i zajednički doprinosi roda, dobi i statusa veze na stilove privrženosti, aspekte seksualnosti i seksualno zadovoljstvo. Većim dijelom su potvrđena ranija saznanja o rodnim osobitostima stilova privrženosti u smislu veće anksiozne privrženosti žena, te veće izbjegavajuće privrženosti muškaraca. Muškarci imaju više seksualno samopoštovanje i više su preokupirani seksom na kognitivnom i ponašajnom planu od žena. Međutim, ukazano je na značenje sadašnjeg partnerskog statusa na seksualno samopoštovanje muškaraca, koje je više kod muškaraca u vezi, dok je kod žena seksualno samopoštovanje podjednako bez obzira na status veze. U skladu s očekivanjima, samci imaju viši stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti, lošiju sliku o vlastitoj seksualnosti i manje seksualno zadovoljstvo od osoba u vezi. Kao što se očekivalo, seksualno zadovoljstvo smanjuje se

sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction were investigated. For the most part, both previous findings and the study hypothesis were confirmed on the gender characteristics of attachment dimensions in terms of higher anxious attachment in women and higher avoidant attachment in men. Men also had higher sexual-self-esteem than women. However, it was shown that the significance of current partner status on the sexual self-esteem of men was higher in men in a relationship, while sexual self-esteem was the same in women regardless of relationship status. According to the expectations, single people had a higher degree of avoidant attachment, a lower sexual self-esteem and lower sexual satisfaction than coupled people.

As has been predicted, sexual satisfaction declined as a function of age. The possible reasons for the decline in sexual satisfaction were studied from the perspective of the combined influences of biological (hypogonadism, deteriorating health), psychological (depression, attitudes about sexuality in old age, negative perception of one's own sexual attractiveness, declining quality of

u funkciji dobi. Razlozi za opadanje seksualnog zadovoljstva proučavani su iz perspektive zajedničkog utjecaja bioloških (hipogonadizam, narušeno zdravstveno stanje), psiholoških (depresija, stavovi o seksualnosti u starijoj dobi, negativna percepcija vlastite seksualne privlačnosti, opadanje kvalitete veze) i socijalnih čimbenika (narušene socijalne interakcije, dostupnost partnera, stereotipi o seksualnosti) (43-45). U drugim istraživanjima nije utvrđeno opadanje seksualnog zadovoljstva s dobi (46,47). Neujednačenost istraživačkih nalaza vjerojatno je rezultat širokoga određenja pojma seksualnog zadovoljstva o kojima ovisi i odabir primijenjene metodologije u različitim istraživanjima. Kao i u ovom istraživanju, izraženiji izbjegavajući stil privrženosti kod muškaraca i izraženija anksiozna privrženost žena pronađeni su i u drugim istraživanjima (12-16,30,48). DelGuidice (49) u objašnjenju rodni razlika u izbjegavajućoj privrženosti uključuje i čimbenike vezane uz životnu povijest, rane stresove, obiteljske utjecaje i hormonsku aktivnost. Međutim, istraživanja rodni razlika u privrženosti nisu do kraja jednoznačna. One nisu pronađene u Oceaniji, Africi i zemljama Istočne Azije (50), što djelomično potvrđuje i njihovu kulturološku uvjetovanost. Male rodne razlike (osobito povećanje izbjegavajuće privrženosti kod žena), pronađene su i u zemljama s visokim razinama smrtnosti, visokim natalitetom i nesigurnijim životnim uvjetima. Uočeno smanjenje rodni razlika pripisuje se utjecajima okolinskog stresa pri čemu se kod oba roda izbjegavajuća privrženost povećava (16). Rodne razlike u seksualnom zadovoljstvu nisu utvrđene u ovom istraživanju. Raniji nalazi u ovom istraživačkom području su proturječni pri čemu neki autori pronalaze, a neki ne pronalaze rodne razlike u seksualnom zadovoljstvu (8,51, 52). Ovakva neujednačenost je objašnjena korištenjem nedovoljno pouzdanih samoprocjenskih mjera za utvrđivanje seksualnog zadovoljstva (36).

