



THE INTERPLAY OF SUBSTANCE USE AND RELATIONSHIP POWER DYNAMICS AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN



KAYLAH WADE, NINA T. HARAWA, PH.D. M.P.H.; KATRINA M. SCHRODE PH.D

INTRODUCTION

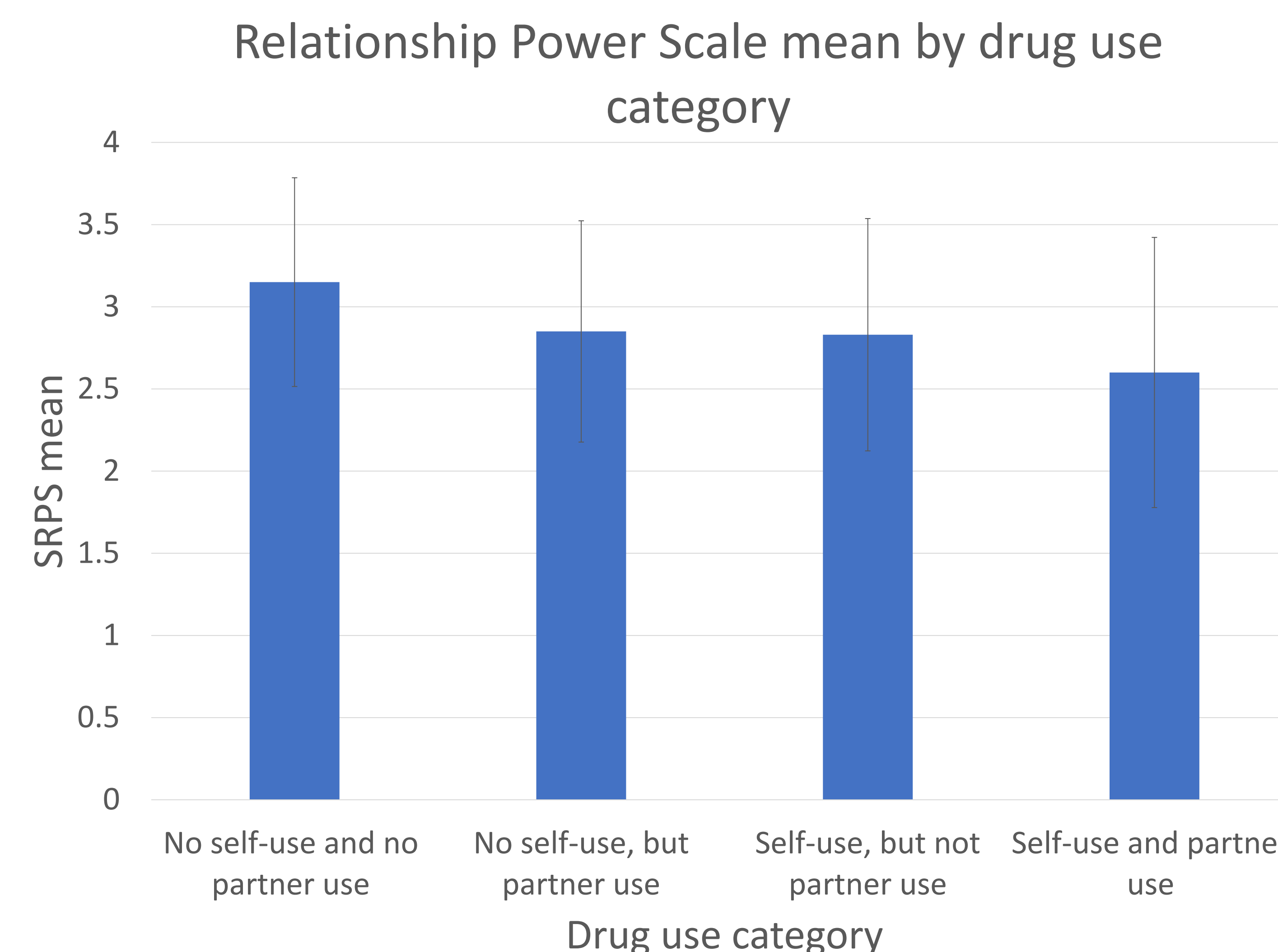
- In 2018 FemAALES Project was a NIMHD-funded study to conduct a randomized controlled trial of a focused HIV/STD prevention intervention with low-income African American women who report sex with high-risk men.
- We examined associations between the drug-using behaviors of study participants and their male partners and the power dynamics of their partnership using FemAALES Study data.
- We predict women who indicate substance use in themselves and their partner to report lower scores of decision-making dominance and relationship control as it pertains to the SRPS than women who indicate no substance use in themselves or their partner.
- The Sexual Relationship Power Scale (SPRS) is a 23-item measure of relationship power dynamics with two subscales: Relationship Control and Decision-Making Dominance. Items on the Relationship Control subscale are scored on a 4-point Likert scale (1= strongly agree and 4 = strongly disagree). Items on the Decision-Making Dominance Factor subscale are scored as (1=your partner, 2= both of you equally, 3= you),

METHODS

- We analyzed self-reports among 183 participants with main partners who provided sufficient data to be grouped into four categories of partnerships
- Categories were based on any current use of “hard” drugs by the woman and any lifetime use of crack cocaine, injection drug, or methamphetamine by their partner.
- We examined scores on the Sexual Relationship Power Scale (SRPS) in each subgroup and analyzed scores using the chi-square test and ANOVA.

RESULTS

- Women were divided as follows into four groups:
 - (i) women who report any recent substance use AND report a history of substance use in their partner (n=29);
 - (ii) women who report substance use but not in their partner (n=34);
 - (iii) women who do not report substance use BUT do report it in their partner (n=32); and
 - (iv) women who do NOT report substance use in themselves or their partners (n=88).
- The 88 women who indicated no substance use in themselves or their partners had the highest mean SRPS score (3.15 sd= .635). The 29 women who reported substance use in both themselves and their partners had the lowest scores (2.60 sd = .822). SRPS average means were similar in the categories where only the women or only the partner were using.



LIMITATIONS

- The reliability and validity of measures like the SRPS may vary across different populations and age groups, and factor analysis should be performed to assess the psychometric properties of the SRPS in each sample.
- Future investigations using the SRPS and subscales should examine both heterosexual and same-sex couple-level data, as well as the correlations among partner reports.
- This study uses data obtained through an HIV prevention study, the population sample was limited to women who reported having at-risk male partners and therefore cannot capture a full range of the experiences of urban, low-income African American women as a whole. Furthermore, because the population sample focuses largely on low-income African American women, the results may not be generalizable to African American women in the U.S. at large.

CONCLUSION

- Low-income African American women who report substance use in themselves and their partners have less relationship control than women who do not.
- Understanding how substance use and recovery trajectories contribute to relationship control and decision-making is imperative in substance abuse research designed for understanding both use and adherence to treatment and intervention.