

Hot stuff: Do human pheromones really exist?

Some companies, such as the Athena Institute, which, according to its founder, [Winnifred Cutler](#), published its 108th consecutive ad in The Atlantic this month, assert that scientific studies back up their claims [that human pheromones exist].

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[P]heromones are broadly defined as chemical signals released by an animal that induce specific effects on other members of the same species. Although these substances are typically associated with sexual attraction, researchers have found they can have a broader range of influence, such as prompting aggression or modifying parental behaviors.

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[T]he presence of such molecules in humans remains controversial. “I still have an open mind about whether human pheromones exist,” says [Ron Yu](#), an investigator at the Stowers Institute for Medical Research who studies rodent pheromones. “But I just don’t find any of the published studies convincing enough.”

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[Athena Institute’s] formulations, which Cutler says are synthesized copies of chemical substances isolated from armpit extracts, were tested in three published, double-blind, placebo-controlled investigations.

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All three papers reported that individuals who received the pheromone formulation reported increased frequencies of sexual behaviors, including kissing, formal dates, and sexual intercourse.

[I]ssues associated with these studies, according to Yu, are the relatively small sample sizes and their reliance on self-reported behaviors. As a result, he says, “I don’t think [these studies] are powerful enough to draw a solid solution.”

Read full, original post: [Do Human Pheromones Exist?](#)