

Ancient battle of sexes explains promiscuity, good parenting

Making babies is one of the fundamental conflicts of interest between the sexes. Care by either partner is beneficial to both partners as it increases the health and survival prospects of the common young, while providing care is costly only to the caring individual. As a result, each partner does best in a situation where most of the care is provided by the other partner—an outcome that is clearly impossible.

Small initial differences which predispose one sex to care more are exaggerated once the ability to care evolves and as a result, one sex evolves attributes – such as mammary glands in female mammals or increased brain size in some fish – that enhance the ability to care. Then this sex does most or all of the care. Patterns of parenting in nature range from care by one parent only (seen in many mammals), to male/female biased care, to care by both parents (seen in many birds).

Differences in care can be explained by differences in the costs and benefits of caring with two factors currently considered to be the key drivers: certainty of parentage (which decreases the benefit of care for the less certain sex – usually the male) and sexual selection (which increases the cost of care for the sex that can mate again faster).

Read full, original article: [Child Rearing Is Unequal Between The Sexes – And That Is Due To Evolution](#)