Abstract

Sexual selection theory and parental investment theory have guided much of the evolutionary psychological research on human mating. Based on these theories, researchers have predicted and found sex differences in mating preferences and behaviors. Men generally prefer that their long-term partners are youthful and physically attractive. Women generally prefer that their long-term partners have existing resources or clear potential for securing resources and display a willingness to invest those resources in children the relationship might produce. Both men and women, however, desire long-term partners who are kind and intelligent. Once a partner is obtained, men and women act in sex-specific ways to ensure the continuation and exclusivity of the relationship. Men, in particular, engage in behaviors designed to prevent, correct, and anticipate their partner’s sexual infidelity. Relationships dissolve for evolutionarily-relevant reasons: infidelity, childlessness, and infertility. The discussion addresses directions for future research.