

POSTER

INFLUENCE OF AGGRESSION IN FEMALE JAPANESE MACAQUES' (*MACACA FUSCATA*) PARTNER PREFERENCE DURING THE LATE MATING SEASON

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ABSTRACT

When female Japanese macaques (*Macaca fuscata*) reach sexual maturity, they engage in a wide range of sexual behaviors with partners of both the same and opposite sex. Observations of homosexual consortships reveal no clear social benefit but point toward immediate sexual gratification through genital stimulation. These behaviors suggest a sexual preference for female partners, even when male options are available. This preference could also result from a lack of interest in—and from—male partners. During the mating season, increased testosterone and competition among males lead to heightened aggression and risk of injury for both sexes. Young females, being smaller and less experienced, may be especially vulnerable to male aggression. According to the safer-sex hypothesis, adolescent females may avoid males and instead seek female partners, to reduce the risk of aggression. Yet, little is known about third-party aggression toward different consort types. Due to reproductive competition, males often aggressively interrupt heterosexual consortships. Whether female pairs experience less aggression from bystanders and partners remains unclear. We investigated this question in the semi-free-ranging Japanese macaque population at the Affenberg Research Station in Landskron, Austria. Using focal, behavioral, and scan sampling, we recorded both heterosexual and homosexual consortships to document third-party aggression and partner behavior. Based on these data, we aim to compare the frequency of aggressive interruptions, as well as the aggressive behaviors displayed and received by females involved in different types of consortships.