Osim roda i dobi u ovom su istraživanju utvrđeni i doprinosi partnerskoga statusa na privrženost, seksualno samopoštovanje i seksualno

relationships) and social factors (disturbed social interaction, partner availability, stereotypes about sexuality) (43-45). In other studies, a decline in sexual satisfaction with age was not established (46,47). The disparity among the research findings is likely due to the wide range of definitions of the concept of sexual satisfaction, upon which the selection of the methodologies used in various studies depends. As in this study, the majority of previous studies also found a more pronounced avoidant attachment style in men and a more pronounced anxious attachment style in women (12-16,30,48). Due to gender specificities in attachment styles, Del Guidice (49) includes factors related to life history, early stresses, family influences and hormonal activity, which together contribute to gender differences in attachment. However, such differences were not found in Oceania, Africa and the countries of East Asia (50), thereby partially confirming their cultural conditionality. Small gender differences (especially higher avoidant attachment in women) were also found in countries with high mortality rates, high birth rates and unsafe living conditions. These differences were attributed to the influences of environmental stress, whereby avoidant attachment increases in both genders (16). Gender differences in sexual satisfaction were not established in this study. Previous findings on gender considering sexual satisfaction are contradictory (8,51,52). A possible explanation for the differences between men and women reported by some studies may be the use of self-reports that include predictor items of sexual satisfaction (36).

In addition to gender and age, the contributions of relationship status to attachment, sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction were established in this study. In that sense, single people had a higher degrees of avoidant attachment, a lower sexual self-esteem and a

zadovoljstvo. Samci u ovom istraživanju imaju viši stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti, niže seksualno samopoštovanje i manje seksualno zadovoljstvo od osoba u vezi. Slični rezultati su pronađeni i u drugim istraživanjima što je objašnjeno utjecajem zaštitnih čimbenika kao što su učestaliji seksualni odnosi (45), uživanje veće socijalne podrške (53) i niže razine izbjegavajuće privrženosti (30) ljudi u partnerskim vezama, u usporedbi sa samcima.

Također, u ovom je istraživanju pronađen zajednički doprinos dobi i statusa veze razini izbjegavajuće privrženosti što je originalan doprinos ovog istraživanja. Naime, izbjegavajuća privrženost kod samaca izraženija je u svim dobnim skupinama u odnosu na osobe u vezi. Slični su rezultati pronađeni i u istraživanju Chopika i sur. (30) koji ukazuju na više vrijednosti anksiozne i izbjegavajuće privrženosti u svim dobnim skupinama samaca u odnosu na osobe u vezi. Stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti samaca u ovom istraživanju najizraženiji je nakon 40. godine života, nešto niži do 26. godine, a najniži u dobnoj skupini od 27. do 39. godine života. Nešto drugačiji rezultati pronađeni su u istraživanju Chopika i sur. (30) koji ukazuju na viši stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti u srednjoj dobnoj skupini u odnosu na mlađe i najstarije sudionike te je ovaj obrazac najuočljiviji kod osoba u vezi, a razlika u izbjegavajućoj privrženosti je najveća među najmlađim sudionicima. Mogući razlog su maturacijski procesi svojstveni dobi: kod mlađih osoba postoji viši stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti zbog straha od vezivanja uvjetovanih nezrelošću, nedostatkom iskustva i samopouzdanja u partnerskim odnosima, nespremnošću za stupanje u vezu i sl. U prilog ovom tumačenju ide i podatak da promjene koje se odvijaju tijekom rane odrasle dobi mogu biti praćene višim razinama izbjegavajuće privrženosti (54). U srednjoj dobnoj skupini nešto niži stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti može ukazivati na veću psihološku spremnost izbjegavajuće privrženih osoba za zasnivanje partnerske veze zbog dobne zrelo-

