

ALLOMATERNAL BEHAVIOR IN TWO SPECIES OF THE *MACACA* GENUS

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Allomaternal behavior, defined as care and interest for infants by adults other than the parent, is a common phenomenon among primates. In order to investigate allomaternal behavior in non-human primates, we studied two macaque captive colonies at the Parco Natura Viva in Verona. One group was composed of 19 *Macaca sylvanus* individuals and other of 9 *Macaca nemestrina* individuals. We conducted focal studies, supplemented with scan sessions during the first three months after the birth season (August – September 1995). Allomaternal behavior was measured as the total number of affiliative interactions (aggressive encounters were never observed) performed between infants under 3 months of age and individuals who were not the infant’s mother. The results illustrate a significant difference between the two species in both frequency and distribution of such behavior. For one, the dominant male of the *Macaca sylvanus* troop interacted notably more with infants than did the dominant male of the *Macaca nemestrina* troop. Having accounted for the effect of the dominant male leader, we tested the various plausible theories using mutually exclusive predictions from a set of multiple hypotheses. The following hypotheses were confirmed by our study: “Play Mothering”, “By-Product of Aggressive Behavior”, and “Infant Social Strategy”. Conversely we could not confirm “Future sexual investment” and “Reproductive Error”. “Kin Selection” and “Adoption Strategy” were true only for *Macaca sylvanus*, suggesting species specific differences in macaque allomaternal behavior.