

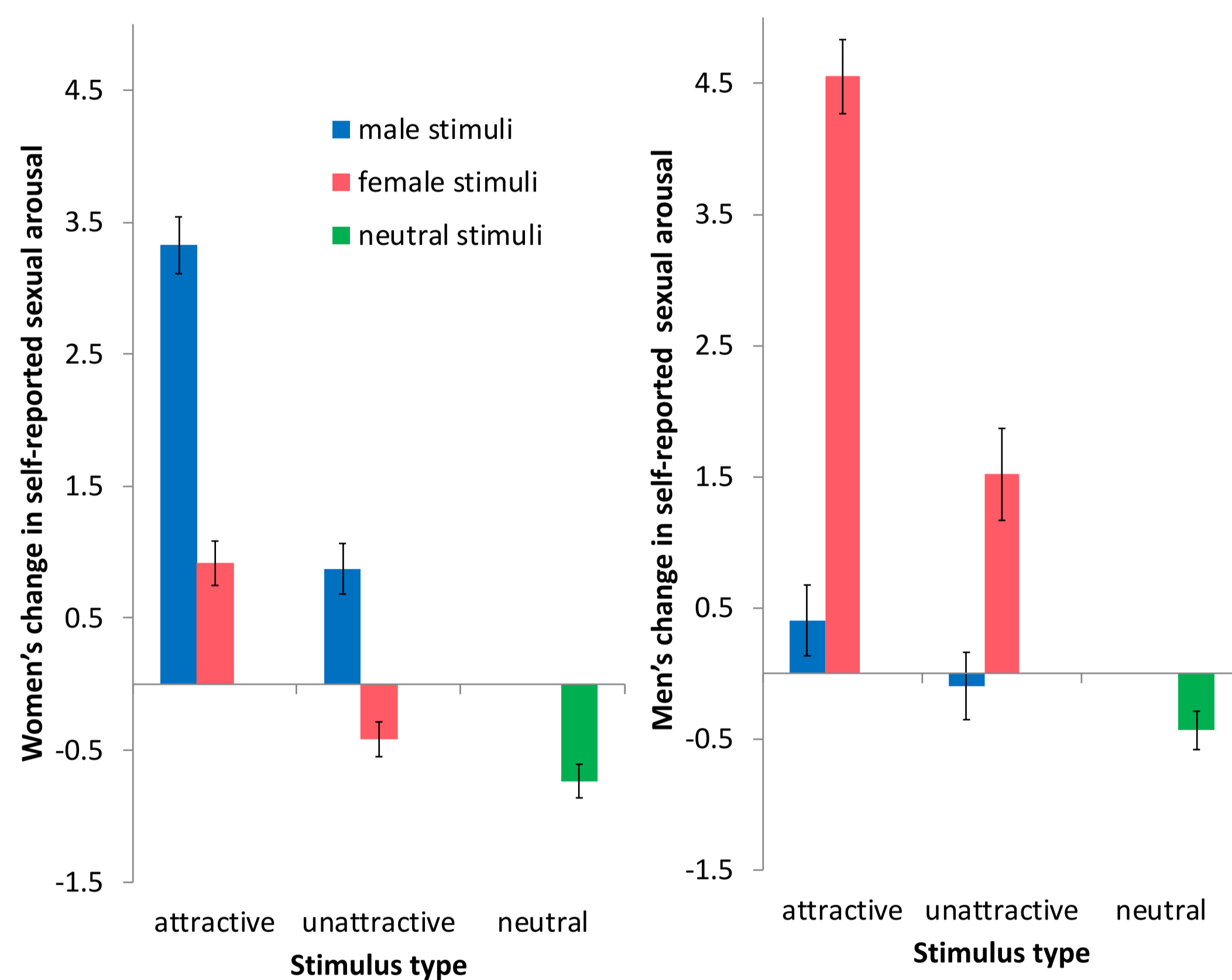
Introduction

- Sexual response triggered by sexual cues with incentive value (Toates, 2009).
- Attractiveness theorized to contribute to incentive value (e.g., Singer, 1984; the "aesthetic response").
- Effects of attractiveness cues on women and men's sexual response and visual attention has not been directly tested.
- Ovulatory shift hypothesis predicts cycle phase effects on women's sexual response to attractiveness cues (Jones et al., 2019).

