Podcast Script

Why men prefer blondes? An evolutionary perspective

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Psyco 403: Topics in Evolutionary Psychology
Introduction: Title “Why men prefer blondes: An evolutionary perspective” appears on a black screen.

Scene 1

Location: Central Academic Building, U of A

Setting: A group of boys sitting at a table and checking out girls at another table.

(Camera focuses on a table where two girls (Katherene and Kami) are sitting).

Katherene: I think those guys are looking at me.

Kami: Yo! (Sigh) You always think guys look at you.

Katherene: Okay looks like they’re coming this way…

(The group of guys wave and Katherene waves back but they (the boys) head to the group of blonde girls sitting at a table right behind Katherene and Kami).

Katherene: What the hell? What is it with men and blondes?

Kami: Ummm, it’s called “men prefer blondes”…

(Kris walks towards the table and interrupts their conversation).

Kris: Hey girls! Looks like you’re having some serious convo here…. and why is this one’s face looking like she just ate sour grapes? (referring to Katherene).

Kami: Well, she was just wondering why men prefer blondes.

(Kris pulls a chair and sits down).

Kris: In the Western world, male preference for blondes is not just a contemporary cultural phenomenon. Studies have shown that men were attracted to blonde-haired women for thousands of years. In fact, the first blonde-haired woman appeared around 15-20 thousand years ago in Europe. Blonde hair usually coexists with fair skin and according to Ramachandran from the University of California, fair skin indicates health and age more clearly than dark skin. I am sure you have learned that males value youth and fertility in potential female mates. Therefore, a female that provides phenotypic cues that indicates her age and health better than other women would be the preferred mate choice for males.
Kami: Okay but I don’t get how being blonde indicates health and age better than other skin colors.

Kris: According to Frost (1989), fair skin is a general indicator of young age. Differences in skin color are generated by active sexual hormones. Young girls and boys have similar skin colors but differences occur at puberty: girls’ skin turn lighter and boys’ skin turn darker.

Katherene: Hmmm, that’s interesting.

Kris: What’s more interesting is that women’s skin is lighter during ovulation than infertile days and is darker while using contraceptive pills and after pregnancy. Therefore, natural blonde-haired women with fair skin may be more attractive to males because their fair skin indicates many biologically important characteristics such as whether they are fertile or not.

(While Kris is talking, Katherene searches for articles relevant to the topic of discussion on her laptop).

Katherene: Check out this article. It says that another reason for the preference for blondes is that the absence of protection from UV radiation by melanin causes the skin of blondes to age faster. I don’t get it. If they age faster, doesn’t that mean they will be less attractive as potential mates?

Kris: Okay, pass me the laptop.

(Katherene passes the laptop to Kris).

Kris: Yes, the skins of blonde women do age faster BUT their fair skin makes dermal signs of aging such as dark age spots and wrinkles easier to detect. A woman’s fertility and offspring viability decreases with age. As such, men prefer blondes because the signs of aging are much easier to detect. This would enable men to predict the age of a woman fairly accurately to ensure that they mate with a young, fertile woman which would in turn increase their reproductive success.

Katherene: That makes a lot more sense now.

Kami: What about the part where you said blondes provide a clearer indication of health…?

Kris: Being blonde means that it is easier to detect diseases such as anemia, jaundice and skin infection. Infestation with intestinal parasites may have been very common in early agricultural settlements and this would have produced severe anemia in the host. The reason I’m focusing on anemia is because it interferes substantially with fertility,
pregnancy and birth of a healthy child. As such, there must have been considerable pressure for early detection of anemia in young nubile women and since fair skin facilitates detection of anemia, males would have shown a preference for blonde women. It’s also easier to detect signs of sexual interest such as social embarrassment and blushing in blondes and this helps men predict whether their courtship gestures will be reciprocated and consummated with greater confidence.

Kami: Okay, all you’ve been talking about is how blondes have fair skin but what about their hair?

Kris: Blonde hair could be interpreted as an honest signal of youth and therefore reproductive fitness. This is because postmenopausal women rarely retain the flaxen locks of their youth. Studies have shown that women with blonde hair are rated by men as being more attractive than females with other hair colors. So, Kathere…you know what to do right?

(Kris pulls out a blonde hair dye and puts it on the table while music plays in the background).

Kami: I guess Kris, I guess.

(Camera zooms in on the blond dye and closing credits appear shortly after).

Scene ends.
References


Mankind Quarterly, 30, 3-16.


Sorokowski, P. (2008). Attractiveness of Blonde Women in Evolutionary Perspective:
Studies with two polish samples. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 106, 737-744.