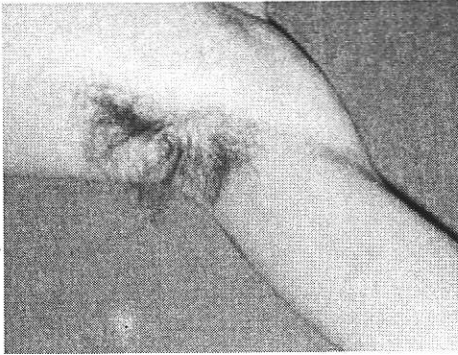


The honeybee pictured above, releases a pheromone to get swarms into empty hives.

Amongst the eight known types of pheromones, there are alarm pheromones, food trail pheromones, sex pheromones, and many others that affect behavior or physiology. Their use among insects has been well documented, although many vertebrates and plants also communicate using pheromones.



A pheromone is a chemical in the body that triggers an innate behavioural response in another member of the same species.



In mammals and reptiles, pheromones are detected by the vomeronasal organ, or Jacobson's organ, which is placed between the nose and mouth, although some pheromones are detected by regular olfactory membranes.



In animals, sex pheromones indicate the availability of the female for breeding. Male animals also emit pheromones that inform others as to what species they are, and their genotype. The purpose of pheromones giving information about genotype is a mechanism to avoid inbreeding. Females are attracted to males with the least similar genotype, which means they are attracted to males who are the least likely to be related to them.



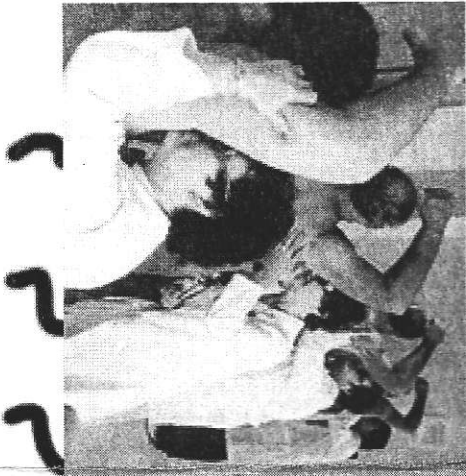
Studies have suggested that people might be using odor cues connected to the immune system to select mates who are not closely related to themselves. Using brain imaging techniques, Swedish researchers have shown that homosexual and heterosexual males' brains respond differently to two odors that may be involved in sexual arousal, and that the homosexual men respond in the same way as heterosexual women.



Some commercially-sold substances are advertised using claims that the products contain human sexual pheromones and can act as an aphrodisiac or chick magnet. These substances often lack credibility due to excessive marketing tactics and scientific proof. Despite claims to the contrary, no "pheromonal" substance has ever been shown to directly influence any human sexual behavior



PHEROMONES



The End

