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The Role of Sex, Gender, and Education on Depressive Symptoms among Young

Adults in the United States

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**Abstract** 

Background: Men are less likely to experience depression and both women and men who self-

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assess as high in traits associated with masculinity are less likely to experience depression.

Recent theoretical developments stress that the context of gender construction varies by other

aspects of social status such as education.

Methods: Data come from The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health wave III,

romantic relationship sub-sample, a nationally representative sample of middle and high school

students in the U.S. in 1997. Wave III data were collected in 2001-2002 when they are ages 18-

26. A subsample of individuals who were or currently are in a romantic relationship (N=4,302)

were administered the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI).

Results: We find that femininity, not masculinity, results in less depressive symptoms among

women regardless of education. Femininity is associated with less depressive symptoms among

college educated men, but masculinity is associated with less depressive symptoms among non-

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