

nature

International weekly journal of science

Search Advanced search

Editor's Summary

29 May 2008

Sex and the malaria parasite

Malaria parasites need to reproduce sexually before they can transmit to vectors, but despite extensive research on ways of blocking transmission, little is known about their reproductive strategies. Reece *et al.* use novel experiments to show that the assumptions of sex-allocation theory, previously controversial when used to explain sex ratios in malaria parasites, are in fact valid. As predicted by this plank of evolutionary theory, *Plasmodium chabaudi* parasites adjust their sex-allocation in response to the presence of unrelated conspecifics. By means of this kin discrimination they evaluate the genetic diversity of their infections, and adjust their behaviour in response to environmental cues.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Evolutionary biology: Sex ratios writ small

The evolutionary theory of sex ratios should apply to all creatures, both great and small. Experimental studies of the proportions of male to female sex cells of malaria parasites deliver cheering results.

Jos. J. Schall

doi:10.1038/453605a

[Full Text \(/nature/journal/v453/n7195/full/453605a.html\)](#) | [PDF \(121K\) \(/nature/journal/v453/n7195/pdf/453605a.pdf\)](#)

ARTICLE

Sex ratio adjustment and kin discrimination in malaria parasites

Sarah E. Reece, Damien R. Drew & Andy Gardner

doi:10.1038/nature06954

[Abstract \(/nature/journal/v453/n7195/abs/nature06954.html\)](#) | [Full Text \(/nature/journal/v453/n7195/full/nature06954.html\)](#) | [PDF \(341K\) \(/nature/journal/v453/n7195/pdf/nature06954.pdf\)](#) | [Supplementary information \(/nature/journal/v453/n7195/supinfo/nature06954.html\)](#)