

Wealth and brains last, but where's the love?

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It's not often beauty, brains and wealth finish last, especially in the bedroom. But when it comes to finding a sexual partner in Australia, the top priority for most men and women is finding a partner who loves and cares for them.

The National Study of Health, Intimacy and Social Relations has found most men and women preferred sex partners who were interesting, fun and good companions who had shared interests and activities.

Sex was preferred with someone who enjoyed the experience but the quality or technical love making ability was not the overriding factor.

Participants in the national phone survey of 1784 men and women, aged between 18 and 59, were asked to rank the qualities they most desired in a sexual partner.

Men and women had almost identical priorities when describing the qualities they look for in a sexual partner.

Wealth, looks and brains rated lowest in the study published in the international journal, *Marriage and Family Review* (volume 40, issue 1).

Lead author, University of Queensland Population Health and Social Science Professor Jake Najman, said it was unexpected that people placed a higher priority on a sex partner who loved them than a partner whom they loved.

“We obviously need to feel that someone is really concerned about us,” Professor Najman said.

“It appears that we need people to love us. That's the part I find really interesting.”

Younger participants most preferred someone who was fun to be with while older participants placed more emphasis on having a partner who cared about them and enjoyed sex.

Married people cared most about enjoying sex and having sex with someone who cared about them.

Homosexual males placed the highest emphasis on someone who was fun to be with and who enjoyed sex.

Professor Najman said the study was originally intended to examine sexual practices and behaviour in the community and to understand why some people were more likely to be infected with sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

“We know that there are many who continue to have unprotected sex with partners who may have a sexually transmitted infection,” he said.

“The reality is that some people are prepared to take high risks to obtain sexual and possibly emotional fulfilment.”

Survey data was collected in 1999 but only recently analysed.

Similar studies have showed sexual partner qualities have changed over the decades with dependability and emotional maturity the most sought after qualities in 1939.

By the mid 1980s mutual attraction and love ranked highest.

TOP 3 QUALITIES FOR A SEX PARTNER:

WOMEN

1. Cares about you
2. Enjoys sex
3. Fun to be with

MEN

- 1: Enjoys sex
- 2: Fun to be with
- 3: Cares about you

Professor Najman wrote the analysis of the study, *Sexual partner preferences: Evolutionary imperative, emotional attachment or hedonism*, with colleagues from UQ's School of Population Health and QUT's Centre for Public Health.

Source: University of Queensland

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