

## Another scientific proof of the difference in social perception between men and women

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"The Love Hormone", Oxytocin affects men and women differently in social contexts- in men it improves the ability to identify competitive relationships whereas in women it facilitates the ability to identify kinship. "These findings are in agreement with previous studies on the social differences between the sexes: women tend to be more communal and familial in their behavior, whereas men are more inclined to be competitive and striving to improve their social status", said Prof. Simone Shamay-Tsoory from the Dept. of Psychology at the University of Haifa who led the research.

The hormone Oxytocin is released in our bodies in various [social situations](#), and it is better known as "The Love Hormone" since our bodies release it at high concentrations during positive social interactions such as falling in love, experiencing an orgasm or [giving birth](#) and breastfeeding. In her previous researches, Prof. Shamay-Tsoory discovered that the hormone is also released in our body during negative social interactions such as jealousy or gloating.

In the current study, conducted with the help of research students Meytal Fischer-Shofty and Yechiel Levkovitz, researchers tried to find out what effect Oxytocin would have on women's and men's accurate perception of social interactions. 62 men and women aged 20-37 years participated in the current research. Half of the participants received an intranasal dose of Oxytocin while the other half received a placebo. After a week, the groups switched with participants undergoing the same procedure with the other substance (i.e. Placebo or Oxytocin).

Following treatment, video clips showing various social interactions were screened. Participants were asked to analyze the relationships presented in the clips by answering questions that focused mainly on indentifying relationships of kinship, intimacy and competition. Participants were expected to base their answers, among other things, on gestures, [body language](#) and [facial expressions](#) expressed by the individuals in the clips.

The results showed that Oxytocin improved the ability of all the participants to better interpret social interactions in general. When the researchers examined the differences between the sexes they discovered that following treatment with Oxytocin, men's ability to correctly interpret competitive relationships improved, whereas in women it was the ability to correctly identify [kinship](#) that improved. Surprisingly, researchers discovered that "The Love

Hormone" doesn't help women or men to better identify intimate situations. According to them, since the ability to correctly identify intimate situations was substantially low among all participants in the study, there is evidence to say that correctly identifying an intimate relationship between two people is intricate and complicated.

"Our results coincide with the theory that claims the social-behavioral differences between men and women are caused by a combination of cultural as well as biological factors that are mainly hormonal", concluded Prof. Shamay-Tsoory.

Provided by University of Haifa

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