

Gangestad, S.W., & Thornhill, R., (1997). The evolutionary psychology of extra-pair sex: The role of fluctuating asymmetry. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 18, 69–88.

Evolutionary psychologists have theorized that men and women have engaged in extrapair copulations (EPC) for different reasons. Men's EPC opportunities are contingent upon their carrying desirable genetic traits in exchange for which women accept the resulting short-term relationships. Fluctuating asymmetry (FA) is asymmetry of two sides of bilateral characters, a sign of developmental instability. Thus, low FA is a marker of carrying "good genes". In the current article, Gangestad and Thornhill (1997) hypothesized that 1) men's EPC numbers would be negatively correlated with their FA; 2) men's number of having been an EPC would be negatively correlated with their FA.

The sample consisted of 203 college heterosexual couples with mean age of 21.06 years ($SD = 3.55$) for men and 19.95 years ($SD = 3.24$) for women. Twenty couples were married, 9 had children together, while 6 men and 8 women had children from previous relationships. The mean length of the current relationships was 20.6 months ($SD = 18.6$). The participants completed a series of questionnaires that examined their history of EPC partnership, SES, expected income, and attachment styles. FA scores were computed by measuring the width of their bilateral characters: feet, ankles, hands, wrists, elbows, ears. Physical attractiveness was measured by averaging attractiveness scores rated by 8 to 10 judges who gave a score of 1 (least attractive) to 10 (most attractive).

Multiple Regression Analyses revealed that FA was the only predictor in men's number of EPC partners while FA, age, and physical attractiveness predicted men's number of times having been an EPC partner. Low FA men had more EPC partners than high FA men while also having been EPC partners more often than high FA men. Older, physically attractive men were more likely to have been an EPC Partner than younger, less attractive men. This suggests that men who carry the developmentally stable genes are likely to engage in EPC and be chosen as EPC partners by women without investing into the relationship.