

POSTER

## **SELF-LOVE, HELPING HANDS AND MOVING TAILS: MASTURBATION AND PARTNER STIMULATION IN JAPANESE MACAQUES (*MACACA FUSCATA*)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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Non-conceptive sexual behaviors in non-human primates offer important insights into the complexity of social and sexual strategies beyond reproduction. This study contributes to the growing body of research on the non-reproductive functions of sexual behavior in primates, including social bonding, stress reduction and pleasure. It investigates self and partner directed sexual stimulation, particularly masturbation and partner genital stimulation in semi-free-ranging Japanese macaques (*Macaca fuscata*). It reports two previously undescribed sexual behaviors: (1) manual genital stimulation of a male by a female, and (2) tail-assisted genital stimulation of females by males during female-male mounting. The study also categorizes male and female masturbation in different social contexts.

Behavioral observations were conducted at Affenberg Landskron (Austria) between September 2024 and January 2025 using focal animal sampling and ad libitum methods. Over 4,600 minutes of focal observations on temporary sexual relationships, called consortships, were recorded. Additionally, group-wide scans were conducted to record sexual activity on group level. These scans resulted in 1,147 documented events involving 122 different consort pairs.

Manual genital stimulation by a female partner was observed only once. This rare event highlights not only the uniqueness of the behavior but also how much may remain undocumented in primate sexual behavior. It suggests that sexual behavior is highly individual and more diverse than previously assumed. The findings also underline the importance of recognizing female sexual agency and behavioral variability. This work broadens our understanding of Japanese macaque sexuality and offers comparative insights into the evolution of human sociosexual behavior.