Current study

- Examined cisgender, heterosexual women's (n = 60) and men's (n = 31) self-reported sexual arousal (SRA), genital responses, and visual attention to attractiveness and gender cues presented in slideshows of attractive and unattractive nude females and males.
- Effects of cycle phase and testing order – follicular (n = 18) or luteal phase first (n = 15) – were examined within women; follicular phase confirmed with LH testing.

Self-reported sexual arousal



Results

- Both women and men showed gender-specific SRA, genital response, and visual attention to sexual cues (see figures).

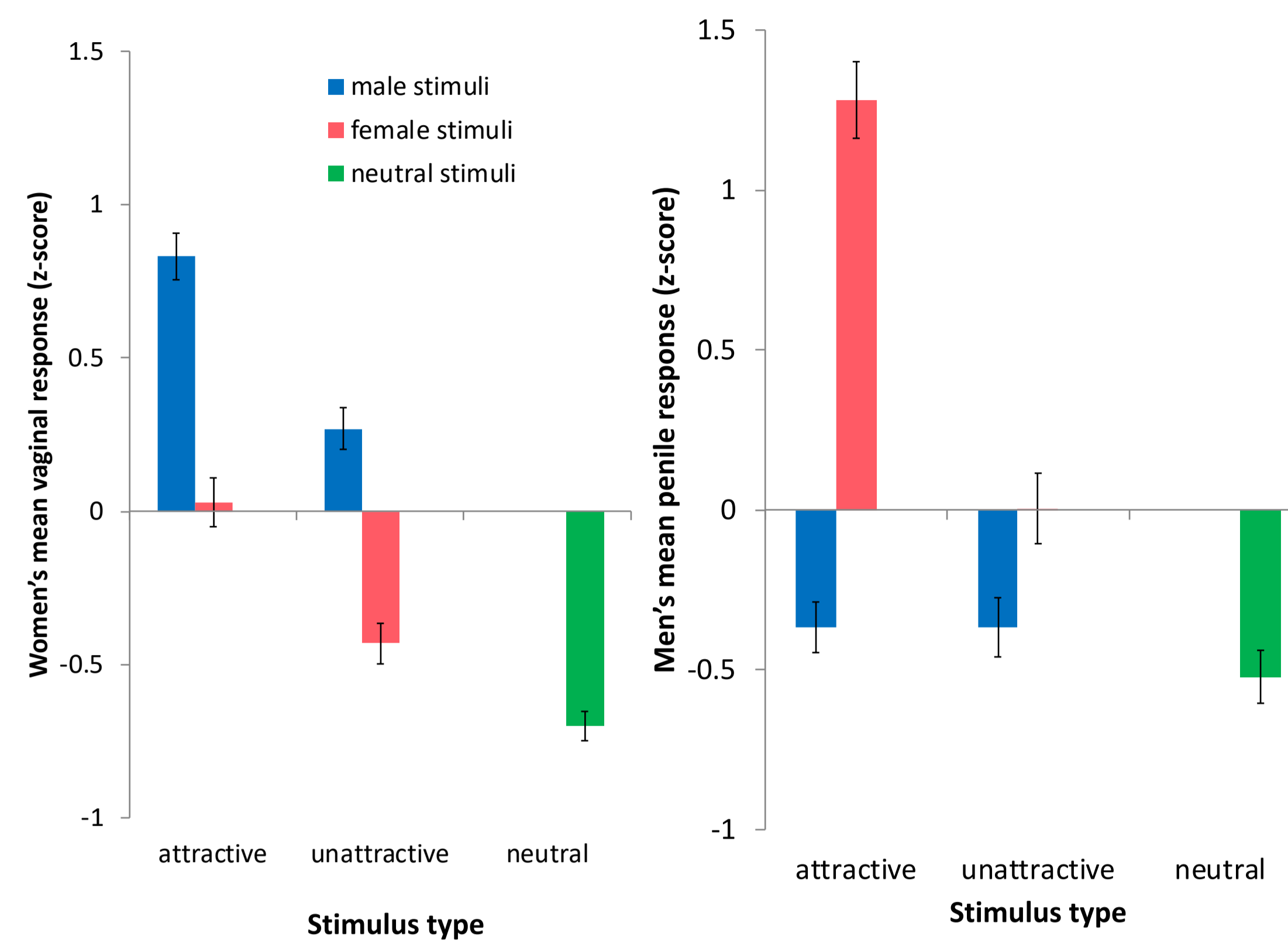
WOMEN

- SRA: Significant interaction between attractiveness and gender ($\eta_p^2 = .24$)
- Genital response: main effects of gender ($\eta_p^2 = .64$) and attractiveness ($\eta_p^2 = .38$)
- Visual attention: main effects of gender ($\eta_p^2 = .07$) and attractiveness ($\eta_p^2 = .16$)
- No significant cycle phase effects of gender or attractiveness.
- Greater differentiation between attractive/unattractive stimuli among women tested in follicular phase first for SRA ($\eta_p^2 = .13$) and genital arousal ($\eta_p^2 = .14$)

