

Dressing Provocatively

By: Nani Jenson

The article claimed that women dress more provocatively during their fertile phase than the other phases of their menstrual cycle

“In addition, the ovulatory cycle contributes to changes in a woman’s motivations to appear attractive, and during the fertile phase, women dress more provocatively”

When discussing ‘the pill’ the article stated that the disruption of a woman's natural cycle could interfere with a continuing mate attraction in a long term relationship when the female starts the pill when already in a relationship

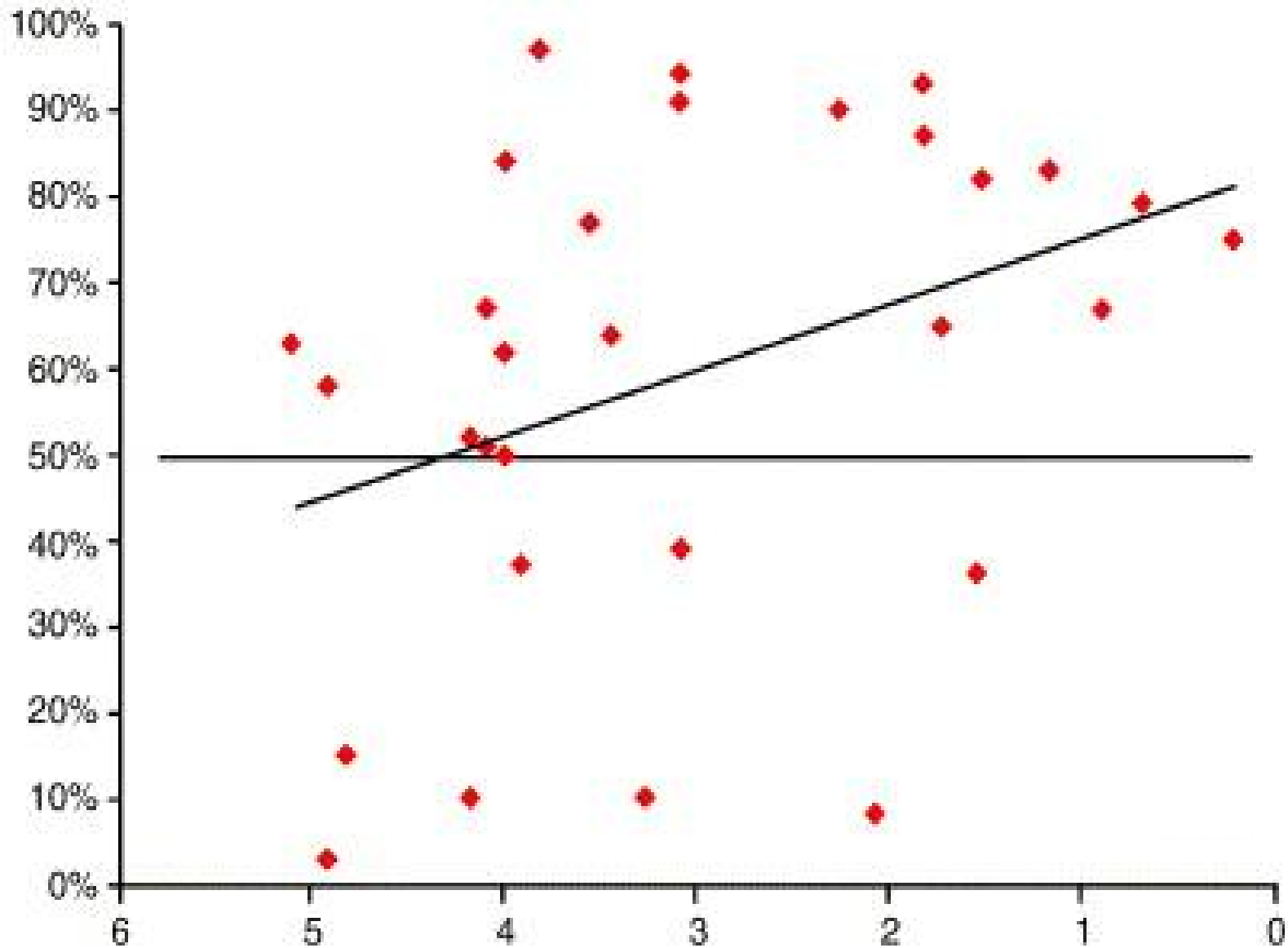
The experiment

In the first experiment 30 women had photographs taken of them at their high and low fertile phases and were then judged on how attractive they looked by 42 judges (17 men, 25 women).

