**A relationship between attractiveness and performance in professional cyclists**

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By [Erik Postma](http://rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org/search?author1=Erik+Postma&sortspec=date&submit=Submit)⇑

*Institute of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 190, 8057 Zürich, Switzerland*

**Abstract**

Females often prefer to mate with high quality males, and one aspect of quality is physical performance. Although a preference for physically fitter males is therefore predicted, the relationship between attractiveness and performance has rarely been quantified. Here, I test for such a relationship in humans and ask whether variation in (endurance) performance is associated with variation in facial attractiveness within elite professional cyclists that finished the 2012 Tour de France. I show that riders that performed better were more attractive, and that this preference was strongest in women not using a hormonal contraceptive. Thereby, I show that, within this preselected but relatively homogeneous sample of the male population, facial attractiveness signals endurance performance. Provided that there is a relationship between performance-mediated attractiveness and reproductive success, this suggests that human endurance capacity has been subject to sexual selection in our evolutionary past.