

It's pretty stressful being the top banana

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- 1 Think it's easy at the top? Turns out chasing females, putting down underlings and generally maintaining one's special status can be very stressful.
- 2 If you're a baboon, that is. A nine-year study tracking five troops in Kenya found that the top-ranked alpha males had more stress than the second-place beta males. In fact, the top dog – er, baboon – was just as on edge as those unfortunate primates at the bottom of the totem pole.
- 3 The researchers figured this out by following the baboons and snatching the adult males' fresh faeces. Those droppings were preserved in a lab to look for the stress hormone glucocorticoid, which helps the body gear up to deal with an immediate threat.
- 4 The research team discovered that a baboon's stress level dropped as his rank rose – except for the alpha males. The top baboons had 10% more glucocorticoid than their runners-up, and matched those of the lowest-ranked baboons.



- 5 Lead author Laurence Gesquiere had expected to find that the advantages of being at the top – better access to food and fertile females – would translate into a less fraught existence. “I was very surprised to see high levels of stress,” she said. “That strain is probably due to the effort required to stay at the top of the heap,” Gesquiere added. Lower-ranking baboons, on the other hand, probably experience stress for different reasons, including less access to food and the tendency to get thrashed by socially superior peers.
- 6 Though short bursts of glucocorticoid can be helpful, animals with consistently high levels wear out their reproductive and immune systems, among other adverse health effects.

latimes.com, 2011

Tekst 1 It's pretty stressful being the top banana

- 1p 1 "It's pretty stressful being the top banana" (title)
How did researchers come to this conclusion?
- A They collected and examined the excrements of wild baboons.
 - B They compared the behaviour of wild baboons with the behaviour of those in captivity.
 - C They injected the baboons with substances that influenced their behaviour.
 - D They set up several experiments to test the reactions of the baboons.
- 2p 2 Geef van elk van de volgende stellingen aan of deze juist of onjuist is volgens de tekst.
- 1 Male baboons that are not quite or not yet the leaders of the troop suffer the least amount of stress.
 - 2 In certain circumstances an increase in stress hormone levels can help react adequately to imminent danger.
 - 3 The findings of the research were in accordance with the team's expectations.
 - 4 The leader of a baboon troop is more fertile than lower-ranking baboons.
- Noteer het nummer van elke stelling, gevolgd door "juist" of "onjuist".
- 1p 3 How can the tone of this article as a whole be characterised?
- A as mocking
 - B as objective
 - C as surprised
 - D as worried

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.