

Study shows persistence pays off in the mating game

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(Medical Xpress) -- A new study co-authored by a University of Texas at Austin psychology professor suggests that self-deception may help men succeed in the mating game, while women will benefit more from effective communication.

David Buss, professor of psychology, and psychology graduate student Judith Easton, both of The University of Texas at Austin, conducted the research with Williams College psychologist Carin Perilloux, senior author of the study. The findings will appear in an upcoming issue of [Psychological Science](#), a journal published by the Association for Psychological Science.

The research, conducted at The University of Texas at Austin, involved 103 female and 96 male undergraduates who were asked to rate their own attractiveness on a scale of 1 to 7 before participating in a "speed-meeting" exercise in which the students had three-minute, one-on-one conversations with five members of the opposite sex. After each conversation, they rated the other person's [physical attractiveness](#) and perceived [sexual interest](#). Participants were also assessed for their level of desire for a short-term [sexual encounter](#) with each person with whom they interacted.

Men looking for a "quick hook-up" were more likely to overestimate a woman's desire for them, researchers found. Men who thought of themselves as attractive also overestimated a woman's desire for them. Indeed, the more attractive the woman was to the man, the more likely

he was to overestimate her interest in him.

Men who were actually considered attractive according to the women's rankings did not seem to have this discrepancy in evaluating the situation. Interestingly, women tended to show a bias opposite that of most men — they consistently underestimated men's sexual interest in them.

In terms of human evolution, it is likely that ancestral men who overestimated their appeal to women and pursued them — even at the risk of being rebuffed — were more likely to reproduce and pass along this tendency to "over perceive" to genetic heirs.

The research suggests that women should be as communicative and clear as possible, while men should consider that the more attracted they are to a woman, the more likely they are wrong about her interest.

Provided by University of Texas at Austin

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