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Why nice guys finish last

Women consistently rate smiling men as the least attractive, UBC researchers find

By Randy Shore, Vancouver Sun May 25, 2011

Happy, smiling men are consistently rated least attractive by women when compared to proud or brooding men, says a new University of B.C. study.

The finding, published Tuesday in the journal *Emotion*, goes a long way toward explaining the sexual allure of dark characters such as the brooding Twilight vampire Edward Cullen or the tortured and shamed Jim Stark in James Dean's *Rebel Without a Cause*.

The finding lends credence to the idea that women "shop" for genes for their offspring from the most successful males they can find.

"Women are more attracted to men who aren't smiling and who look proud, which could have a genetic basis," said UBC psychologist Jessica Tracy. "It could signal high status, which would be adaptive in terms of mating."

A high-status man is perceived to be better able to protect his offspring, an effect that is consistent across cultures, she said. "But this is the first study to look at how attractive each emotional expression is."

Men who thought they might attract a mate with a happy, friendly picture might want to update their online profiles.

While sexual attractiveness in real life involves much more than looks, said Tracy, "in the world of online dating, many decisions are made based on that single photo."

Tracy and her research partner, graduate student Alec Beall, had 1,000 adults rate the attractiveness of people in photographs displaying either pride, happiness, shame or a neutral expression.

In men, happiness was consistently rated by women as the least attractive expression, while pride was the most sexually attractive. "No women, no matter what their age, found smiling men attractive."

In women, happiness -a likely indicator of good health, good genes and sexual receptiveness -was the most attractive expression to men.

rshore@vancouversun.com

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[Reality bites as Canucks' Burrows cleared, Bruins must grin and bear it](#)

The Vancouver Canucks, up 1-0 in the Stanley Cup Final, evidently decided to zip their lips Thursday about the Alex Burrows biting incident, having escaped the not very long arm of the law, and the Boston Bruins elected to take the high road.

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[Canucks' Malhotra still 'day-to-day,' as team debunks new surgery rumours](#)

It's the Stanley Cup Final, when the playing status of a decapitation victim would be announced as "day-to-day" — so no one was expecting a straight answer today when rumours surfaced that Vancouver Canucks centre Manny Malhotra had undergone emergency surgery Tuesday night to repair a detached retina.

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