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Old people smell nicer than young people

3rd June, 2012

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1206/120603-body_ouour.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120603-body_ odour.html

“Old-person smell” is for real, according to a new study into body odour. And what’s more, it’s not as bad as the smell of younger people. Researchers at the Monell Chemical Senses Centre in the USA tested people’s perceptions of the body odour emitted by people aged 20 to 30, 45 to 55, and 77 to 95. Volunteers in each age group wore a T-shirt containing underarm pads to bed for five nights. Samples from the pads were then tested on 41 “sniffers,” who had the task of evaluating each armpit smell. The evaluators were able to distinguish between the different age groups and said the smell from the older age group was less intense and less unpleasant than the others.

The study is part of wider research into how our brain interprets different human smells and how we react to them. Lead researcher Dr Johan Lundstrom said: “Similar to other animals, humans can extract signals from body odours that allow us to identify biological age, avoid sick individuals, pick a suitable partner, and distinguish kin from non-kin.” He said of his test results: “Elderly people have a discernible underarm odour that younger people consider to be fairly neutral and not very unpleasant. This was surprising given the popular conception of old age odour as disagreeable.” He said other bodily smells other than B.O. might also differ with age, especially that of our breath.

WARM-UPS

1. BODY ODOUR: Walk around the class and talk to other students about body odour. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

smells / body odour / perceptions / volunteers / evaluate / age groups / unpleasant / wider research / sick individuals / suitable partner / elderly people / popular / breath

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. OLD & YOUNG PEOPLE: How are they different? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

| | Young people | Old people |
|----------|--------------|------------|
| Manners | | |
| Driving | | |
| Memory | | |
| Fashion | | |
| Learning | | |
| Humour | | |

4. B.O.: Students A **strongly** believe B.O. is the worst smell in the world; Students B **strongly** believe it isn't so bad. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. SMELLS: Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best smells at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- cheesy feet
- garlic breath
- B.O.
- dirty toilets
- cheap perfume
- gasoline
- cow poo
- garbage

6. SMELL: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'smell'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120603-body_ odour.html

1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A study says older people are better at smelling than younger people. | T / F |
| b. Volunteers smelled pads that had been under armpits for five nights. | T / F |
| c. The volunteers found a difference in smell according to age groups. | T / F |
| d. The "sniffers" said young people had a worse smell than old people. | T / F |
| e. The research was part of a bigger study into how we react to smells. | T / F |
| f. The article says humans can sense a person's age from their smell. | T / F |
| g. Younger people think the smell of old people isn't too bad. | T / F |
| h. The writer said other bodily smells do not change with age. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. according to | a. released |
| 2. perceptions | b. fitting |
| 3. emitted | c. powerful |
| 4. evaluating | d. comprehends |
| 5. intense | e. impressions |
| 6. interprets | f. respond |
| 7. react | g. as claimed by |
| 8. suitable | h. nasty |
| 9. neutral | i. judging |
| 10. disagreeable | j. ordinary |

3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. "Old-person smell" is | a. were then tested |
| 2. people's | b. different human smells |
| 3. Samples from the pads | c. was less intense |
| 4. distinguish between the different | d. with age |
| 5. the smell from the older age group | e. results |
| 6. how our brain interprets | f. for real |
| 7. biological | g. smells |
| 8. test | h. perceptions |
| 9. bodily | i. age groups |
| 10. differ | j. age |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120603-body_odour.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

“Old-person smell” is for (1) _____, according to a new study into body odour. And what’s (2) _____, it’s not as bad as the smell of younger people. Researchers at the Monell Chemical Senses Centre in the USA (3) _____ people’s perceptions of the body odour emitted by people aged 20 to 30, 45 to 55, and 77 to 95. Volunteers in (4) _____ age group wore a T-shirt containing underarm pads to bed for five nights. (5) _____ from the pads were then tested on 41 “sniffers,” who had the (6) _____ of evaluating each armpit smell. The evaluators were able to (7) _____ between the different age groups and said the smell from the older age group was less (8) _____ and less unpleasant than the others.

each
distinguish
real
task
samples
more
intense
tested

The study is part of (9) _____ research into how our brain interprets different human smells and how we (10) _____ to them. Lead researcher Dr Johan Lundstrom said: “Similar to other animals, humans can (11) _____ signals from body odours that allow us to identify biological age, (12) _____ sick individuals, pick a (13) _____ partner, and distinguish kin from non-kin.” He said of his test results: “Elderly people have a discernible underarm odour that younger people consider to be (14) _____ neutral and not very unpleasant. This was surprising given the (15) _____ conception of old age odour as disagreeable.” He said other bodily smells other than B.O. might also differ with age, especially that of our (16) _____.

avoid
popular
react
extract
fairly
wider
breath
suitable

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120603-body_ odour.html

“Old-person smell” is for real, according to a new study _____ . And what’s more, it’s not as bad as the smell of younger people. Researchers at the Monell Chemical Senses Centre in the USA tested _____ of the body odour emitted by people aged 20 to 30, 45 to 55, and 77 to 95. Volunteers in each age group wore a T-shirt containing _____ bed for five nights. Samples from the pads were then tested _____,” who had the task of evaluating _____. The evaluators were able to distinguish between the different age groups and said the smell from the older age group _____ and less unpleasant than the others.

