

Project title: Understanding the link between mating and obesity: Cross-cultural perspectives and comparisons

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Proposal (250 words):

Introduction: The link between mating and obesity has received little attention, both in Europe and in China, nor how individuals in urban versus rural areas differ. In China 23.5 million single men (often of lower socio-economic status) seek to marry by 2020. Never-married men have lower overall well-being, and are a vulnerable group in societies with a marriage norm. At the same time, many countries have experienced a transition from malnutrition to an increase in overweight and obesity: In China, a 10.3 fold increase in obesity was observed in (rural) men aged 35–44 between 1991-2011 (Ning et al., 2014). Additionally, both obesity and feeling 'left over' are considered risk factors for mental health (e.g. depression, suicidal thoughts, self-stigmatization, negative body image). How does obesity affect (self-) perceptions of one's chances on the 'mating market' and vice versa?

Objectives: The main aim is to understand, using a cross-cultural perspective, how (skewed) sex ratios affect obesity rates in men, their perceptions as desirable bachelors, and their psychological well-being. Sub goals are: 1) Understanding cultural and geographic differences (the Netherlands, and rural/urban China) related to obesity, mating, and psychological well-being. 2) Understanding how singlehood affects obesity (risk) and psychological well-being, and vice versa.

Setting and Methods: Cross-cultural, mixed methods (qualitative, experimental, survey) research.

Impact: At the end of this project, we have a comprehensive overview of the influence of cultural differences and sex ratios on single, 'surplus' men, as well as their risk for obesity, self-perceptions, and physical and psychological well-being.

Requirements candidate: Highly motivated student with excellent English communication skills and proactive and resolute attitude.

Keywords: obesity, evolutionary psychology, mating, cross-culture

Top 5 selected publications:

1. Bartholomew-Eldredge, L. K., Markham, C. M., Ruiter, R. A., Kok, G., & Parcel, G. S. (2016). *Planning health promotion programs: an intervention mapping approach*. John Wiley & Sons. (cited 1874 times).
2. Baams, L., Bos, H., & Jonas, K. J. (2014). How a romantic relationship can protect same-sex attracted youth from the impact of expected rejection. *Journal of Adolescence*, 37, 1293-1302. (cited 8 times).
3. Ten Hoor, G. A., Kok, G., Peters, G. J. Y., Frissen, T., Schols, A. M., & Plasqui, G. (2017). The psychological effects of strength exercises in people who are overweight or obese: A systematic review. *Sports Medicine*, 47(10), 2069-2081.
4. Massar, K., & Buunk, A. P. (2010). Judging a book by its cover: Jealousy after subliminal priming with attractive and unattractive faces. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 49(6), 634-638. (cited 52 times)
5. Jansen, A., Schyns, G., Bongers, P., & van den Akker, K. (2016). From lab to clinic: Extinction of cued cravings to reduce overeating. *Physiology and Behavior*, 162, 174-180. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physbeh.2016.03.018> (cited 13 times).