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Women with high levels of a key sex hormone are not only attractive to themselves and others, but are also more likely to engage in serious affairs, said a study published online in the British journal Biology Letters.

Such affairs are unlikely to be short-term flings, as they seem to be linked to mating strategy.

Oestradiol, a form of oestrogen, has been linked to fertility and physical traits such as attractive facial features, fuller breasts and a low waist-to-hip ratio. This study also found that women with high oestradiol levels did not report being more open to sex in general, did not have more sexual partners and were not more predisposed to casual sex.

Dr Li suggests that the results indicate a link to a long-term mating strategy known as "sexual potential" – or a willingness to "trade up" one's partner.

As women with higher oestradiol levels are considered to have "higher mate value", they may be less committed to their partners, given the number of higher-quality potential mates seeking them – and tempting them into a serious affair.

While being aesthetically pleasing and socially successful gets your foot in the door, a long-term relationship needs more than that. All this may sound rather primitive but it is true: some men are more than willing to trade up their partner.

While women did not evaluate their mates based on their looks, they did report lower commitment to their partners after reading or hearing about socially successful or dominant men. Dr Li said the key is to identify the cues that people are attracted to. For example, if you are attracted to someone's intelligence, here are a few things to look out for:

1. They have a strong desire to learn and grow.
2. They are good at solving problems.
3. They are good at communicating.

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