

Neuroscience
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Biological versus nonbiological older brothers and men's sexual orientation

(immune | sexuality)

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The most consistent biodemographic correlate of sexual orientation in men is the number of older brothers (fraternal birth order). The mechanism underlying this effect remains unknown. In this article, I provide a direct test pitting prenatal against postnatal (e.g., social/rearing) mechanisms. Four samples of homosexual and heterosexual men (total $n = 944$), including one sample of men raised in nonbiological and blended families (e.g., raised with half- or step-siblings or as adoptees) were studied. Only biological older brothers, and not any other sibling characteristic, including nonbiological older brothers, predicted men's sexual orientation, regardless of the amount of time reared with these siblings. These results strongly suggest a prenatal origin to the fraternal birth-order effect.

Author contributions: A.F.B. designed research, performed research, contributed new reagents/analytic tools, analyzed data, and wrote the paper.

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