‘Selfish sperm’: Why men generate it and how it drives evolution

[L]ike all animals, we are biologically driven to try and pass our genetic material on to the next generation, and for the males of the species, that means succeeding at mating and producing offspring, aka having kids. For men, this means passing their DNA down via sperm cells.
Scientists thought they had a pretty good handle on how this worked. But according to a new study published January 14 in Science, sperm are actually far more selfish than previously thought. The study was funded by the Massachusettes-based Ohana Biosciences.

Essentially, the new findings suggest natural selection starts on the sperm vs sperm level, long before conception. In other words: Men aren’t just in competition with one another on the evolutionary level — individual sperm are, too. This has profound implications for how we understand genetic inheritance, and how genes influence behavior, development, and even disease.

…

[Robin] Friedman and the study’s other authors found some sperm don’t share their gene variants. In fact, there are some genes the expression patterns for which are linked to their genotype in sperm. The team labeled these “geoinformative markers,” or GIMS.

In this scenario, Friedman explains “alleles spread through a population quickly because they help sperm compete, but not because they help the entire organism survive overall.”

Read the original post