lower sexual satisfaction than coupled people. Similar results were found in other studies, which were explained by the influence of protective factors such as more regular sexual activity (45), enjoying greater social support (53) and lower levels of avoidant attachment (30) in coupled people compared with their single counterparts. Moreover, in this study, avoidant attachment in single people was more pronounced in all age groups compared with coupled people. The similar results were found in the study of Chopik et al. (30) who determined that single people were higher in both attachment anxiety and avoidance in each age group compared with those who were coupled. In this study, the degree of avoidant attachment in single people was most pronounced in the oldest age group (after 40), somewhat lower in the youngest (up to 26 years of age) and lowest in the middle age group (from 27 to 39 years of age). Somewhat different results were obtained by Chopik et al. (30) who found that avoidance was higher among middle-aged adults compared with younger and older adults, that this pattern was most evident for coupled individuals and that the difference for avoidance was greatest among young adults. It is possible that, in young people, a higher level of avoidant attachment could be the result of fear of bonding due to immaturity, lack of experience, unwillingness to enter into a relationship, etc. However, literature on emerging adulthood suggests that changes during young adulthood could be accompanied by higher levels of attachment avoidance (54). Furthermore, among middle-aged singles in this study, the somewhat lower level of avoidant attachment could indicate the greater psychological readiness of avoidant-attached people to establish a partner relationship due to maturity and/or social expectations. This is not consistent neither with the Mickelson et al. (31), who found that avoidance was higher among middle-aged compared with young

sti i (ili) socijalnih očekivanja. Ovaj nalaz nije u skladu sa nalazima Mickelsona i sur. (31) koji pronalaze višu izbjegavajuću privrženost u srednjoj odrasloj dobi, ni s nalazom studije koja pronalazi pozitivnu povezanost između dobi i izbjegavajuće privrženosti (5). Međutim, osobe koje nakon 40. godine života nisu u partnerskoj vezi imaju najviši stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti. Ovaj nalaz moguće je sagledati u svjetlu smanjenih mogućnosti i (ili) motivacije za pronalaženjem partnera u zrelijoj životnoj dobi. Smanjena očekivanja izbjegavajuće privrženih samaca o mogućnosti zasnivanja veze smanjuju mogućnost njezinog zasnivanja, a time i manju učestalost seksualnih aktivnosti.

U ovom je istraživanju utvrđen zajednički doprinos statusa veze i roda na seksualno samopoštovanje sudionika. Ovaj je nalaz također originalan istraživački doprinos. Muškarci u partnerskoj vezi imaju pozitivniju sliku o vlastitoj seksualnosti od žena u vezi, dok je kod žena seksualno samopoštovanje podjednako bez obzira jesu li ili nisu u vezi. Ovaj nalaz navodi na zaključak da različiti uzroci određuju seksualno samopoštovanje muškaraca i žena. U ranijim istraživanjima pronađeno je da kod muškaraca slika o vlastitoj seksualnosti varira u ovisnosti o dostupnosti učestalijih seksualnih aktivnosti, što stalna veza omogućuje u većoj mjeri, u odnosu na život bez stalnog partnera (45,55). Navedenom objašnjenju ide u prilog nalaz Walsh (56) koji je utvrdio najveću razliku u razinama samopoštovanja između muškaraca koji nikada nisu imali seksualni odnos i onih koji su ga imali, dok se djevice i žene sa seksualnim iskustvima ne razlikuju u razini samopoštovanja. Nadalje, kod žena je slika tijela snažni prediktor samopoštovanja (57,58). Moguće je da se sniženo samopoštovanje, temeljeno na lošoj slici tijela (zbog nedostizanja socijalno nametnutih standarda o ženskom izgledu), proširuje i na sliku o vlastitoj seksualnosti (59).

Iako rezultati ovog istraživanja proširuju ranije spoznaje o štetnim učincima nesigurne

adults, nor with the results of another study that found avoidance was positively correlated with age (5). However, single people over 40 years in the present study had the highest degree of avoidant attachment. This finding can be viewed in the light of diminished opportunities and/or motivation to find a partner at a mature age. The diminished expectations reduce the possibility of establishing a relationship and, consequently, less frequent sexual activities.