MEN

- Significant interactions between attractiveness and gender for SRA ($\eta_p^2 = .44$), genital response ($\eta_p^2 = .59$), and visual attention ($\eta_p^2 = .23$).

Genital response



Attractiveness and gender cues were significant determinants of cisgender, heterosexual women's and men's self-reported sexual arousal, genital response, and visual attention to female and male sexual stimuli

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Methods

Participants

Men

n = 31
M_{age} (SD) = 23.4 (4.9)
58% European Canadian
23% Asian Canadian
6% African Canadian
13% Other

Women

n = 60
M_{age} (SD) = 22.7 (5.2)
58% European Canadian
17% Asian Canadian
7% First Nations
17% Other

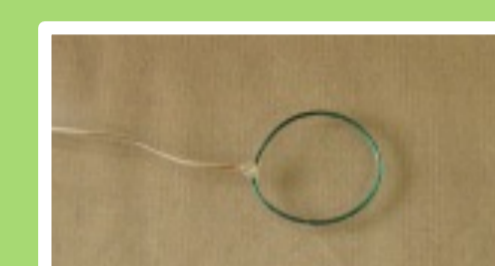
Measures



Self-reported sexual arousal



Eye-tracking

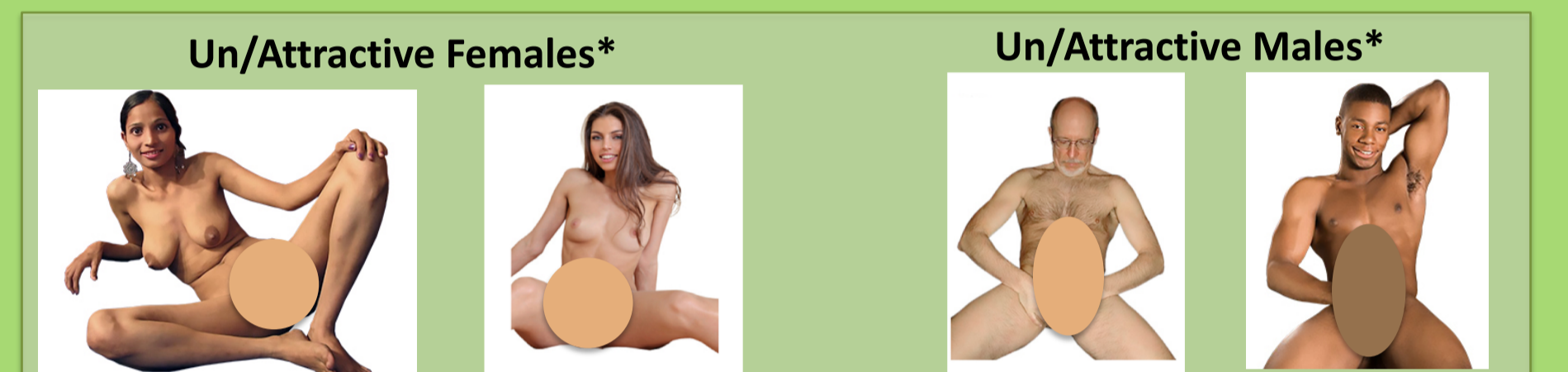


Penile plethysmograph



Vaginal/Clitoral plethysmograph

Still Image Slideshow – 16 images, 96s (6s per image)

