

# Direct gaze makes you more attractive

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Looking directly at someone makes you more attractive to them according to research published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, today (Wednesday 7 November, 2007).

Previous face preference research has mainly focused on physical attractiveness but this new research has investigated the effects of gaze direction, gender and expressions on peoples face preferences.

Participants were divided into four different groups and asked to rate the attractiveness of the images they were shown.

Dr Claire Conway, author of the study from the University of Aberdeen, found that identifying the factors that govern our face preferences is a complex process and whether we find people facially attractive is dependent on a combination of factors. For example, we are more

attracted to happy faces, which are directly looking at us and are of the opposite sex.

Dr Conway said: "When asked to think of examples of attractive facial characteristics, most people think of physical traits such as healthy looking skin, symmetrical features or a strong jaw.

"Here we show that gaze direction can also be important for attraction. Faces that were looking directly at the viewer were judged more attractive than faces with averted gaze.

"This effect was particularly pronounced if the face was smiling and the opposite sex to the viewer. This shows that people prefer faces that appear to like' them and that attraction is not simply about physical beauty. It is possible that our brains are wired this way to allow us to invest our time in attracting members of the opposite sex who seem the most receptive to our interest in them."

Link: [www.royalsoc.ac.uk/news.asp?id=7244](http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/news.asp?id=7244)

Source: University of Aberdeen

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