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“TIME SLOWS DOWN WHENEVER YOU ARE AROUND” FOR WOMEN BUT NOT FOR MEN

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Background: What happens when we unexpectedly see an attractive potential partner? Previous studies in laboratory settings suggest that the visualization of attractive and unattractive photographs influences the perception of time.

Aims: The major aim of this research is to study time perception and attraction in a realistic social scenario, by investigating if changes in subjective time measured during speed dating are associated with attraction.

Method: The duration of the dates was variable and participants had to estimate the time that passed. Among other measures, participants also rated the potential partners in terms of their physical attractiveness before and after the dates and reported if they would like to exchange contact with them.

Preliminary results: Results showed that, in a real speed dating situation, when there is a perception of the partner as being physically more attractive, women tend to overestimate the duration of that meeting, whereas men tend to underestimate its duration. Such changes may reflect evolutionary adaptations which make the human cognitive system more responsive in situations related to reproductive fitness.

Keywords: Speed dating; Attraction; Physical attractiveness; Time perception

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