

Men and women really DO see things differently: Our brains process colours in different ways

By [Fiona Macrae](#)

It will come as no surprise to any woman who has despaired over her husband's choice of clothes: The sexes see colours differently.

Research has shown that male and female brains process colours in slightly different ways.

This means that if both sexes look at an orange, it will appear redder to the man than to the woman. Similarly, grass looks yellower to a man and greener to a woman. The differences don't end there.

New research has shown men and women see colours differently, as their brains process them in different ways

The experiments from the City University of New York also showed that men struggle to distinguish subtle differences in shades of yellow, green and blue.

The effect is very small but it might mean that choosing a shade of paint from the dozens on a colour chart is a job best suited to a woman.

The intriguing findings come from experiments in which men and women were shown flashes of light and asked to name the colours they saw.

All had normal vision and none were colour blind, a trait that is known to be much more common in men than in women.

Researcher Professor Israel Abramov said that differences between the sexes' colour vision cannot be explained by differences in the structure of the eye.

'What do you mean its purple? Its clearly pink.' Maybe there is a scientific reason why men aren't always the most helpful shopping companions

Therefore, the answer must lie in the way the brain, with the male sex hormone testosterone likely affecting how it processes and makes sense of the information taken in by the eye.

The professor, who described the sex differences as 'small but very real' said: 'We hypothesise that testosterone plays a major role, somehow leading to different connectivities for males and females.'

He is unsure, however, how big an impact the differences have outside the lab and in the real world.

Vision is far from the only sense to differ between the sexes.

The journal *Biology of Sex Differences* says that research has shown women to have a better hearing and more acute senses of taste and smell.

Men, however, do come out top in one regard.

Experiments show them to be particularly good at detecting fine detail in moving images - a trait that might have made our male ancestors good hunters.

In the modern world, it might be particularly useful when watching football on TV.