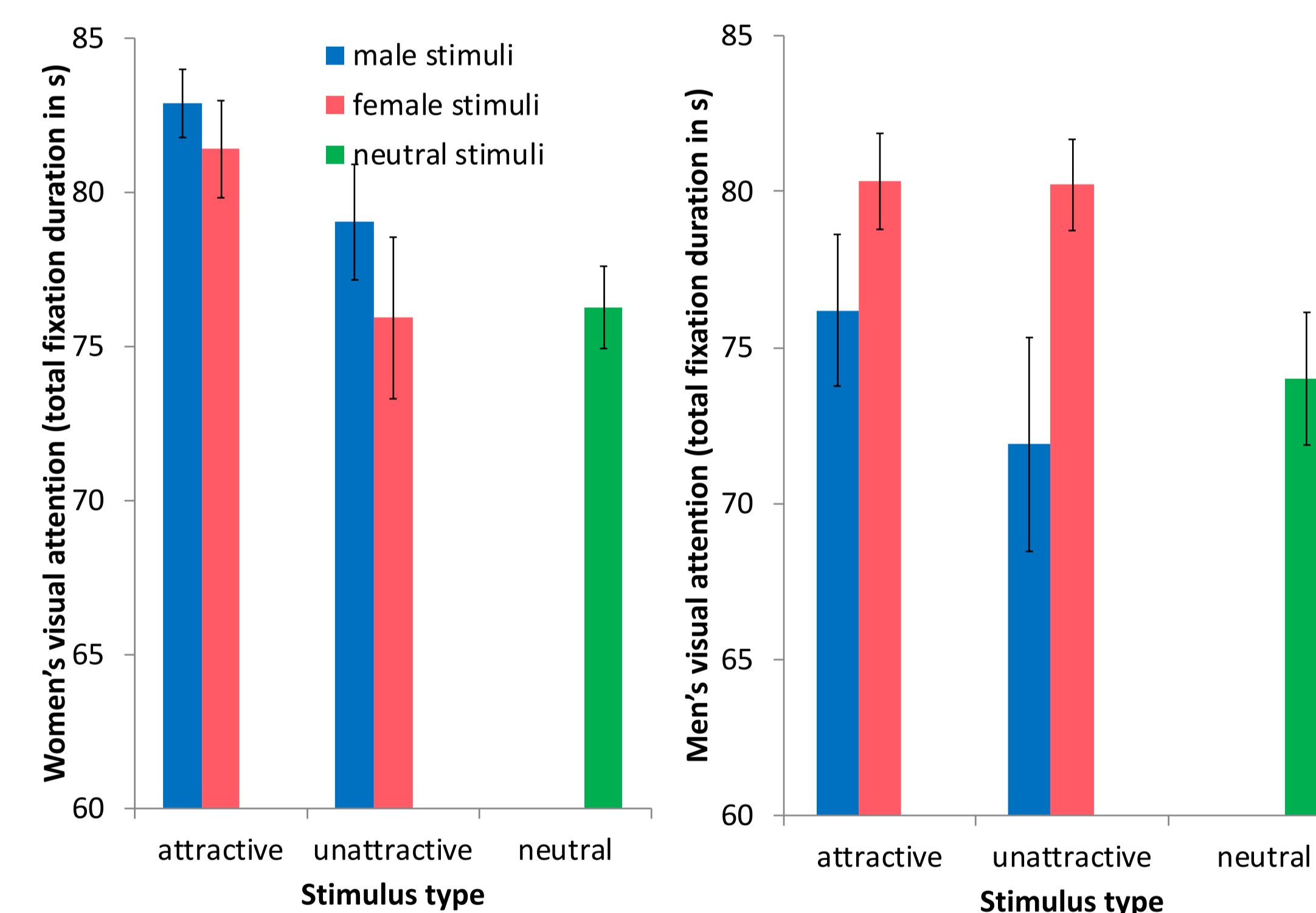


*attractiveness based on independent online study (n = 96)

Stimulus set	Attractiveness ratings (range 0-9) M(SD)	t(df)	p	Cohen's d
AM	4.04 (1.66)	0.16 (95)	0.87	0.03
AF	4.09 (1.67)			
UM	1.81 (0.95)	0.80 (95)	0.80	.04
UF	1.78 (0.92)			

Note: Mean attractiveness ratings of attractive male (AM), attractive female (AF), unattractive male (UM), and unattractive female (UF) stimulus sets (32 images each). Analyses include ratings from 36 men and 60 women (N = 96) with predominantly or exclusively other-sex attractions.

Visual attention



Discussion

- Actor attractiveness significantly influences sexual responses in cisgender women and men.
- Echoes research showing greater effort to view attractive vs unattractive faces (Hahn et al., 2016).
- Women's sexual responses were gender-specific when contextual and sexual activity cues were absent (see Chivers, 2017).
- No cycle phase effects (cf. Bossio et al., 2014)
- Cycle phase testing order effects suggest greater response to attractive images for women tested in fertile phase first (cf. Slob et al., 2016); Caution re: small sample sizes.

References

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