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# Testosterone and attachment style in Finnish men and women

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## BACKGROUND

Testosterone has been identified as an important hormonal factor in social and romantic relationships. There is some previous research which has connected personality and mating behaviour in humans, but there is to our knowledge no research connecting testosterone and attachment style in humans.

## STUDY AIM

We examined whether testosterone is related to attachment styles in adults of both sexes.

## METHODS

Participants were from the prospective Young Finns cohort study set up in 1980 ( $n=3596$ ) and followed up to date. For the present analysis, there were 914 men with two repeated measurement times in 2001 and 2007 ( $n=1405$  person-observations) and 1011 women with one measurement time in 2001. Mean age was 31 years ( $sd=5.0$ ).

Attachment styles were assessed with the Relationship Questionnaire used to assess *anxiety* (i.e., anxiety about abandonment) and *avoidance* (i.e., discomfort with closeness).

## RESULTS

In men, higher testosterone was associated with lower anxious attachment ( $B=-0.16$ ,  $CI=-0.25$ ,  $-0.07$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) but not avoidant attachment ( $B=0.03$ ,  $CI=-0.08$ ,  $0.13$ ,  $p=0.61$ ).

No associations were observed for women ( $p$ -values  $> 0.27$ ). Levels of sex-hormone binding globulin (SHBG) were not associated with attachment in men or women.

## DISCUSSION

These results suggest that men with higher testosterone levels are less anxious about their romantic relationships, which may help to explain other relationship outcomes associated with high testosterone, such as having multiple partners and increased divorce risk.

It is possible that using different measurements of attachment, or using measurements of different time points (puberty vs. adulthood) there would be additional or different findings in the topic.

## CORRESPONDENCE:

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