

Did Our Primate Ancestors Help *Make* a Murderer?

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Discussion questions to use in your class with Pop Science article:

1. Considering the study shows that there is an evolutionary factor that contributes to the trait of lethal violence in our species, why would this trait persist in the population over time?
2. The bonobos are another close relative of humans. However, they do not display the same level of lethal violence in their population as chimpanzees or humans. Based on what these researchers are presenting, what factors may be influencing this difference?
3. The researchers in this study admit that obtaining information regarding ancient acts of lethal violence were difficult and that they often had to rely on battlefield accounts. How do you think that this limited data set may have influenced the results? What additional information would you like to see before coming to a conclusion?
4. You have been selected to be a juror for an upcoming murder trial. In their opening remarks, the defense states that since humans have an evolutionary history of lethal violence, that their client is simply acting according to his biological origins. What information in this study should be used by the prosecution to argue against that statement?