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Beyond the Social Stereotypes of Hormones

Running title: challenging hormone stereotypes

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Stereotyping, despite its bad reputation, makes the world simpler to deal with. We constantly label and categorize in order to make cognitive and emotional processes more efficient. The drawback is that stereotypes are oversimplified notions of reality. As scientists, we are challenged to venture beyond stereotypes, so that they do not hinder our progress and limit our understanding. Here, we wish to debunk three common stereotypes concerning hormones and their relationship to social behaviour.

First, it is commonly believed that testosterone is a male hormone that is only relevant to male behaviour, and therefore should only be studied in males. This notion is based on an anthropocentric male-biased view of nature. Indeed, in humans, men have on average tenfold higher circulating concentrations of testosterone relative to women (Longcope, 1986; Mazur and Booth, 1998; Staub and DeBeer, 1997). However, this view of male testosterone dominance is not universal across nature (Koren et al., 2006), and individual variation is vast. Testosterone is an androgen, produced by both sexes mainly in the gonads and the adrenal cortex (Mazur and Booth, 1998). It is required for basic physiological and anatomical functions such as muscle and bone development, neuronal growth, and immune reaction in

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