

# Why can't we be friends? Relating university students' mobile dating app use purpose to sexual risk behaviors

Rachel Logan, MPH, Shana M. Green, MPH, DeAnne Turner, MPH, & Stephanie Marhefka, PhD  
 Department of Community & Family Health, College of Public Health, University of South Florida

## Introduction

- Mobile dating apps provide unique relationship-seeking experiences
- Young adults use such apps to find friends, relationships and sex partners
- Little is known about mobile dating app use and associated sexual health risks

## Methods

### Distributed

- Online, self-administered, theory-based survey

### Included

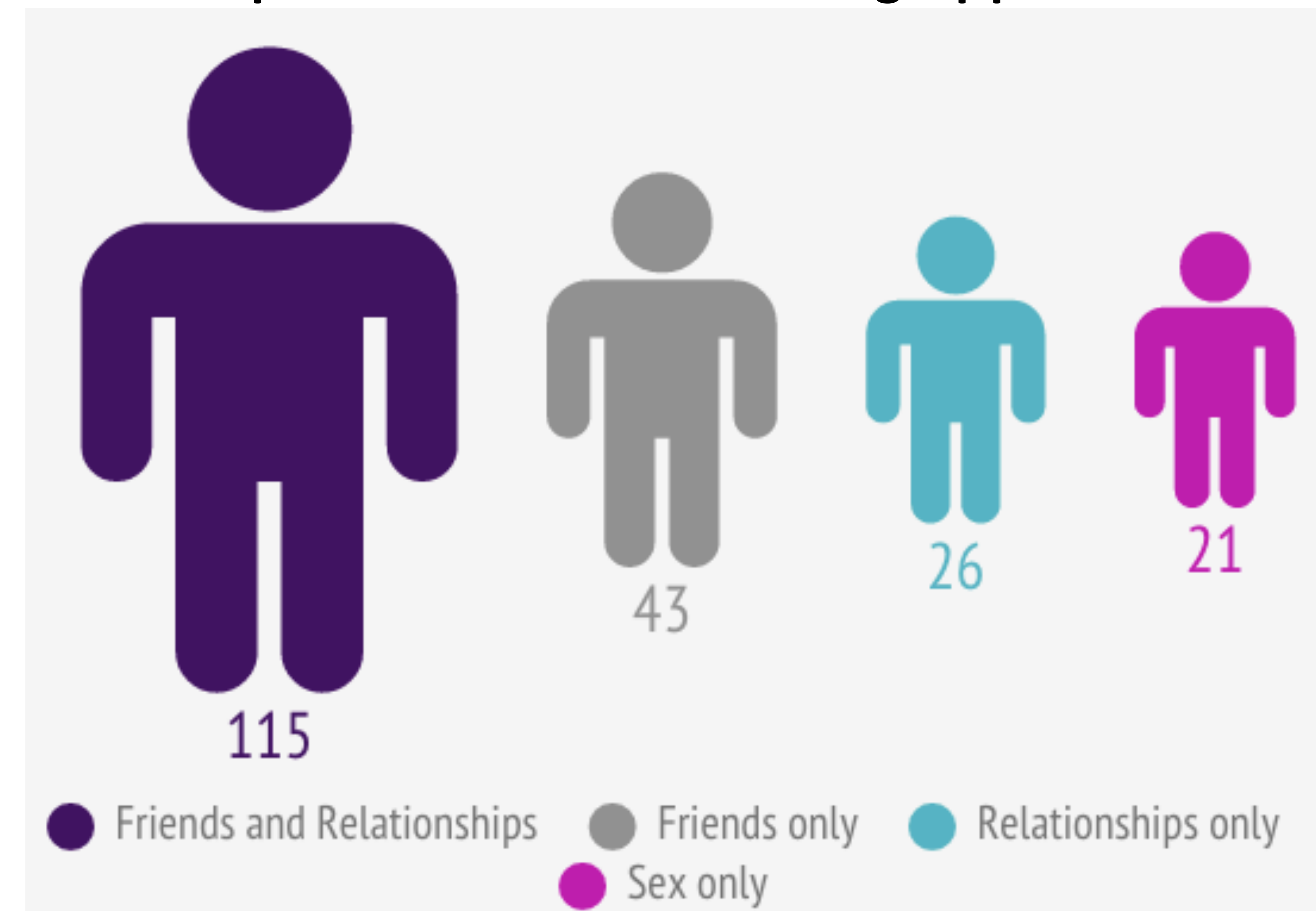
- Data from 369 mobile dating app users aged 18-24 years at an urban southeastern university

### Analyzed

- Data to predict whether app use purposes relate to sexual risk behaviors

## Results

### Participants use mobile dating apps to find...



### Purpose of Use and STI Testing



Those seeking friends and relationships were **less likely** to ask potential partners about STI testing compared to other app users

### App Use Purpose and Sex at First In-Person Meeting, 95% CI

	OR	95% Confidence Level	
		Lower	Higher
Friends and relationships(ref)	0.095	0.017	0.535
Friends	0.351*	0.157	0.781
Relationship	0.500	0.073	3.435
Sex	0.917	0.238	3.535

\* p<0.05

Summary: Those who used the app for friend-seeking were not less likely to engage in sex the first time they met another user in-person compared to those seeking friends and relationships

## Conclusions

- Regardless of initial purpose, students allow relationships to progress to offline encounters which may become sexual
- Although fewer friend-seekers asked potential partners about STI testing, they engaged in sex the first time they met another user in-person more than those with other purposes
- Further investigation of mobile dating app experiences is needed to determine additional factors involved in sexual activity among users