

Beauty and bacteria: Slim, attractive men have less nasal bacteria than heavy men

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Do attractive traits tell us anything about a person's reproductive health? New research in the *American Journal of Human Biology* reveals a link between Body Mass Index (BMI) and the amount of bacteria colonizing noses. The results show that heavier men harbor more potentially pathogenic species of bacteria in their nose, compared with slimmer, more traditionally attractive men.

"According to an evolutionary point of view, traits related to attractiveness are supposed to be honest signals of biological quality," said Dr. Boguslaw Pawlowski. "We analyzed whether nasal and throat colonization with potentially pathogenic bacteria is related to body height and BMI in both sexes."

103 healthy females and 90 healthy males participated in the study. Heights and weights were self-reported, while waist and hip circumferences were measured. Six potentially pathogenic bacteria were isolated and identified from nasal and throat swabs.

The results showed that 'colonized' men were found to have a higher BMI than non-colonized males, although no differences were found in females.

"To our knowledge, this is the first attempt to study body morphology traits related to [physical attractiveness](#) in relation to bacterial colonization in young people," said Pawlowski. "The results confirmed our hypothesis, but only for BMI in males."

More information: Boguslaw Pawlowski, Judyta Nowak, Barbara Borkowska, Zuzanna Drulis-Kawa, Human body morphology, prevalence of nasopharyngeal potential bacterial pathogens, and immunocompetence handicap principal, *American Journal of Human Biology*, [DOI: 10.1002/ajhb.22510](https://doi.org/10.1002/ajhb.22510)

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