

neatly into one of these three categories. One researcher writing decades ago suggested that there was a continuum from homosexual to heterosexual and that people could be various places along this scale (Sell 1997; Kinsey et al. [1948] 1998; Kinsey et al. [1953] 1998). A recent study followed women who, at the beginning of the study, identified as something other than heterosexual. The study found that about two-thirds of these women shifted the sexual orientation they identified with over 10 years. They moved in all directions between identifying with the labels *lesbian*, *bisexual*, and *heterosexual*, and even preferring no label. Also, the study showed that behavior (which sex one has sex with), attraction (which sex one is attracted to), and identity (whether one refers to oneself as lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual) are not always consistent (Diamond 2008).

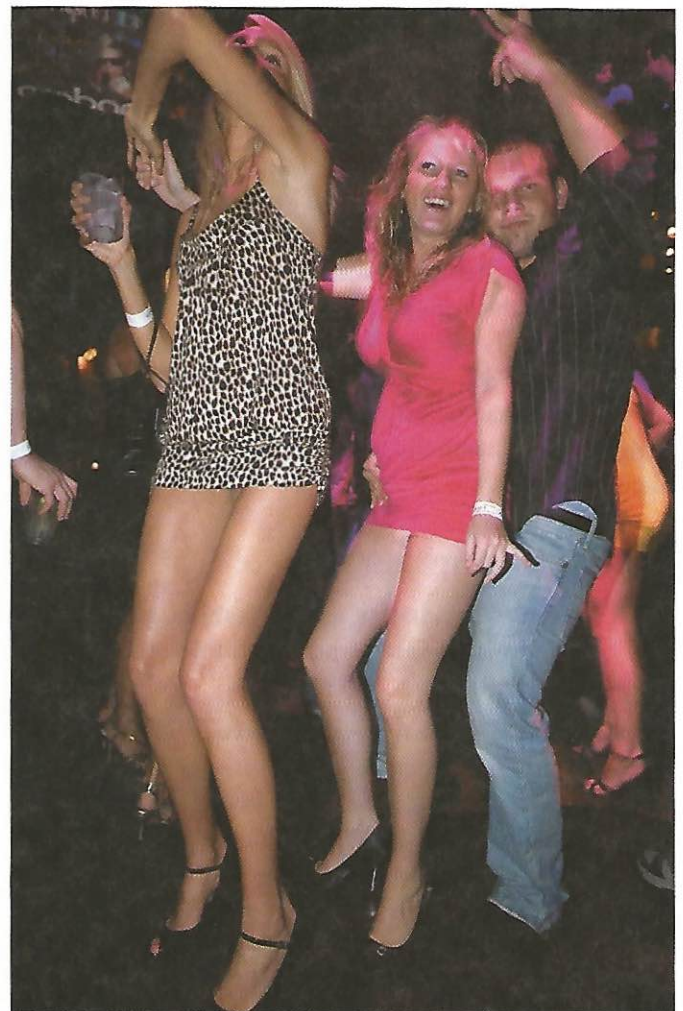
An interesting question is where our sexual orientation comes from. As with other aspects of sex, there is evidence that both biology and society have their effects. Evidence that genetics affect sexual orientation comes from research on twins and other siblings. Researchers asked samples of gay men or lesbians, some of whom were twins, about the sexual orientation of their siblings. They compared how often same-sex siblings—including identical twins, fraternal twins, and adoptive siblings—of gay or lesbian individuals were also homosexual. Siblings differ in their degree of genetic relatedness—with identical twins having identical genes, fraternal twins being as related as nontwin siblings, and adoptive siblings being the least genetically similar. The researchers found that a higher percentage of the identical twins of gay men were also gay, compared to a lower percentage of the fraternal twins of gay brothers and an even lower percentage of the adoptive brothers of gay men. A similar pattern was found for women (Bailey and Pillard 1991; Bailey et al. 1993, 2000). On the one hand, the study proves that genes don't entirely determine sexual orientation because even among identical twins, when one is gay or lesbian, most of the time the other is not. Because identical twins are genetically identical, if they don't have the same sexual orientation, something else from their social experiences must explain their differences (Stein 2001). On the other hand, the study shows that there is some influence of genes on sexual orientation as the finding is that siblings who are more genetically related are more similar in sexual orientation than siblings who are less genetically related.

Sexual Behavior

12.3.2: Discuss the impact of biology and society on sexual behavior.

How do biology and society affect other aspects of our sexual behavior? A big debate in this area is whether men like casual sex more than women, and, if so, if this is because of some biological difference or is a result of social

influences (Schmitt 2003). Evolutionary theories say that this is a gender difference that we would expect to have evolved millennia ago. According to these theories, in any population, variation in genes occurs at random. Some of the randomly occurring new genes lead to things that enhance survival, others hurt survival, and still others are neutral. Over many thousands of years, the genes that enhance survival will be more represented in the population because the people (or other animals) with these genes are more likely to survive long enough to reproduce, and their descendants will carry those genes. If there are sex-specific genes, then genes that helped women to produce offspring that survive will be carried in women today, while genes that helped men produce offspring that survive will be carried in men today. Because a woman carries a fetus for nine months, her number of surviving children will not be enhanced much by frequent sex with multiple partners. But this is different for males, who could potentially impregnate many women in the nine-month period it takes a woman to gestate one child. Thus, any combination of genes that encouraged frequent, casual sex would increase



Nightclubs and college parties often feature women showing more skin than men. Why is this?