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Men's Revealed Preference for Their Mates' Ages

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**Abstract**

Both young and old men say that they are sexually attracted to young, fertile women, but older men tend to marry older women, including those who are peri- and post-menopausal. We assessed men's freely revealed preference for their mates' age using an unusual marriage phenomenon in South Korea: the practice in which men purchase their brides from developing countries. Presumably, the men's mate choice, at least regarding the brides' age, is unrestricted by women. We analyzed all first marriages reported in 2010–2014 in South Korea and compared men who married Korean brides ( $N=1,088,457$ ) with those who purchased their brides ( $N=45,528$ ); the age range of grooms and brides was 15–59. While the former exhibited the typical pattern where older men married older women, the latter, whether young or old, always married young, fertile women. This finding is consistent with men's stated preference for young, fertile women in mating and suggests that the typical pattern is generated by women's limiting role in mating.

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