

HEALTH



THE RATING GAME—Arianna Young, an assistant professor of psychology at Cal Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, was part of a team that performed studies on dating.

Study shows men don't like to date women who are smarter than they are

By Carissa Thilgen
Special to the Acorn

It's a familiar dating problem: In the quest to meet a soulmate, we sometimes find our ideal notion of a person—what "looks good on paper"—isn't what we're actually attracted to in real life.

What do women really want? The jury's still out on that one. But when it comes to men, what they really don't want is a woman who's smarter than they are.

So say the conclusions of a study published in the November issue of *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*,

Arianna Young, assistant professor of psychology at Cal Lutheran

University in Thousand Oaks, was part of a team that conducted a series of studies revealing that while most men claim they find smart women attractive and would date someone smarter than they are, when they meet these women in the flesh, they feel threatened and their interest wanes.

"What men say they want is not always what they actually want when they are faced with that situation in person," Young said in an interview with the *Acorn*. "Even though men say they really want more intelligent women than themselves, . . . when they were faced with that particular situation, where a woman outsmarted them, they

didn't actually want it." "Basically, dating is complicated," she added.

Laws of attraction

Young, a San Francisco Bay Area native who now lives in Thousand Oaks and is in her second year of teaching at CLU, said the idea of studying men's attraction to smart women was sparked by another research project.

While pursuing her doctorate in social personality psychology at the University at Buffalo, Young worked with Lora Park, an associate professor of psychology at the New York university, to examine how women's romantic goals affect their interest in math and science, fields where women are typically underrepresented.

Their hypothesis—that being intelligent in traditionally masculine domains may be perceived

as incompatible with attracting a partner—proved correct.

"Women distance themselves from math and science when they are pursuing their goal to be more romantically desirable," said Young, 32.

This led researchers Young and Park to a new question: Are men really more attracted to women who are less intelligent than themselves?

To help them with their new line of research, they recruited Paul Eastwick, an associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin and an expert on the evolution of relationships, including mate preferences.

Getting the male perspective required six separate studies, all taking place at the University at Buffalo and involving a total of 650 male undergraduate college students as well as several female "confederates," or actors.

The research took over three years to complete, with the first study beginning in the fall of 2009 and the last one wrapping up in spring 2013.

The male psyche

The first set of studies examined men's evaluations of hypothetical partners who bested them on an intelligence test, while the second set examined attraction to live partners. They produced conflicting results.

In the first study, the hypothetical one, the men demonstrated greater romantic interest in women who were smarter than they were, placing value on intelligence in their partners—at least in the abstract.

In the second set of studies, men whose intelligence was outstripped by a female actor responded by physically distancing themselves from her, rating her as less attractive and exhibiting less of a desire to exchange contact information or plan a date with her.

In trying to make sense of this discrepancy, the researchers saw a pattern emerging based on how close the woman was to the man psychologically or physically.

"When she was hypothetical or down the hall, he actually liked when she outperformed him," Young said. "It's not that men don't like smart women; it was more complicated. Men do like smart women in theory, but they don't like smarter women who outperform them in the moment. That was a little twist."

So the researchers performed a third set of studies to confirm these findings.

"When men were outperformed by women who were right there with them, they were threatened. And that makes sense," Young said. "When someone is better than you, it hurts, it stings. It's a bit of a threat to your masculinity, your ego. As a result of that threat (the men) tend to not like these women."

With this new knowledge, Park suggested, men could work to bridge the gap between what they say they want in a partner and how they behave.

"If what one truly wants is someone smarter . . . then one might respond to a partner's achievements by supporting them or being proud of their accomplishments rather than the default response of feeling threatened," Park said.

This may be easier said than done. As Young pointed out, "The real world is messier" than the lab. The CLU professor also acknowledged that this self-protective response is likely not unique to men.

"That would be some exciting future research . . . to see what factors contribute to women's partner preferences," she said. "What makes women more or less attracted to men?"

Dr. Jennifer Young
 Accepting New Patients
 Board Certified Family Medicine Physician.
 Providing primary care for both children and adults.
 On Medical Staff at Los Robles Hospital
 Same day appointments available.

Dr. Jennifer Young Family Medicine 558 North Ventu Park Road, Suite A THOUSAND OAKS, CA 91320
 805149818265 • www.DrJenniferYoung.com



COMMENTARY // Aye eye, doc

Set your sights on new presbyopia treatments

By Rajesh Khanna
Special to the Acorn

What is presbyopia? If you are reading this article with the help of glasses you'll be pretty familiar with presbyopia.

For those who don't know what presbyopia is, let's talk about it. The eye is like a camera. The natural lens acts as a auto-focusing mechanism and allows us to see things at distance. The auto adjusts itself when focusing

at middle or near. By age 40 and up the mechanism starts degenerating and people have difficulty reading books and seeing their smartphones. This condition is called presbyopia.

To overcome presbyopia, reading glasses or bifocals have been the solution for hundreds of years. Monovision contact lenses became popular in the last century.

To reverse or cure presbyopia, many people are familiar with monovision Lasik eye surgery. The dominant eye is set for far vision and the other for near.

Younger women adapt to this procedure better than men. There may be loss of binocularity and difficulty in intermediate vision.

The 21st century FDA approved treatment methods are Kamra Inlay and PIE (presbyopia implant in eye).

Kamra Inlay is a specially designed colored implant with a clear aperture in the center.

It works on a pinhole effect similar to a camera. The small aperture increases the depth of

INTEGRATED WITH LIFE

Today's hearing device technology will keep you connected, and allows you to link up with a variety of electronic devices.

Get connected today.
 Call now to schedule an appointment.
(805) 584-3327

WE ALSO PROVIDE
 Audiology Evaluations • Educational Seminars • Custom Earmolds • Hearing Device Sales & Service




Ellen Baker, Au.D.



Kelley Bannon, Au.D.

oticon PEOPLE FIRST
 DECIBEL HEARING SERVICES
 Simi Valley & Thousand Oaks | www.decibelhearing.com