Pod Cast Script: Is waist to hip ratio indicative of cognitive abilities?

By Lisa Martens

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Enter inside telus building, walking across pedway

Lisa: Hi Everybody! I'm Lisa and today we're going to take a look at waist to hip ratio and how it affects cognitive abilities. That's right ladies, today we're going to see what your curves say about your intellectual potential.

First let's take a look at what waist to hip ratio actually means. Simply put waist to hip ratio is the ratio between your waist circumference and your hip circumference. With a smaller waist to hip ratio, ideally around 0.7 a women possesses a gynoid shape. This shape is present all over western media

Show Pictures of Hollywood female sex symbols.

Sitting in chair on TELUS looking toward camera

Lisa: Now the Gynoid shape says very little about weight preferences, but it is widely acknowledged that the Gynoid shape itself is cross culturally preferred by men. This preference was tested in a study by p-0[Dixon et al 2010, who looked at male gaze fixation when viewing nude female figures that had been altered to possess varying waist to hip ratios. They were attempting to prove that men fixated more on the waist and hip areas in their evaluations. The study found that within 200ms the men had begun to focus in the women's mid drift, and this area continued to be the main focal point, irrespective of whether the women were viewed from the front or the back. The only difference in viewing angle was that breasts received the first brief glance when viewed from the front. This frontal view discrepancy has been associated with differences across cultures as breast size and other facial cues added more variables to the attractiveness rating. The waist to hip ratio served as an indicator of femininity; hence men are drawn to this feature very quickly in their evaluation of potential mates.

What's the reason for this preference? Evolutionarily the higher waist to hip ratio is indicative of larger fat deposits in the gluteofemoral area which represents a number of advantages in child bearing. Lower waist to hip ratios are indicative of earlier menarche in girls, regular menstrual cycles in women, and regular ovulation in women as mentioned in Dixon et al 2010. The predominant perception of the evolutionary benefits of a small waist to hip ratio has long been that it is a purely physical benefit showing fertility and estrogen production, and therefore women of this shape are rarely portrayed as intellectual. Let's ask a few students what their first impressions are of these ladies.

With picture of Kim Kardashian, ask students in my class what the first word is that comes to mind

Lisa: When you see this picture what's the first word that comes to mind?

Student: Butt, skanky, hot, ect

Lisa: Not so shockingly none of them answered with smart. However a study done in 2009 by Lassek and Gaulin took a different look at the evolutionary potential associated with high gluteofemoral fat deposits, which are a key feature of the gynoid shape. This study found that women with high fat deposits in this area had an increased ability to store fatty acids which were needed for not only their brain development but infant brain developmental as well. Interestingly abdominal fat stores, which decrease waist to hip ratio, were found to have an opposite effect. Though this does point to a physical birthing advantage it also points to a potentially higher cognitive ability. There is also an increased chance of survival for offspring, who would have an increased amount of this fatty acid after birth, and who would therefore also possess greater cognitive abilities.

According to Lassek and Gaulin not only will the children born to mothers with higher gluteofemoral fat deposits have higher IQ's A recent meta-analysis estimates that a child's IQ increases by 0.13 point for every 100-mg increase in daily maternal prenatal intake of DHA. The mothers also confer some advantages and they have been found by Lassek and Gaulin to" have higher cognitive abilities than those with higher WHRs.

Benefits from a low waist to hip ratio were also afforded to teenage mothers, who are considered an at risk pregnant population due to their bodies inability to properly support cognitive development of a foetus as they are still developing themselves. Teenage mothers who had low waist to hip ratios have children with none of the ill-effects associated with the competition for resources which occurs during teen motherhood.

You can see that many advantages are afforded intellectually to women with gynoid shape and a low waist to hip ratio, as well as the fertility benefits which are most often the focus of our attention.

So next time you see a girl walking by with a curvy gynoid shape, take a second to ponder whether you find her attractive just for her curves, or for the intellectual advantage they give her, and her potential offspring.

Butt dancing to "I like big butts" with credits rolling

References

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Pictures provided by

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