

Unlocking the secret of beauty: Scientists discover the complexities of attractive female bodies

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Scientists in Australia and Hong Kong have conducted a comprehensive study to discover how different body measurements correspond with ratings of female attractiveness. The study, published in the *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*, found that across cultural divides young, tall and long armed women were considered the most attractive.

"[Physical attractiveness](#) is an important determining factor for evolutionary, social and economic success," said lead author Robert Brooks from the University of New South Wales. "The dimensions of someone's body can tell observers if that person is suitable as a potential mate, a long term partner or perhaps the threat they pose as a sexual competitor."

Traditional studies of attractiveness have been bound to the Darwinian idea of natural selection, which argues that an individual will always choose the best possible mate that circumstances will allow. Such studies have focused on torso, waist, bust and hip measurements.

In this study the team measured the attractiveness of scans of 96 bodies of Chinese [women](#) who were either students or volunteers, aged between 20-49 years of age.

Videos of the models were shown to a sample of 92 Australian adults, 40 men and 52 women, aged between 18 to 58 years of age, and mostly of European descent. They then compared the attractiveness ratings given

by the Australian group to the ratings from a group in Hong Kong to avoid cultural bias.

Both sample groups were asked to rate the models' attractiveness on a 7 point scale; on average the raters took just 5.35 seconds to rate each model. The team then explored the statistical results, focusing on age, body weight and a range of length and girth measurements.

The results showed that there was a strong level of agreement between the 4 groups of Australian men and women, and Hong Kong men and women, with scans of younger, taller and lighter women being rated as more [attractive](#). Women with narrow waists, especially relative to their height, were also considered much more attractive.

The study also revealed that BMI (Body mass index) and HWR (Hip to waist ratio) were both strong predictors of attractiveness. Scans of taller women who had longer arms were also rated highly, however leg size did not contribute significantly to the ratings.

"Our results showed consistent attractiveness ratings by men and women and by Hong Kong Chinese and Australian raters, suggesting considerable cross cultural consistency," concluded Brooks. "In part this may be due to shared media experiences. Nonetheless when models are stripped of their most obvious racial and cultural features, the features that make bodies attractive tend to be shared by men and women across cultural divides."

Brooks and his colleagues have taken their studies of the complexities of male and female attractiveness online at www.bodylab.biz.

Provided by Wiley

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