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Mating Preferences and Attractiveness of Intelligence in Members of a High-IQ Society

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Due to its evolutionary value—significant positive correlations with numerous measures of success, health, and even longevity—, intelligence is among the most highly valued characteristics in potential partners. This is especially true for long-term relationships, and more so for women than for men. Some individuals even consider high intelligence in itself to be sexually attractive, a phenomenon termed “sapiosexuality” in the popular media. Despite the linear relationship between IQ and other positive outcomes, Gignac et al. (2018) identified a curvilinear relationship between attractiveness and potential partner IQ, suggesting an optimal IQ of ~120. In this preregistered replication study, we examined members of the high-IQ society Mensa in Germany (entry criterion: $IQ \geq 130$). Results suggest a shift of the attractiveness peak for the highly intelligent sample towards the right end of the distribution. Expected gender differences and differences in ratings for long- versus short-term partnerships were largely confirmed. Furthermore, we examined what the “ideal partner” for Mensa members looks like.

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