

Daddies' girls choose men just like their fathers

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Women who enjoy good childhood relationships with their fathers are more likely to select partners who resemble their dads research suggests. In contrast, the team of psychologists from Durham University and two Polish institutions revealed that women who have negative or less positive relationships were not attracted to men who looked like their male parents.

Due to be published in the July issue of *Evolution and Human Behaviour*, the study investigated evidence of parental sexual imprinting, the sexual preference for individuals possessing parental characteristics, in women. The team used facial measurements to give a clear view of how fathers' facial features relate directly to the features of faces their daughters find attractive.

The study, supported in part by the Economic and Social Research Council and The Royal Society, helps shed further light on how we choose partners and the impact of a parent's role in this process, which until recently researchers believed to be a passive one. It adds to growing theories that suggest sexual imprinting is an active process which involves the relationship between the child and the adult upon whom they imprint. This reveals the importance of parental relationships in partner selection, which could move studies in areas like evolutionary biology, fertility and genetics a step forward and offer new insights in areas such as relationship counselling and psychology.

Author Dr Lynda Boothroyd of Durham University explains: "While

previous research has suggested this to be the case, these controlled results show for certain that the quality of a daughter's relationship with her father has an impact on whom she finds attractive. It shows our human brains don't simply build prototypes of the ideal face based on those we see around us, rather they build them based on those to whom we have a strongly positive relationship. We can now say that daughters who have very positive childhood relationships with their fathers choose men with similar central facial characteristics to their fathers."

Well known 'daddies' girls' such as Nigella Lawson and Zoe Ball back up these findings. A comparison of pictures of Charles Saatchi with Nigel Lawson and Norman Cook with Johnny Ball reveals some close correlations, especially in the central facial area, including the nose, chin and eyes.

The study used a sample of 49 Polish eldest daughters. Each chose the most attractive face from 15 distinct faces, whose ears, hair, neck, shoulders and clothing were not visible, removing any external influences which could potentially skew results. The male stimuli's facial measurements were taken and compared with each daughter's father's measurements, so that the researchers knew which faces correlated most closely with the fathers' faces.

The daughters were asked to rate their paternal relationships looking at areas such as how much a father engaged in bringing up his daughter, how much leisure time he spent with her and how much emotional investment she received from him. These scores then made up an overall 'positivity' score. As a group as a whole there was no correlation between fathers' and male stimuli's faces, however, when the daughters were split into two groups based on positivity, those in the higher positivity group showed significant positive correlations between fathers' and the male stimuli's faces that they found most attractive.

Source: Durham University

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