

# 43rd APS Annual Conference



## Media Release

23 – 27 September 2008: Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart Tasmania

### Study finds romantic relationships boost men's self-esteem

A preliminary study of 300 Australians aged 18 to 25 has found men who are in romantic relationships have higher levels of self-esteem than those without a partner.

The quantitative study into opposite-sex friendships also found having a romantic partner is more important for boosting self-esteem in men than women.

Study author, Simon Rice, said romantic relationships have a positive impact on men's feelings of self-worth.

"We know that men tend to feel better about themselves when their place in the social hierarchy is bolstered. Men are naturally more competitive and being in a relationship comes with a sense of social achievement," said Mr Rice.

"A romantic partnership for men may also fulfill unmet intimacy needs. Women tend to provide more encouragement and emotional validation in their relationships.

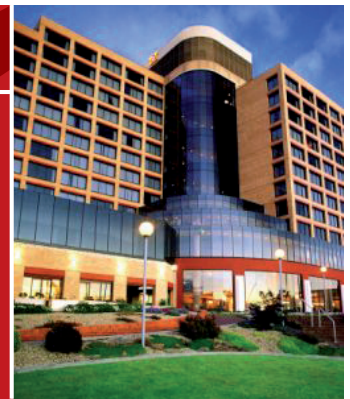
"They are also more prepared to listen, support and nurture their partners. Many men don't find this same level of intimacy in their same-sex friendships," he said.

The study found romantic relationships had little impact on women's self-esteem.

"Women tend to fulfil their intimacy needs through a range of platonic relationships."

Mr Rice said the findings highlight the need for young adults, particularly men, to learn strategies for coping with the breakdown of a romantic relationship.

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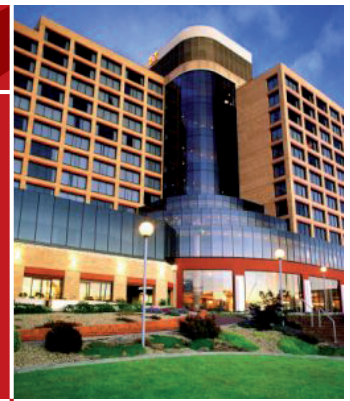
“Psychological research suggests that men may be more rejection-sensitive than women, and could be almost twice as likely to experience depression after the dissolution of a long-term romantic relationship,” said Mr Rice.

“We need to ensure young adults have the skills to manage their emotions when relationships go off the rails. If your relationship breaks down, try to talk to friends, family or even a psychologist, who can provide you with coping strategies and advice.”

Mr Rice will present his findings at the Australian Psychological Society’s 43rd annual conference, ‘Psychology Leading Change’, at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart from 23 to 27 September.

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To coordinate an interview with Mr Rice, please contact:  
Elaine Grant on 0412 683 068.



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