

Testosterone Does Not Cause Violence

Contributed by Superhuman
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A common scene in modern sports films, such as "Any Given Sunday," is the psychotic athlete going off the deep end because of "roid rage." Violence associated with high testosterone levels and anabolic steroid use is largely an urban legend.

High testosterone levels do not cause violence, according to an article by Christopher Mims published in Scientific American. Testosterone is linked to the drive for dominance and is only weakly associated with aggression. In prison, for example, the quest for dominance might result in a violent confrontation, while in an upscale neighborhood it might be expressed by driving a nicer car or living in a fancier house. Studies of sexual attraction in women show they are drawn toward men with high testosterone levels (e.g., muscular body, dominant attitude), but fear their lack of commitment. Testosterone levels are a product of the environment. It increases in boxers and chess players when they win and goes down when they lose. Testosterone plays an important role in establishing social dominance. In the animal world, this plays out in violent confrontations during the mating season. In humans, the hormone plays a role in the social pecking order. (ScientificAmerican.com, July 5, 2007)