



@RoseWesche

Dating in the peer context:

Differences across same-sex and mixed-sex romantic relationships

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Romantic relationships and friendships are closely linked

- Romantic relationships emerge from larger peer networks in adolescence
 - Friends → dating?
 - Dating → friends?
- These processes may differ for adolescents with same-sex relationships compared to those with mixed-sex relationships
- Understanding the peer context of dating for sexual minority adolescents will:
 - Improve understanding of normative developmental processes
 - Help identify how peers can be sources of social support

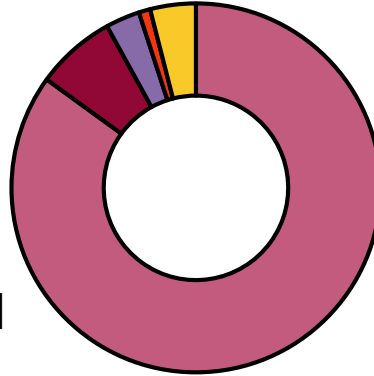
Connolly et al., 2000
Kreager et al., 2016
McMillan et al., 2022
Poteat et al., 2021

Research goal

- Describe the friendship origins and sequelae of romantic relationships for adolescents with same-sex and other-sex romantic partners
 1. How likely is it that adolescents are friends with their future romantic partners prior to dating?
 2. How likely is it that adolescents are friends with their former romantic partners following romantic relationship dissolution?
 3. How long, on average, are romantic relationships maintained?

The PROSPER study

- Annual sociometric data collection
- From 8th – 12th grade, participants could name up to seven close friends and one romantic partner in their grade at school
 - $N = 6,447$ who reported a romantic partner at any wave (~50% of overall sample)
 - 50% male
 - Sexual orientation not asked



