

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Height and 2D:4D Within and Between Ethnic Groups: Reply to Hurd and van Anders (2007)

John C. Loehlin · Dennis McFadden ·  
Sarah E. Medland · Nicholas G. Martin

Published online: 17 February 2007  
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2007

We found the discussion of latitude and digit ratios by Hurd and van Anders (2007) most interesting, and their finding of a strong negative correlation between average heights and digit ratios across ethnic groups (their Fig. 2) quite provocative. We heartily endorse their call for further research on the topic. Those thinking about this matter might wish to keep in mind that height and digit ratio do not appear to be correlated for individuals *within* populations. Lippa (2003) reported correlations between the 2D:4D ratio and self-reported height in his California sample as .03 for right hands and .01 for left hands for 299 males, and .11 in both cases for 414 females.

In response to the Hurd and van Anders note, we have calculated the correlations between height (measured at age 12) and 2D:4D (measured at various ages) for both right and left hands for the Australian sample described in our article (Loehlin, McFadden, Medland, & Martin, 2006). This was a sample primarily of Caucasian—mostly British—ancestry.

The correlations for right and left hands were  $-.02$  and  $.06$ , respectively, for 575 males, and  $-.04$  and  $-.02$  for 624 females—non-significantly different from zero. A unified explanation of ethnic group differences, sex differences, and individual differences promises to be challenging indeed.

### References

- Hurd, P. L., & van Anders, S. M. (2007). Latitude, digit ratios, and Allen's and Bergmann's rules: A comment on Loehlin, McFadden, Medland, and Martin (2006) [Letter-to-the-Editor]. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 36, doi: 10.1007/s10508-006-9149-9.
- Lippa, R. A. (2003). Are 2D:4D finger-length ratios related to sexual orientation? Yes for men, no for women. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 179–188.
- Loehlin, J. C., McFadden, D., Medland, S. E., & Martin, N. G. (2006). Population differences in finger-length ratios: Ethnicity or latitude? *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 35, 739–742.

---

J. C. Loehlin (✉) · D. McFadden  
Department of Psychology, University of Texas at Austin,  
Austin, Texas 78712-0187, USA  
e-mail: loehlin@psy.utexas.edu

S. E. Medland  
Genetic Epidemiology, Queensland Institute of Medical Research,  
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

S. E. Medland  
Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics,  
Virginia Commonwealth University,  
Richmond, Virginia, USA

N. G. Martin  
Queensland Institute of Medical Research,  
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia