Men’s Long-Term Mating Strategies

Theoretical background for men’s preferences
Why might men evolve a desire for commitment? -- 7 potential benefits

7 Benefits to Men of LT Mating

- Attract a woman (given women’s prefs)
- Attract more desirable women
- Increase odds of paternity
- Increase survival of children
- Increase reproductive success of kids
- Increase alliances through wife’s kin
- Increase in social status
Class Exercise

What do men want in a long-term mate?

1. Assessment problem: Identifying fertility and reproductive value
2. The content of men’s desires -- Cues to RV and fertility

Youth: reproductive value and fertility
Men’s age preferences as they get older

Comparisons of Teenage Preferences with Those Expressed in Adult Advertisements
Kenrick’s data on teenage males preferring “older” women; refutes “learning” and “power” hypotheses

Standards of beauty: in the adaptations of the beholder
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Jon Snow, the Channel 4 newsreader “Sex comes into every evaluation of a woman, there’s no doubt about it,”

Logic of the Evolution of Standards of Attractiveness

Fertility or Reproductive Value → Cues → Standards of Attractiveness

Cues
- Full lips
- Clear skin
- Clear eyes
- Lustrous hair
- Muscle tone
- Sprightly gait
- Symmetry
- Health
- Youth
- Etc.
Standards of beauty emerge early in life

Standards of beauty are consistent across cultures
“Average” and Symmetrical Faces

Beauty and the brain

fMRI of brain – Nucleus accumbens in red
Leg length

- Both sexes prefer “longer legs”: Approx. 5% longer than average legs are maximally attractive:

- Women with longer legs (in China) have more offspring (Fielding et al., 2008)

- Explains use of high-heeled shoes

Body shape (WHR)--fertility cue (also cue to non-pregnancy)
Evidence from Miss America Contestants:

“in spite of change in height and weight over these years, the body shape of the contestants has retained the hour glass shape rather than becoming tubular”

1940  34 - 24.5 - 35  (WHR = .70)
1987  35 - 23.5 - 34.5  (WHR = .68)

Historical WHR preferences across cultures
WHR, Breasts, and Fecundity

- Women with combination of higher breast-to-underbreast ratio has higher fecundity.

- Women with lower WHR had higher fecundity.

- Both groups combined had 26% higher mean estradiol (E2) and 37% higher mid-cycle E2 than other women [Jasienska et al., 2004]

Kate Moss
Age: 27
Height: 5'7”
Weight: 105 lbs
Measurements: 33-23-35
WHR = .66
Ruben’s paintings

\[ WHR = 0.70 \]

But could just be a preference for specific BMI?

Sex differences in importance of physical appearance
Desire for physical attractiveness in long-term mate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Indispensable</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>N = 269</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
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<td>N = 172</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>N = 1,491</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Do men have a preference for ovulating women? -- some clues

Women’s sexual desire as a function of ovulation cycle

Women’s Body Odors Over Ovulation Cycle

- Males rated sexual attractiveness (odor of T-shirts) highest at mid-cycle for women not on oral contraceptives.

- No effect on women judges

- No effect for women taking oral contraceptives [Kuukasjarvi et al., 2004]
a. Desire for premarital chastity—highly variable across cultures
b. Desire for post-marital fidelity--more likely adaptive solution

“Hi, what's your name. Happy Birthday, I love you, let's have children, goodbye”

Context effects on men’s desires
Men in positions of power -- Do they get what they want?

b. Contrast effects from viewing attractive models
b. contrast effects from viewing attractive models

Testosterone

- 21% lower in men who are in committed relationships
- Even lower for men who have children.
- Why?
Two Explanations

1. low T men tend to get into committed relationships.

2. men’s T drops after getting in relationships: Mating effort hypothesis

Data seem to support #2:
- Men in relationships who fantasize about sex with other women are higher in T
- Males in a committed relationship with no desire to cheat have less testosterone than males in a committed relationship with a desire to cheat.

Effect of Men’s Preferences on Actual Mating Behavior
a. Personal Ads

Sex differences in content of "lonely hearts" advertisements


a. Personal Ads

Sex differences in percent of "lonely hearts" advertisements in England seeking “attractiveness”

a. Personal Ads

Sex differences in percent of "lonely hearts" advertisements seeking resources


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a. Men’s responses to women’s personal ads--more to women who advertise youth and attractiveness

[Image of advertisement from match.com]
b. Age preference and marital decisions--men do marry younger women

Actual Age Differences in 1,511 Marriages on the Island of Poro (1913-1939)
c. Women’s attraction tactics

d. Women’s derogation of competitor tactics
Am I losing any hair?

Nope

Am I overweight?

Absolutely not.