



Male baboons show higher levels of aggression towards fertile females. Stella Diamant

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Baboons use intimidation to win females

Aggressive mating practices, previously seen only in humans and chimps, may be more widespread.

Male use of aggression to coerce females into sex may be more widespread than previously thought.

Sexual intimidation, whereby male aggression improves mating success days or weeks later, has until now been documented only in humans and chimpanzees. Alice Baniel at the Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse, France, and her colleagues found that wild male chacma baboons (*Papio ursinus*) in Tsaobis Nature Park in Namibia were more aggressive towards fertile females than they were towards females that were pregnant or nursing offspring. Males were responsible for 78% of injuries to female baboons. The more aggression a female received from a given male during her receptive period, the more likely the pair

were to mate during her next ovulation. But there was no link between overall male violence and mating.

The authors suggest that sexual intimidation may have been overlooked in primates because of the delay between the act of aggression and its benefit to the male.

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