

Does birth control impact women's choice of sexual partners?

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Birth control is used worldwide by more than 60 million women. Since its introduction, it has changed certain aspects of women's lives including family roles, gender roles and social life. New research in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* found a link between birth control and women's preferences for psychophysical traits in a sexual mate.

The researchers utilized a PMI (Partner's Masculinity Index) to determine the male traits that women found attractive during the fertile phase of their menstrual cycle. The participants were from Central Italy and divided into two groups – one that completed a questionnaire to verify the structure of the PMI, and another to determine the pill's influence in [mate selection](#).

The PMI, which consisted of 20 items, was used to assess the degree of masculinity in a desired mate. It referred to concepts of physical, psychological, and behavioral "masculinity" as an indicator of genetic fitness.

The results indicated that, with regard to mate selection, taking the pill may psychologically influence women's preference for certain characteristics of an ideal sexual partner. In particular, it was hypothesized that indicators of masculinity would be considered more attractive in the central phase of the cycle (between 11th and 21st day) than other phases as well for both pill and non-pill users.

More information: Gori, A., Giannini, M., Craparo, G., Caretti, V.,

Nannini, I., Madathil, R., Shuldberg, D. (2014), Assessment of the Relationship Between the Use of Birth Control Pill and the Characteristics of Mate Selection. *Journal of Sexual Medicine*. [DOI: 10.1111/jsm.12566](https://doi.org/10.1111/jsm.12566)

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