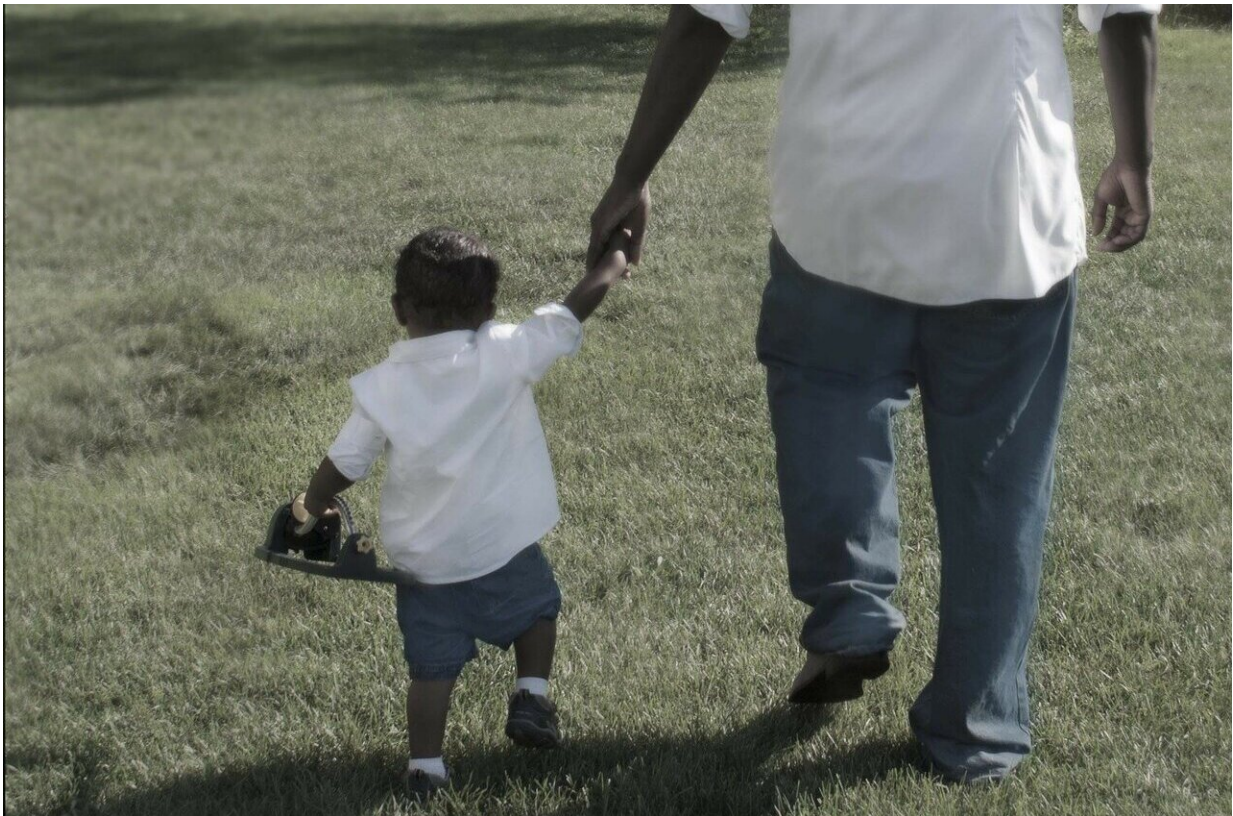


No connection between father-son relationships, adherence to masculine norms

May 11 2021, by Bob Yirka



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A team of researchers at Federation University in Australia has found that there is no connection between the relationship boys have with their father as they grow up and their adherence to masculine norms later on

in life. In their paper published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences* the group describes developing a questionnaire aimed at assessing views on masculinity and the type of relationship a person had with their father and administering it to male volunteers.

The term "[toxic masculinity](#)" has become part of the culture in most English-speaking countries. It refers to a set of beliefs and behaviors considered toxic by other men and women in a given society. Prior research has suggested such behaviors as refusing to discuss emotional well-being or trauma, being overly permissive of harmful behaviors of other men and boys ("boys will be boys"), and beliefs that include aggressiveness and "macho" ideals, and that men are superior to women. These views, when accompanied by associated behavior have been found to have a [negative impact](#) on others who do not share their views. In this new effort, the researchers sought to learn more about the origins of such beliefs, and most specifically, whether they are learned during boyhood from a male parent.

The questionnaire included sections geared toward learning more about the [life experiences](#) that might have led to beliefs associated with toxic masculinity. The first part focused on [social relationships](#); the second, [childhood experiences](#); and the third established character traits that measured the degree of toxic masculinity in a given individual. The team administered the survey to 188 men between the ages of 18 and 62.

The researchers found no evidence of boys learning toxic masculinity traits from their fathers—or their mothers. Instead, they found a very strong link between the relationships men had with other men. They noted that men with clear toxic masculinity traits tended to have far fewer male friends than other men and the kind of friendships they did have were rarely close. It was not clear if the men in the survey developed their beliefs regarding masculinity due to lack of friends, or if it was the other way around.

More information: Daddy issues: Friends rather than fathers influence adult men's hegemonic masculinity, *Personality and Individual Differences* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2020.110467](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110467)

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