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WEDNESDAY, March 20 (HealthScoutNews) -- Forget baking him those cinnamon buns, and toss out t designer heels.

New research claims that what really turns a man on is a synthetic version of pheromones, natural biocl women normally secrete during their most fertile times.

In a study appearing today in the journal *Physiology and Behavior*, researchers from San Francisco State have published what they say is the first study to independently test the power of a synthetic pheromone men.

"We were able to show that a synthetic pheromone compound can affect a man's romantic behavior towa woman, increasing his desire for a more intimate connection," says study co-author Norma McCoy, a prc psychiatry at San Francisco State University.

While the concept may sound a little "new age-y," McCoy says it's really rooted in the most basic of hun animal instincts -- the drive to reproduce.

When a woman is fertile, she secretes pheromones, odorless biochemicals that are processed through sen a man's nose. From there, researchers theorize, signals are sent to his brain, which in turn signals his bod urge to "reproduce."

"He then automatically responds with romantic behavior, the end result of which is to have an intimate relationship," says McCoy.

McCoy's study found that much the same scenario occurs with the use of a synthetic pheromone, an idea therapist and researcher Michael Perelman finds exciting.

"I think that the more that we understand physiological causes of sexual behavior, the greater the opportu sex therapists to integrate that into the counseling that we do, to be able to further improve people's sexu: says Perelman, co-director of the Human Sexuality Program at The New York-Presbyterian Hospital We

Medical Center.

While he believes clinical application of this new data may be limited now, "it does portend a future where compounds, both pharmaceutical and otherwise, are likely to be available to us, to assist our patients with sexual health."

In McCoy's research, the women tested how well synthetic pheromones work in a "normal" social situation. A 14-week study recruited 36 women between the ages of 19 and 48, who identified themselves as white, Black, Latino, Portuguese, Chinese, Brazilian ([news](#) - [web sites](#)), Native American, Mexican, Japanese, Jewish or Hispanic.

For the first two weeks, they each kept a daily "baseline" diary, detailing their number of experiences with each of the following categories: petting/affection/kissing; sleeping next to a romantic partner; sexual intercourse on formal dates; informal dates; the number of times a man approached her; and frequency of masturbation.

The women were then asked to blindly choose one vial of liquid from a group of identical containers, half of which contained a synthetic pheromone compound and the other half a placebo solution. The women were told to use the vial to 2 ounces of their favorite perfume, and apply two to three dabs of the fragrance under their nose, on their cheeks and behind their ears at least once every other day.

The women, none of whom knew if they had the pheromone solution or the placebo, used the mixture over consecutive months, during which time they continually recorded their encounters with men, using the same categories.

After three months, researchers "broke the study code" to discover which 19 women were using the pheromone solution, and which 17 were using the placebo. McCoy's group then tallied the individual results entered in their diaries, both before and after the women used the fragrance compound.

What they found: A whopping 74 percent of the women in the pheromone group saw an increase in three or more of the following activities: frequency of kissing, heavy petting and affection; sexual intercourse; sleeping with their partner; and formal dates with men. By comparison, only 23 percent of those using the placebo solution recorded any significant change.

McCoy says there appeared to be no significant difference between the groups when it came to informal dates, the number of times they were approached by men, or their frequency of masturbation.

"The only area that seemed to be affected by the pheromones," says McCoy, "were intimate behaviors with a partner." The behavioral changes began during the first month, and intensified over the next two months.

While McCoy says a number of commercial fragrances claim to contain pheromones, she says it's important to note that her research has nothing to do with the pleasures of perfume, or how a woman smells.

## What To Do

To learn more about pheromones, visit the [Ludwig-Boltzmann Institute for Urban Ethology](#). You can also learn more by reading this story from [CNN](#).

To discover more about the science of sexual attraction, visit this [Emory University](#) site.

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