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What Triggers Puberty? Researchers Discover Mechanism That Regulates Steroid Hormone Production in Fruit Flies, Institute for Research in Biomedicine Study

3/8/2013 7:13:19 AM

Looking at the transformation of a fly larva into a pupa may help researchers to understand the molecular mechanisms that trigger puberty. A study conducted on the fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*, by scientists at the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona) led by ICREA research professor Marco Milán, identifies an miRNA as key to the relationship between hormones that control growth and sexual maturity. According to Milán, "accelerated growth or obesity can provoke premature puberty in humans, harming their development -- and this is a growing problem in Western societies. Today, physicians know very little about the molecular mechanisms behind premature puberty, and *Drosophila* is providing us with our first hints."

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