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Re-examining the issues: A response to Archer et al.

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to address and contest the issues brought forth by Archer et al. (2005) with regard to our original meta-analysis on the relationship between testosterone and aggression [Book, A. S., Starzyk, K. B., & Quinsey, V. L., (2001). The relationship between testosterone and aggression: A meta-analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behavior: A Review Journal*, 6, 579–599]. We admit to some errors, such as the inclusion of multiple studies employing the same sample. Most of the discrepancies noted by Archer et al., however, were due to the inclusion of an erroneous table in the original article. We reanalyzed the data, again finding a small, positive relationship between testosterone and aggression. This relationship was moderated by age and time of day, confirming the results of our original analysis. Unlike the original analysis, we did find that the method of testosterone measurement was a moderator in the relationship. We disagree with Archer et al.'s claim that our definition of aggression was too broad. Not only are there theoretical reasons for the inclusion of studies on dominance and competition, but the exclusion of such studies did not significantly affect the correlation between testesterone and aggression.

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Archer, Graham-Kevan, and Davies (2005) provide a number of criticisms of our metaanalysis examining the relationship between testosterone and aggression (Book, Starzyk, & Quinsey, 2001). Specific issues included citation errors, sample duplications, an overinclusive definition of aggression, and coding errors. More generally, the authors discussed the criteria for study inclusion and the coding of study characteristics. The present paper addresses the issues raised by Archer et al. (2005) discuss the exclusion criteria and choices made by Archer et al. (2005) in their analysis, and provides a reanalysis of our data in light of the concerns that Archer et al. (2005) raised.

1. Addressing the issues

Archer et al. (2005) correctly point out some citation errors in our review of the literature. We mistakenly cited Turner (1994) when we should have cited Olweus (1986), and that we erroneously cited Mazur (1983) as an empirical study when it was, in fact, a book chapter. We also misinterpreted a graph in Daly and Wilson (1988). We stated that boys between 12 and 25 were responsible for most violent acts, when in fact the graph given by Daly and Wilson suggests that the age range is from 15 to 25.

The second issue put forth by Archer et al. (2005) in their review of our meta-analysis is that we included several duplicate studies included in our analysis. We mistakenly included 3 studies by Olweus (1986), Olweus, Mattsson, Schalling, and Low (1988), Olweus, Mattsson, Schalling, and Low (1980), that reported data from the same sample. The second occurrence of duplication was with Dabbs, Frady, Carr, and Besch (1987). The data reported in this study were also reported elsewhere.

The third issue raised by Archer et al. (2005) was that of problems in our effect size estimations and coding of study characteristics. These inconsistencies listed by Archer et al. (2005) were, for the most part, due to an error in which an early draft of our table was mistakenly submitted for publication instead of the final version. Because this error took place before submission, it was not caught in our proof-reading of the galleys. The ease of computerized publication is a mixed blessing. Some of the values in the published table were incorrect. Most of the errors in the table, however, were not present in the analyses we presented. Table 1 gives the correct information for the studies that are included in the present meta-analysis. It should be noted that the effect size listed (as in the table from the original article) was calculated using Fisher's r-z transformation, which is necessary for combining effect sizes. Where correlations are listed in the results, the values have been converted back to Pearson's r. The combination of the erroneous table and the use of this transformation account for most of the inconsistencies described

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