

Male opinions of paternity issues studied

University of Oklahoma researchers say U.S. men involved in paternity disputes are more often right when they strongly believe a child is theirs.

"Paternity confidence has important implications for a man's involvement with his children, since men are less likely to interact with and support children whom they do not believe to be theirs," said Kermyt Anderson of the university's Center for Applied Social Research.

Anderson compared the paternity test results for men with high paternity confidence to the results for men with low paternity confidence in an effort to determine how perceptions of fatherhood correlate to fact. He found, overall, men who were confident about their fatherhood were only wrong 1.7 percent of the time, that is, they were indeed the child's father more than 98 percent of the time.

Men who were dubious about their fatherhood -- specifically men contesting paternity through paternity tests -- were more frequently not the father of the child, but only in 29.8 percent of cases. More than 70 percent of the time, men who doubted their paternity were wrong.

The research is to appear in the June issue of *Current Anthropology*.

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