In the present study, the combined contribution of relationship status and gender on sexual self-esteem was determined. Coupled men had a higher sexual self-esteem than coupled women, while for women sexual self-esteem was the same whether or not they were in a relationship. This finding suggests that different factors could determine the sexual self-esteem of men and women. In earlier studies, it was found that the sexual-self-image of men varied according to the frequency of sexual activities, which a steady relationship makes possible to a greater extent than life without a steady partner (45,55). This explanation is supported by the findings of Walsh (56), who noted the greatest difference in the levels of self-esteem between men who had never had sexual intercourse and those who had, while virgins and women with sexual experience did not differ in the level of sexual self-esteem. Moreover, for women body image is a strong predictor of self-esteem (57,58). It is possible that diminished self-esteem based on poor body image also extends to sexual self-esteem (59). The results of this study improve the understanding of the relationship between attachment and aspects of sexuality within different age groups of single and coupled people. There were also several limitations in this study regarding the methodology applied, which prevented the representativeness of the sample. The specific nature of sexual research (unwillingness of participants to report

privrženosti na seksualnost ljudi te uvodi nova saznanja o tim učincima u kontekstu statusa partnerskih veza, postoji i nekoliko ograničenja koja umanjuju mogućnost generalizacije rezultata. Osnovno ograničenje vezano je uz osobitost primijenjene metode koja onemogućuje reprezentativnost uzorka već je uzorak definiran karakteristikama početnog uzorka iz kojeg su generirani daljnji sudionici. Specifičnosti istraživanja seksualnosti sljedeći su izvor mogućih pristranosti vezanih uz (ne)spremnost sudionika da iskreno izvješćuju o svom seksualnom životu. Konačno, presječna studija koja je korištena u ovom istraživanju također ograničava mogućnost donošenja sigurnijih zaključaka o doprinosu dobi na privrženost i seksualnost.

ZAKLJUČAK

Rezultati u ovom istraživanju ukazuju na postojanje rodnih razlika u stilovima privrženosti i seksualnom samopoimanju pri čemu žene imaju izraženiju anksioznu privrženost i niže seksualno samopoštovanje od muškaraca, bez obzira na status veze. Dob je negativno povezana sa seksualnim zadovoljstvom. Samci imaju izraženiju izbjegavajuću privrženost, naročito u najmlađoj i najstarijoj dobnoj kategoriji. Stupanj izbjegavajuće privrženosti samaca je najizraženiji nakon 40-te godine, nešto niži do 26-te godine i najniži u dobi od 27. do 39-te godine života. Samci također imaju niže razine seksualnog samopoštovanja i seksualnog zadovoljstva u odnosu na osobe koje su u vezi. Konačno, pozitivni učinak partnerskog statusa na seksualno samopoštovanje muškaraca izraženiji je kod muškaraca koji su u vezi, dok je kod žena taj učinak nepromijenjen bez obzira jesu li ili nisu u vezi.

honestly about their sex life) could be another source of potential bias. Finally, the cross-sectional study that was used in this research also limits the possibility of secure conclusions on the contribution of age to attachment and sexuality.

CONCLUSIONS

Gender differences were established in this study, indicating more pronounced anxious attachment and lower sexual self-esteem in women compared with men, regardless of relationship status. Age was negatively associated with sexual satisfaction. Single participants had higher levels of avoidant attachment, especially in the youngest and the oldest age group. They also had lower sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction compared with coupled participants. The degree of avoidant attachment of single people was most pronounced in the oldest age group (after 40), somewhat lower in the youngest (up to 26 years of age), and lowest in the middle age group (from 27 to 39 years of age). Finally, the significance of current partner status on sexual self-esteem in men was higher in men in a relationship, while sexual self-esteem was the same in women regardless of the relationship status.

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