

Social and ecological correlates of homosexual behavior in wild pygmy chimpanzees, Pan paniscus.

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The mutual homosexual behavior of genito-genital (GG) rubbing has been observed in both wild and captive pygmy (bonobo) chimpanzees, Pan paniscus. Data from field work on an unprovisioned study population of P. paniscus in the Lomako Forest shows that GG rubbing occurred most frequently at the start of feeding bouts. The frequency of GG rubbing was correlated with the size of the food patch, but not with the number of individuals present. The frequency of GG rubbing was also dependent on the size of the sexual swelling and the age class of the females. GG rubbing may reflect decisions to tolerate other females in large food patches where feeding competition is low. GG rubbing may also function to attract to mates and decrease tension between individuals with different tenure in the community.

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