

## Predicting Expectations of Non-Monogamy in Long-Term Romantic Relationships

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**Abstract :** Positive romantic relationships and marriages offer a buffer against a host of physical and emotional difficulties. Conversely, poor relationship quality and marital discord can have deleterious consequences for individuals and families. Research has described non-monogamy, infidelity, and consensual non-monogamy, as both consequential and causal of relationship difficulty, or as a unique way a couple strives to make a relationship work. Much research on consensual non-monogamy has built on feminist theory and critique. To the author's best knowledge, to date, no studies have examined the predictive relationship between individual and relationship characteristics and expectations of non-monogamy. The current longitudinal study: 1) estimated the prevalence of expectations of partner non-monogamy and 2) evaluated whether gender, sexual identity, age, education, how a couple met, and relationship quality were predictive expectations of partner non-monogamy. This study utilized the publically available longitudinal dataset, How Couples Meet and Stay Together. Adults aged 18- to 98-years old (n=4002) were surveyed by phone over 5 waves from 2009-2014. Demographics and how a couple met were gathered through self-report in Wave 1, and relationship quality and expectations of partner non-monogamy were gathered through self-report in Waves 4 and 5 (n=1047). The prevalence of expectations of partner non-monogamy (encompassing both infidelity and consensual non-monogamy) was 4.8%. Logistic regression models indicated that sexual identity, gender, education, and relationship quality were significantly predictive of expectations of partner non-monogamy. Specifically, male gender, lower education, identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, and a lower relationship quality scores were predictive of expectations of partner non-monogamy. Male gender was not predictive of expectations of partner non-monogamy in the follow up logistic regression model. Age and whether a couple met online were not associated with expectations of partner non-monogamy. Clinical implications include awareness of the increased likelihood of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals to have an expectation of non-monogamy and the sequelae of relationship dissatisfaction that may be related. Future research directions could differentiate between non-monogamy subtypes and the person and relationship variables that lead to the likelihood of consensual non-monogamy and infidelity as separate constructs, as well as explore the relationship between predicting partner behavior and actual partner behavioral outcomes.

**Keywords :** open relationship, polyamory, infidelity, relationship satisfaction

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