

# Aggression and biological explanations

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



The demand to understand aggression over the years has continued to intensify as it remains the central cause for broken families and relationships, societal conflicts and most importantly the major cause of incarceration for people in all age groups.

Though some scholars have concluded that biological causes of aggression, the ability to address it by changing things in the environment at different levels of growth and development makes it to be more psychological.

However, it is the findings from many scholars that men are more aggressive than women which that has resulted to a more heated debate. Joel et al (2010) found that women suffered about 65% of the total domestic violence.

Aggression is any action or behavior by members of the same community that is intended to instill pain or cause harm to a specified target; for instance murder, domestic violence, manslaughter, and aggravated assault. It from this consideration that this evaluation intrinsically analyzes aggression and why men are more aggressive compared to women.

### Biological explanations

#### (a) Variation in libido levels

According to Yvonne et al (2010), an individual's actions can be traced from his respective genetic constitutions of chemicals that command them. In this case, aggression arises from stimulation of these chemicals and their relation to respective environments.

Biologically, men's higher levels of aggression can be understood from two different perspectives. First the psychodynamic theory by Sigmund Freud

considers behavior as a derivative and motivated by sexual and libido energies.

Aggression is therefore a libido representation as exemplified by the Oedipus complex. With men's libido being relatively higher compared to women as Rhiannon and Crisp (2010) explain, their aggressiveness is equally higher. At childhood level, a boy of about five years develops strong sexual desires to his mother after realization that she is the provider of food.

Notably, this innate desire to associate with the mother makes the boy to develop and display aggressive behavior towards the father who is considered an immediate rival. For the girls, they seek to associate more with their fathers from penis envy before they are able to resolve the conflict. Though Yvonne et al (2010) differ with Society for Neuroscience (2007) on libido extent in causing aggressive behavior, they emphasize that boys often take longer and their aggression is evident from a broader perspective (in school and community) compared to girls.

Report by Sigelman and Rider (2008) indicate that boys and girls exhibit aggression in about 10% and 6% of their varied social behaviors respectively.

#### (b) Evolutionary explanations

Buss (2005) consideration presents aggression as a factor of an individual's chemical constitution and heredity effects. Over the years different genes are passed down through generations to facilitate their survival in the community. Similar to non-human organisms where males fight for mating

preferences and food, men equally seek to control their dominance in the community and institutions.

Following the male dominance in most of the top executive positions, their aggression is projected at protecting themselves, their progenies and even relatives; an aspect that soon turns into a cycle with only one family or region being in leadership or management. Notably, this consideration has however received major criticism as emerging scholars cite environmental factors as the main cause of aggression.

Neurotransmitter chemicals differences in men and women determine the levels of aggression in them. Society for Neuroscience (2007) indicates that serotonin, a major neurotransmitter messenger, in ordinary levels as it mostly happens with women, have a calming effect. However, men generally have a major deficiency of serotonin which has been linked to greater aggression levels.

However, these results appear to contradict previous findings by Garandean and Cillessen (2006) which indicated that serotonin causes aggression when in higher levels. Yvonne et al (2010) findings are further supported by Buss (2005) who indicates that serotonin is used in treating aggressive behavior.

Unlike other causes of aggression which appear to be controversial in causing aggression in people, high levels of the testosterone (male sex hormone) in men compared to women is a major cause of their aggressive behavior.

Rhiannon and Crisp (2010) explain that in a jail with males of violent crimes, their levels of testosterone was found to be higher compared to those

without criminal record. Unlike women, men's testosterone levels easily rise at slightest provocation to make them easily get involved in different crimes.

Therefore, though testosterone among men is generally high compared to women, it requires an effective precursor situation for one to be involved in aggression activity.

### Psychological underpinnings

#### (a) Social learning

In his view which appears to partially support biological causes of aggression, South and Georgina (2007) postulate that psychological considerations have more weight. Naturally, people are subjected to differing environments which mould how they react to various situations.

According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, when people are subjected to aggressive environments, they internalize and latter practice related actions (Hines and Saudino, 2003). In his experiment with children on aggressive and non-aggressive dolls, Bandura found that related aggression and non-aggressiveness was effectively replicated. However, why are men more aggressive than women?

From a cultural perspective, South and Georgina (2007) argues that men are expected to be handy and therefore often subject themselves to key aggressive events. For instance, more boys often prefer hostile computer games as girls prefer working with dolls. South and Georgina (2007) adds that as men grow up, they often seek to relate with more aggressive systems as they consider them to be useful in defending themselves and their families.

For instance, men will always seek to build up their boy muscles, train in defense skills and also watch hostile media which could easily result to aggression. As indicated earlier, internalization of these violent actions creates a series of constant feedbacks reflected in their behavior as aggression.