



# The biology of fatherhood in context: Evolutionary origins, cross-cultural perspectives, and health implications

Dr Lee Gettler, University of Notre Dame  
1pm AEDT, Friday 23 February 2024



Human fathers have a flexible psychobiological capacity to respond to committed parenting with shifts in hormones such as testosterone, prolactin, and oxytocin. These findings hint at evolved neuroendocrine capacities that help facilitate refocused priorities as men make the transition into fatherhood.

Today, fathers commonly cooperate with mothers to raise children in societies around the world. However, their involvement and roles are variable, as they likely were evolutionarily. Thus, the nature of fathers' hormonal shifts and their influences on behavior are shaped by the ecologies, cultural contexts, and family systems in which those fathering roles find expression.

Bringing together these perspectives using data from my research in the Philippines, Congo-Brazzaville, and US, I will explore how men's hormonal physiology variably responds to parenthood and relates to men's family behaviors. I will then present work on how variation in fathers' hormones and roles relate to children's developmental psychobiology and health.

**Dr. Lee Gettler** is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Notre Dame. His research focuses on physiology in family life and its links to parents' health as well as child growth and development across diverse contexts.

**Attend via zoom:**  
<http://tinyurl.com/yc2ww94t>

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