Race/Ethnicity

White 85%

Hispanic 7%

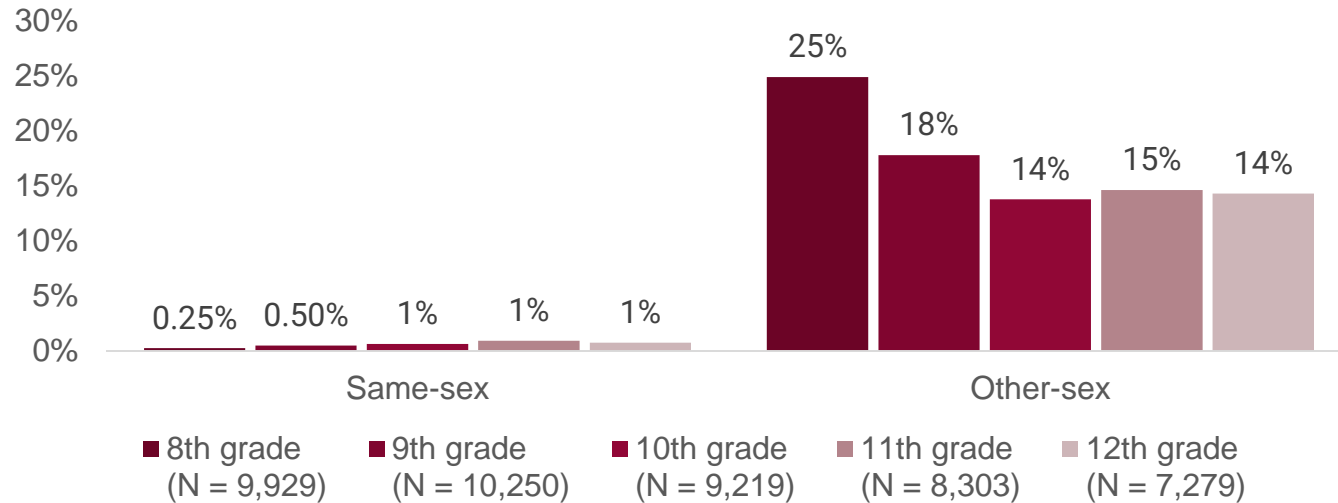
Black 1%

Asian 1%

Other/Multiple 4%

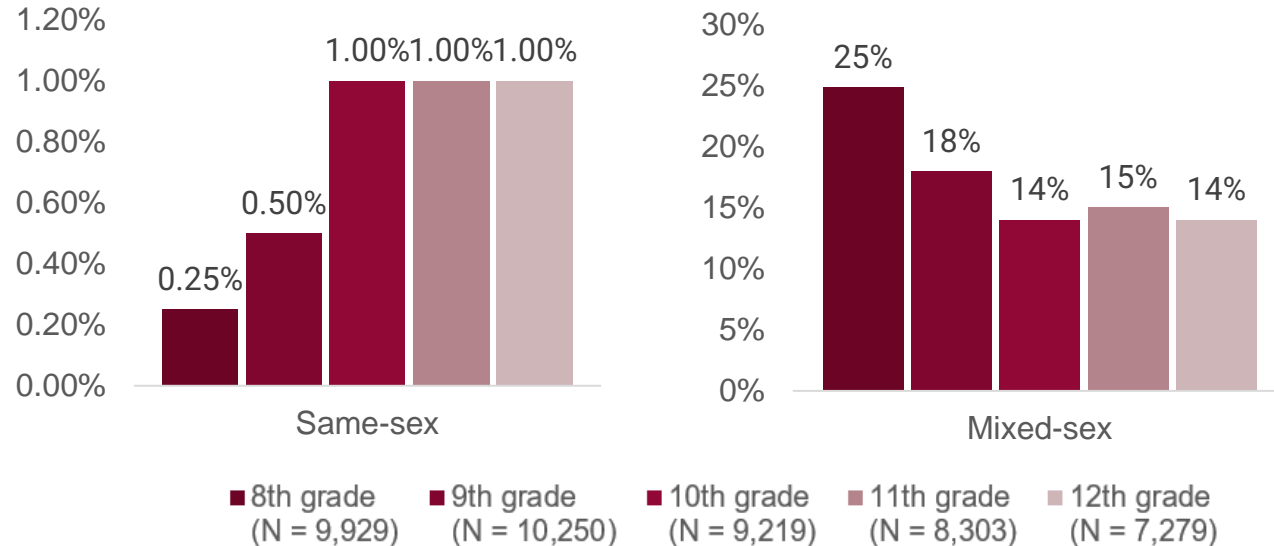
The PROSPER study

Percent of Total Sample Reporting a Same-Sex or Other-Sex Romantic Partner by Grade



The PROSPER study

Percent of Total Sample Reporting a Same-Sex or Other-Sex Romantic Partner by Grade



RQ1: How likely is it that adolescents are friends with their future romantic partners prior to dating?

- For each new romantic dyad, did either partner list the other as a friend in the wave prior to their relationship?
- Logistic regressions with random term for school
- Separate analyses by wave due to interdependence

RQ1: How likely is it that adolescents are friends with their future romantic partners prior to dating?

Same-sex relationship

9th grade

Estimate = 0.64,
SE = 0.66, $p = .33$



10th grade ***

Estimate = 2.05,
SE = 0.39, $p < .001$



11th grade

Estimate = 0.65,
SE = 0.38, $p = .09$



12th grade*

Estimate = 0.96,
SE = 0.47, $p = .04$



At times, same-sex couples were more likely to have been friends than mixed-sex couples

■ Friends ■ Not friends

Mixed-sex relationship



RQ2: How likely is it that adolescents are friends with their former romantic partners following romantic relationship dissolution?

- Did either partner list the other as a friend in the wave after their relationship ended?
- Logistic regressions with random term for school
- Separate analyses by wave

RQ2: How likely is it that adolescents are friends with their former romantic partners?

Same-sex relationship

9th grade***

*Estimate = 1.89,
SE = 0.47, $p < .001$*



10th grade

*Estimate = 0.25,
SE = 0.63, $p = .70$*



11th grade*

*Estimate = 1.08,
SE = 0.44, $p = .02$*



12th grade*

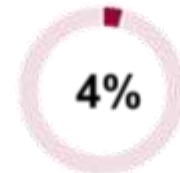
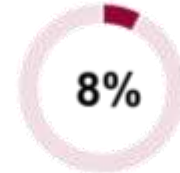
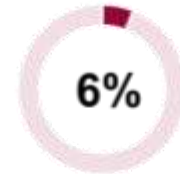
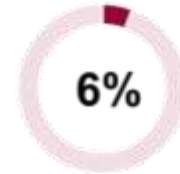
*Estimate = 1.33,
SE = 0.39, $p < .01$*



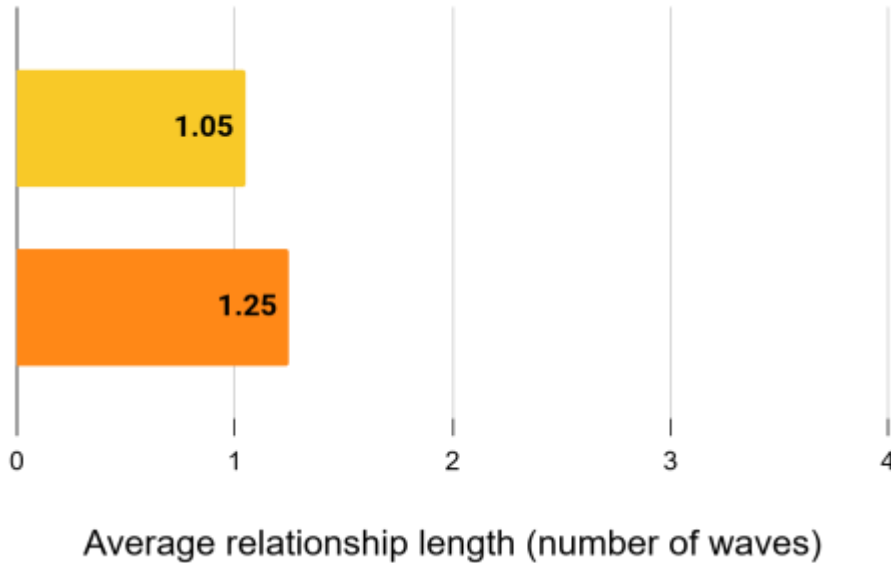
Same-sex relationships were more likely to remain friends than mixed-sex relationships

■ Friends ■ Not friends

Mixed-sex relationship



RQ3: How long do romantic relationships last?



- Linear regression with random term for school
- **SAME-SEX** relationships did not last as long as **MIXED-SEX** relationships
- Estimate = 0.19, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .01$

Discussion

- Same-sex dating relationships were shorter-lived than mixed-sex relationships, but may be more likely to emerge from friendships and end with friendship.
- Limitations: annual measurement, in-grade relationships, sexual identity not asked
- Are sexual minority teens challenging heteronormative scripts that exes can't be friends, similar to findings on queer adult relationships?
- Former romantic partners may be an important source of social support for SM youth.

Allen & Goldberg, 2020
Weinstock, 2014

Contact information and acknowledgments

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