The study is part _____ into how our brain interprets different human smells and _____ to them. Lead researcher Dr Johan Lundstrom said: “Similar to other animals, humans can extract signals from body odours that _____ biological age, avoid sick individuals, pick a suitable partner, _____ from non-kin.” He said of his test results: “Elderly people have a discernible underarm odour that younger people consider to _____ and not very unpleasant. This was surprising given the popular conception of old age odour as disagreeable.” He said other bodily smells other than B.O. might _____, especially that of our breath.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120603-body_odour.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'body' and 'odour'.

| body | odour |
|-------------|--------------|
| | |

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• real• tested• each• pads• task• others | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• react• signals• sick• consider• popular• breath |
|---|--|

BODY ODOUR SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120603-body_ odour.html

Write five GOOD questions about body odour in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

| | STUDENT 1 _____ | STUDENT 2 _____ | STUDENT 3 _____ |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Q.1. | | | |
| Q.2. | | | |
| Q.3. | | | |
| Q.4. | | | |
| Q.5. | | | |

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

BODY ODOUR DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'body odour'?
- c) Do you ever worry whether or not you smell?
- d) What do you think of "old-person smell"?
- e) What do you think of the research in this article?
- f) Would you volunteer to be a "sniffer"?
- g) Why do some people have bad B.O. and others don't?
- h) Have you ever moved away from someone because of their body odour?
- i) Would you tell your best friend if he or she smelt really bad?
- j) Why do you think it is the smell of our body changes as we get older?

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BODY ODOUR DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) How important is our sense of smell?
- c) Do you think we rarely use this sense nowadays?
- d) Do you learn anything about others from their smell(s)?
- e) What would you do if you were in a crowded meeting all day and you overheard someone say you had terrible B.O.?
- f) Is the smell of some perfume worse than the smell of body odour?
- g) What would you do if the person you were sitting next to on a 12-hour flight that was full had seriously bad B.O.?
- h) What do you think of the smell of babies?
- i) Which is worse, B.O. or bad breath?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the body odour researchers?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

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The study is part of wider research (7) _____ how our brain interprets different human smells and how we react to them. Lead researcher Dr Johan Lundstrom said: “Similar to other animals, humans can (8) _____ signals from body odours that allow us to identify biological age, avoid sick individuals, pick a (9) _____ partner, and distinguish kin from non-kin.” He said of his test results: “Elderly people have a discernible underarm odour that younger people (10) _____ to be fairly neutral and not very unpleasant. This was surprising (11) _____ the popular conception of old age odour as disagreeable.” He said other bodily smells other than B.O. might also (12) _____ with age, especially that of our breath.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) really | (b) real time | (c) reality | (d) real |
| 2. | (a) most | (b) many | (c) more | (d) much |
| 3. | (a) perspiration | (b) perceptions | (c) persimmon | (d) perchance |
| 4. | (a) pads | (b) pats | (c) bats | (d) buds |
| 5. | (a) of | (b) to | (c) on | (d) as |
| 6. | (a) upon | (b) upcoming | (c) over | (d) between |
| 7. | (a) up | (b) into | (c) onto | (d) by |
| 8. | (a) extract | (b) exact | (c) react | (d) extradite |
| 9. | (a) ample | (b) suitable | (c) tenable | (d) sizeable |
| 10. | (a) care | (b) review | (c) consider | (d) ponder |
| 11. | (a) given | (b) taken | (c) broken | (d) mistaken |
| 12. | (a) rotter | (b) splatter | (c) offer | (d) differ |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about body odour. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. BODY ODOUR: Make a poster about body odour. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. SMELLS: Write a magazine article about smells. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a body odour expert. Ask him/her three questions about body odour. Give him/her three of your opinions on it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. F e. T f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. according to | a. as claimed by |
| 2. perceptions | b. impressions |
| 3. emitted | c. released |
| 4. evaluating | d. judging |
| 5. intense | e. powerful |
| 6. interprets | f. comprehends |
| 7. react | g. respond |
| 8. suitable | h. fitting |
| 9. neutral | i. ordinary |
| 10. disagreeable | j. nasty |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. "Old-person smell" is | a. for real |
| 2. people's | b. perceptions |
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| 4. distinguish between the different | d. age groups |
| 5. the smell from the older age group | e. was less intense |
| 6. how our brain interprets | f. different human smells |
| 7. biological | g. age |
| 8. test | h. results |
| 9. bodily | i. smells |
| 10. differ | j. with age |

GAP FILL:

Old people smell nicer than young people

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LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - c 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - d 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - c 11 - a 12 - d