

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

May 3, 2018

April Athalie
via the FOI website

Dear April Athalie,

regarding your Freedom of Information request titled “penis” we collected the following information:

A penis (plural penises or penes) is the primary sexual organ that male animals use to inseminate sexually receptive mates (usually females and hermaphrodites) during copulation. Such organs occur in many animals, both vertebrate and invertebrate, but males do not bear a penis in every animal species, and in those species in which the male does bear a so-called penis, the penes in the various species are not necessarily homologous. For example, the penis of a mammal is at most analogous to the penis of a male insect or barnacle. The term penis applies to many intromittent organs, but not to all; for example the intromittent organ of most cephalopoda is the hectocotylus, a specialised arm, and male spiders use their pedipalps. Even within the Vertebrata there are morphological variants with specific terminology, such as hemipenes. In most species of animals in which there is an organ that might reasonably be described as a penis, it has no major function other than intromission, or at least conveying the sperm to the female, but in the placental mammals the penis bears the distal part of the urethra, which discharges both urine during urination and semen during copulation.

Sincerely,

John Smith
FOI Manager