

Self-employed men have higher levels of testosterone, study finds

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An abundance of the sex hormone testosterone is associated with being self-employed, a study from the University of Birmingham, University of Surrey and the University of Adelaide study has found.

Researchers from the three universities found that in a study of Australian men, those individuals with higher testosterone levels were more likely to be self-employed than either employed or not working.

Professor Francis Greene (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/business/greene-francis.aspx>), from **Birmingham Business School** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/business/index.aspx>) at the University of Birmingham, said: "Because men's testosterone levels have been associated with risk-taking and competitive behaviours in past studies, our study sought to examine if there was also a relationship between testosterone levels and self-employment.

"As this is a cross-sectional study we can only say there is an association. Nevertheless, it opens up a new research field focused on the links between hormones and economic activities."

Professor Gary Wittert, from the University of Adelaide, said: "There could be a chicken and egg situation here. We know that there is a relationship between testosterone levels and status from a number of studies of animal behaviour. We also know from research on humans that when men play competitive sports, the winners will have higher testosterone levels after the game than the losers".

"Men who feel they have less control at work and are more stressed because of it are likely to have lower testosterone levels. On the other hand apart from the issue of risk-taking, higher testosterone levels may confer increased resilience and lower reactivity to stress as well as greater drive and motivation."

Dr Liang Han, from Surrey Business School, at the University of Surrey, said: "This is the first time that the association between testosterone and self-employment has been investigated by using a large scale data set. It shows that there is an association between self-employment and testosterone levels with the self-employed more likely to have higher levels of testosterone. Our international collaboration opens up a new research area that looks at the impact of hormones on economic activities."

The study assessed 1,199 adult Australian males aged between 35 and 80 years-old. The paper, Testosterone is associated with self-employment among Australian men, is published in the March edition of Economics and Human Biology.

Ends

Notes to editors

For more information, or to arrange interviews with Prof Greene, contact the University of Birmingham press office on 0121 414 5134 or k.j.bradley@bham.ac.uk (<mailto:k.j.bradley@bham.ac.uk>)

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