

Study: Men Losing Their Minds Over Women

September 7 2009, by Lin Edwards

(PhysOrg.com) -- Research reported in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* has shown that men go ga-ga over pretty women. They simply lose their minds (while women keep theirs).

The study measured [brain function](#) in 40 male heterosexual student volunteers, who were asked to perform a standard [memory test](#) in which they were shown a stream of letters and had to quickly say if each was the same as the previous letter. They then spent several minutes talking to either a man or an attractive woman and then repeated the test.

The researchers found that even a few minutes with the attractive woman was enough to make the students slower and less accurate on the test. The more attracted they were, the worse their results.

They also studied the effects on women students of being in the company of handsome men, and found the test scores were unaffected.

The psychologists Johan C. Karremans, Thijs Verwijmeren, Rila M. Pronk, and Meyke Reitsma, from Radboud University in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, think evolutionary processes have programmed men to regard women first as potential mates. They temporarily concentrated their 'cognitive resources', or [brain power](#), on trying to impress the woman, and there was little left over for the task they had been given.

According to Dr George Fieldman, a member of the British Psychological Society, when a man is talking to an attractive woman he

is 'reproductively focused' and concerned with passing on his genes. Women are less focused on appearances, and look for other signs of a perfect mate, such as youth, kindness and wealth.

The idea for the study came from one of the scientists, who was so impressed by a beautiful woman he met that when she asked where he lived, he had forgotten his own address! He had temporarily lost his mind.

The study may have practical implications, both for the workplace and for mixed-gender schools.

More information: [Journal of Experimental Social Psychology](#), Volume 45, Issue 4, July 2009, Pages 1041-1044.
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