

Affable apes live longer, study shows

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Male chimps that are less aggressive and form strong social bonds tend to live longer, research suggests.

A study of hundreds of [captive chimpanzees](#) showed that males that get

along well with others—by being sensitive, protective and cooperative—outlived their less amiable peers.

The team, led by researchers at the University of Edinburgh, found that, contrary to studies of humans and other primates, being more extroverted, conscientious or neurotic had no impact on chimpanzee's longevity.

Extraversion is frequently associated with [longer life](#) in other [nonhuman primates](#), while conscientiousness and neuroticism are associated with longer and shorter life, respectively, in humans.

Using [personality](#) and survival data from 538 chimpanzees—our closest ape relative—the study tested which aspects of their personalities were associated with longevity.

Results suggest that amongst male chimps, evolution has favoured those that are more agreeable.

Researchers also found some evidence that female chimps who demonstrated openness—those who more readily explored and adapted to changes in their physical and social environments—were more likely to live longer.

The researchers, including colleagues from the US and Japan, assessed chimps' personalities based on a questionnaire of common adjectives and chimpanzee behaviours completed by keepers and researchers who worked with these animals for between seven and 24 years.

The chimps lived in zoos, research facilities and sanctuaries located in the UK, US, Netherlands, Australia and Japan.

The study, published in *eLife*, is the one of the largest ever analyses of

individual behaviour data from chimpanzees or any other great ape.

The findings suggest that links between personality and lifespan in people may not be entirely explained by inherent characteristics, but that lifestyle may play a greater part.

Drew Altschul, Postdoctoral Fellow in the University of Edinburgh's School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, said: "Studying the personality of chimps—one of our closest biological relatives—suggests that the quality of our social relationships can significantly impact our lives."

More information: Drew M Altschul et al, Personality links with lifespan in chimpanzees, *eLife* (2018). [DOI: 10.7554/eLife.33781](https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.33781)

Provided by University of Edinburgh

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