



## LOOK AT HIS FINGER

Maybe women should take a good look at their partner's fingers before putting a ring on one. Men with short index fingers and long ring fingers are on average nicer towards women. They are more likely to listen attentively, smile and laugh, compromise or compliment the other person, according to Debbie Moskowitz, lead author of a study and Professor of Psychology at

McGill University.

This phenomenon stems from their fetal life, and the hormones these men have been exposed to in their mother's womb. The findings might help explain why these men have more children.

The study showing a link between a biological event in fetal life and adult behaviour, was published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*.

## Anti-inflammatory mechanism of dieting and fasting revealed

Researchers at Yale School of Medicine have found that a compound produced by the body when dieting or fasting can block a part of the immune system involved in several inflammatory disorders such as type 2 diabetes, atherosclerosis, and Alzheimer's disease.

In their study, published in the Feb. 16 online issue of *Nature Medicine*, the researchers described how the compound  $\beta$ -hydroxybutyrate (BHB) directly inhibits NLRP3, which is part of a complex set of proteins called the inflammasome. The



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inflammasome drives the inflammatory response in several disorders including autoimmune diseases, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, atherosclerosis, and autoinflammatory disorders.

"These findings are important because endogenous metabolites like BHB that block the NLRP3 inflammasome could be relevant against many inflammatory diseases, including those where there are mutations in the NLRP3 genes," writes Vishwa Deep Dixit, professor in the Section of Comparative Medicine at Yale School of Medicine.

## Eating disorders linked with financial difficulties in female students

Experiencing financial difficulties at university may increase the risk of female students developing an eating disorder, according to new research from the University of Southampton and Solent NHS Trust.

Conversely, the study also found that having extreme attitudes to food and eating predicted short-term financial difficulties for female students, suggesting the possibility of a 'vicious

cycle' occurring.

Clinical Psychologist and lead author of the study, Dr Thomas Richardson, writes: "There may be a 'vicious cycle' for these students, where negative attitudes towards eating increase the risk of financial difficulties in the short term, and those difficulties further exacerbate negative eating attitudes in the longer term."

## Dogs know if you are smiling

Dogs can tell the difference between happy and angry human faces, according to a new study in the Cell Press journal *Current Biology*. It provides the first solid evidence that an animal other than humans can discriminate between emotional expressions in another species.

"We think the dogs in our study could have solved the task only by applying their knowledge of emotional expressions in humans to the unfamiliar

pictures we presented to them," writes Corsin Müller of the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna. "We expect to gain important insights into the extraordinary bond between humans and one of their favorite pets, and into the emotional lives of animals in general."

**Main Source: SCIENCE DAILY  
Compiled by AMITAVA KAR**

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This is the experimental set-up used to test whether dogs can discriminate emotional expressions of human faces.