

Fruit fly's enormous sperm appears to defy biology

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In 1995, Scott Pitnick realized that males of the tiny fruit fly *Drosophila bifurca* produce gargantuan sperm cells that are 6 centimeters or 2.4 inches long. That's 20 times longer than the fly itself, and a thousand times longer than the average human sperm. If a man produced sperm that big, it would stretch diagonally across a basketball court.

The megasperm seemed to contradict what we knew about how evolution governs the reproductive traits of animals. Sperm are meant to be small cells that male animals can produce in large numbers with little effort. They should be tiny, disposable, and numerous. So why did these particular flies evolve sperm that break all the rules.

Pitnick has spent the last 21 years trying to answer that question. He has come to see the megasperm not just as instruments of reproduction, but as sexual ornaments like a peacock's tail or a deer's antlers. "Biologists don't think about these things as weapons or ornaments, but they absolutely are," he says. "They meet all the right criteria."

Read full, original post: [This Fly's Sperm Is One Thousand Times Longer Than Human Sperm](#)