

People that think they're more attractive are less likely to offer to pay, according to research

March 22 2011

(PhysOrg.com) -- A new study by the University of St Andrews suggests that good looking women are most likely to sit back and allow their male date to pay.

The [psychologists](#) suspected that attractiveness would play a role in preferences for who should foot the bill for a dinner date.

Psychologist Dr Michael Stirrat explained, “We predicted that [attractive](#) people would show less willingness to pay because people that are more attractive bring more to the table – literally - in the dating market.”

Dr Stirrat and his colleagues were investigating the role of ‘food provisioning’ in humans. Commonly used as part of the courting behaviour in the animal kingdom, in most species it is the male that provides for the female.

The researchers also predicted that [women](#) would prefer to accept food from the best (more attractive) candidates, and would be less willing to obligate themselves to the less attractive ones. Meanwhile they thought that men would prefer to offer food to the more attractive women and hold on to their resources when out with a less attractive woman.

Dr Stirrat continued, “We thought that women would prefer the more attractive males to pay for the meal, hoping that this may indicate that he

was interested in taking the relationship to a second date, and that men would also prefer to signal their interest in this way.”

Hypothetical blind dates were set up and participants were asked how they would prefer the bill to be paid for. About half preferred to split the bill regardless of sex, although more men than women preferred to pay themselves. In line with predictions, both men and women who consider themselves highly attractive were less inclined to pay for the meal on a blind date.

Although, as Dr Stirrat commented, “Men overall reported a much greater willingness to pay for the meal than the women, consistent with social norms in dating. Women almost never indicated that they would pay.”

More information: “The Effect of Attractiveness on Food Sharing Preferences in Human Mating Markets,” is published in *Evolutionary Psychology* and is available online:

www.epjournal.net/filestore/EP097991.pdf

Provided by University of St Andrews

Citation: People that think they're more attractive are less likely to offer to pay, according to research (2011, March 22) retrieved 4 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-03-people-theyre.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--