3 sessions: cycle information, High Fertility (15-17 days before menstruation), Low Fertility (4-10 before menstruation days)

They measured the LH hormone

Percent of Judges Choosing High Fertility Photograph



Estimated Days to Ovulation
(Based on Luteinizing Hormone Assay)

Day of Ovulation

The experiment

Besides overall attractiveness there were also categories that split up the way they dressed into different areas organized by three research assistants.

“Alternatively, the effect we have documented might reveal a general desire to look more attractive rather than to appear “sexy.”

Table 1

Differences in women's clothing choices across high and low fertility photographs

Judgment (percent concordance of judges' codes)	High fertility	Low fertility
Wearing "more fashionable clothes" (70%)	18	8
Wearing "nicer clothes" (77%)	17	8
Showing more skin (upper body) (77%)	11	6
Showing more skin (lower body) (93%)	7	5
Wearing "sexier clothes" (70%)	6	7
Wearing more "accessories" (63%)	6	7
Wearing a skirt in one session but not other (100%)	3	0
Wearing a lacy top (80%)	3	1

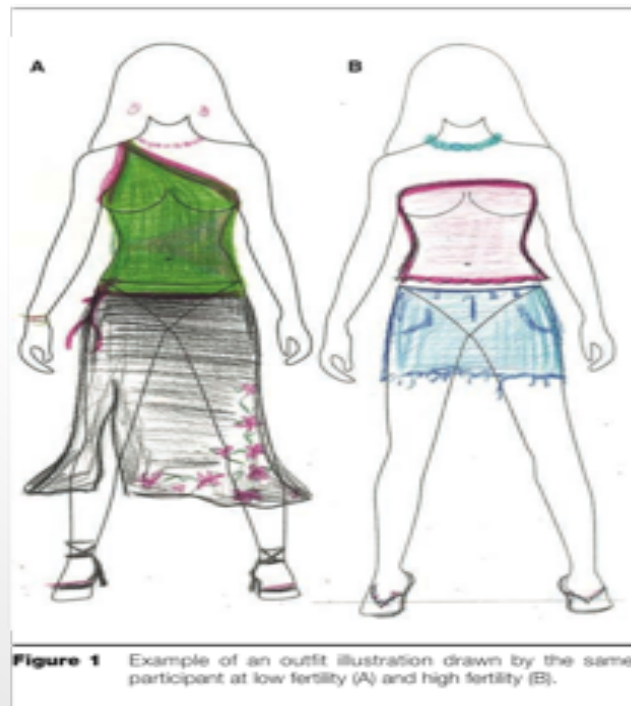
second experiment (Durante)

- 88 women had photographs taken of them on high and low fertility days(they were judged by 69 people, (22 male, 47 female)
- Created a drawing of an outfit they would wear to a social gathering.

“Secondary coding of differences between the photographs indicated that the high-fertility photographs tended to feature women dressed “more fashionably” rather than more revealingly or sexy.”

Drawings women made about what they would wear to social gathering.

A is when women are at the low fertility point in their cycle and B is at her high fertility point



My thoughts

- 1.) The word provocative did seem too bold
- 2.) Pants to skirt
- 3.) Drawing does not mean dressing
- 4.) Both studies used for the feature article involved the same experimenter (Haselton)

Other studies

I could find no other studies than the two that were mentioned in this article. Although both of these experiments have been mentioned multiple times there weren't any other experiments that mentioned ovulation and how it is related to the way a woman dresses.

Take home message

It does seem that a woman's cycle has an effect on the way she dresses and that in her more fertile phase she may dress more attractively, but not necessarily more provocatively. This may be to attract new mates, keep the same mate and thus increase her chance to reproduce while she is at her most fertile point and will have the highest chance to become pregnant.