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<AT>Cortisol Increases in Response to Brief Social Exchanges with Opposite Sex Partners

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<ABS-HEAD>Highlights► Cortisol rose in response to a brief non-face-to-face opposite sex social exchange ► This increase was stronger for people who rated the confederate as more desirable ► This increase was also stronger among those independently rated as less desirable ► This increase was also stronger among men ► Cortisol levels were similar for rejecting, accepting, or no feedback

<ABS-HEAD>Abstract
<ABS-P>Researchers recently demonstrated that cortisol increases in response to mating-relevant social interactions. An important next step is investigating factors that explain individual differences in cortisol reactivity within these contexts. The current study examined demographic, situational, and individual difference predictors of cortisol reactivity following brief, non-face-to-face interactions with potential dating partners. College students made a video introducing themselves to another participant. During another appointment, they watched a short video of an opposite-sex confederate introducing himself/herself, and believed the other person was watching their video. Participants were told they would get to know the confederate more during a web-chat, which never took place. Participants received either rejection, acceptance, or no feedback from the confederate. Cortisol levels increased over baseline in all feedback conditions. Cortisol increases were particularly strong for participants who perceived the confederate as a more desirable dating partner, participants who were independently rated as a less desirable partner, and men.
<KWD>Keywords: mating; cortisol; sex differences; dating; close relationships; rejection

<H1>1. Introduction
Choosing a good mate is an important endeavor with tangible consequences. Researchers have thus set out to understand the hormonal correlates of courtship and mate selection among humans. Prior research in this area has largely focused on testosterone, particularly among men (Archer, 2006; Gray et al., 2004; Roney et al., 2007). More recently, researchers started investigating the link between cortisol and mating-relevant interactions. Cortisol, a hormone released from the adrenal glands, helps mobilize resources by breaking down amino acids from fat and muscle tissue into glucose (see Lovallo and Thomas, 2000 for a review). The release of glucose provides energy for people to manage the demands of their current environment.