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DNA matchmaking for better sex

A couple of genetic testing companies are promising to match couples based on DNA, touting the benefits of biological compatibility.

The companies claim that a better biological match will mean better sex, less cheating, longer-lasting love and perhaps even healthier children.

"How many dating services can you think of where they can suggest you might have better children?" said Eric Holzle, founder of ScientificMatch.com, one of the first online dating sites to use DNA.

Mr Holzle would not reveal membership numbers, but GenePartner, a Swiss company that works with matchmakers and dating sites, has tested more than 1,000 people, according to chief scientific officer Tamara Brown. Some were already in a couple and took the test out of curiosity.

The GenePartner Test is 99 dollars (£59.20), and will be offered at the dating site sense2love.com when it relaunches next month.

The idea is that people tend to be attracted to those who have immune system genes that are dissimilar from their own.

Biologists say the HLA genes of the immune system - which are responsible for recognising and marking foreign cells such as viruses so other parts of the immune system can attack them - also determine body odour "fingerprints". And people tend to be attracted to the natural body odours of those who have different HLA genes from their own.

In one study, Swiss biologist Claus Wedekind found that women who were not taking hormonal contraception preferred the natural scent of men whose immune systems were the most different from theirs.

But don't put too much faith in this, experts said.

Dr Rocio Moran, medical director of the General Genetics Clinic at the Cleveland Clinic, called the idea "ridiculous", and said the science of attraction is too complex to look at only a few genes.

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