

Relatives or just good friends? Affiliative relationships among male bearded sakis (*Chiropotes satanas*) in Tucuruí, Brazil



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Introduction

The association preferences that primates show in their social interactions are a fundamental aspect of social organisation. Primates affiliate through grooming, maintaining proximity to each other and supporting one another in intragroup conflicts. The frequency of these types of behaviours among particular age-sex classes can provide insights into the organisation of social groups.

Methods

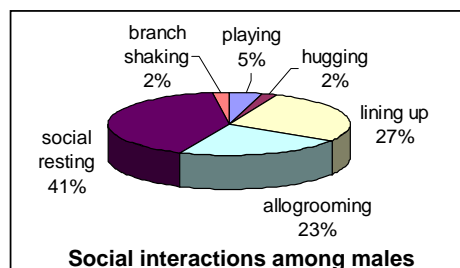
Between July 2002 and February 2004 data were collected for a group of bearded sakis (31-39 members – 12-15 adult males, 9-13 females, 4-3 subadults, 5-6 juveniles and 1-2 infants), in an area of continuous primary lowland *terra firme* forest (home range approximately 80 ha), on the right bank of the Tucuruí reservoir, Tocantins river, Brazil (4°15'S, 49°31'W).

Data on spatial relationships and social interactions were obtained using scan samples at 5-min intervals in four to five observation days per month. A total of 24,219 individual scan records were collected in more than one thousand, three hundred hours of scan sampling. During scans the distance (0 m, <1 m, <5 m and <10 m), and age-sex of nearest neighbours were recorded. Partners and dynamics of social interactions were also registered but in most instances recognition of individuals was not possible. In a preliminary analysis, nearest neighbour data for adults within 5 m of one another were examined. Equal value was given to each distance category within this range.

Results

The results show distinct differences between males and females in the proportion of time spent in proximity to their own age-sex classes. Adult males were each other's nearest neighbours in 63.7% of the proximity records for male subjects, whereas same sex neighbours were recorded in only 15.9% of adult female records. Males spent most of their time in proximity to other males during social interactions (54.6%), whilst females were closest to one another during locomotion (40.5%) and feeding (29.7%) and spent less time interacting socially with one another (16.2%).

Two or more adult males were involved in 53.7% of all social interactions recorded during the study (n = 1179). Over 90% were affiliative in nature (agonistic interactions were extremely rare), the most frequent were social resting, lining up and allogrooming (see below).

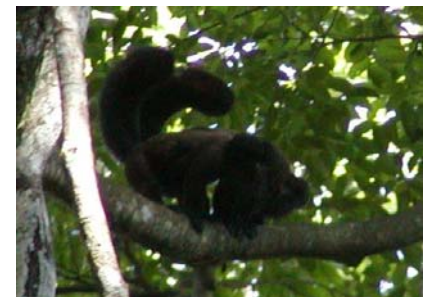


Conclusions

- ❖ adult males demonstrate a high degree of gregariousness;
- ❖ social interactions (largely affiliative) among males were much higher than expected given group demography.



Social resting



Lining -up



Allogrooming