

One And Done: For Short Term Dates, Women Prefer Men With Wider Faces

By News Staff | February 5th 2014

Men, if you want a short term thing and not a lot of talks about "us" and "the relationship", your odds improve if your parents gave you the gift of a wider face.

Women see wider faces as more dominant, and therefore more attractive, at least for short-term relationships. At around age 30, women start to prefer men with jobs and stable personalities.

And since this was a study of speed dating participants, it's probably true, for speed dating participants.

According to psychologist Katherine Valentine of Singapore Management University, there's considerable debate among psychologists about whether physical dominance is advantageous in mating – that is, actually attractive to women. So they have been exploring facial width-to-height ratio (fWHR) as a possible physical indicator of male dominance.

The scholars used results over 150 men and women, ages 18 to 32, who participated in speed-dating events. The participants were all single and each speed-dating interaction lasted 3 minutes.

Male speed-daters with higher fWHR, as measured by computer software, were independently rated as more dominant. Women not only expressed more interest in short-term relationships with these men, but were also more likely to choose them for a second date. These associations held even after the researchers accounted for the men's age and independently-rated attractiveness.

This new study, Valentine says, addresses the two key issues regarding whether physical dominance is advantageous in mating. "Our study shows that within three minutes of meeting in real life, women find more dominant, wider-faced men attractive for short-term relationships, and want to go on another date with them.

"High male fWHR has previously been associated with surviving in hand-to-hand combat, aggressiveness, self-perceived power, and CEO's financial success. Our study shows it's also a reasonably good indicator of perceived dominance – not only that, it piques women's interest in a face-to-face speed-dating setting."

The authors hypothesize that increased fWHR, and a link to testosterone, would make men seem more dominant and more desirable as romantic interests in the short-term, but because facial width is also linked with undesirable traits like aggression, women would not see these men as more desirable for long-term relationships. Psychologists often think that all biology has social functions.

They suggest that the link between higher fWHR and greater interest in a short-term relationship could be accounted for, at least in part, by perceived dominance, but the fact that fWHR predicted whether women wanted another date with a man came as a surprise



Publication: Science 2.0

Date: 5 February 2014

Headline: One And Done: For Short Term Dates, Women Prefer Men With Wider Faces

to the psychologists, which seems strange since that is exactly what they were testing for. "The fact that women wanted to see these men again suggests that our findings are robust – women aren't just saying they are interested, they're actually willing to be contacted by these men. Previous studies have found that women prefer more dominant men for short-term relationships, but almost all of these studies were based in the lab and did not involve an interaction that could actually lead to mating and dating."

Valentine and colleagues plan on further investigating how these individual differences in men affect their overall attractiveness, and in what contexts.

Published in *Psychological Science*.