

612 ABC Brisbane

## Breakfast with Spencer Howson

5:00am - 7:45am

### Family affairs with Susan Hetherington (introducing Lawnmower parents!)

08 October 2014 , 9:01 AM by Spencer Howson

#### Boys will be boys

Researchers have found that teenage boys tend to make riskier decisions than girls or adults. When confronted by a threat they found it more difficult to ignore than others due to increased emotional activity in their brains. The study suggests that boys are unable to stop themselves responding to a threat, even if they are told not to. The research was led by Pradeep Bhide, a Florida State University College of Medicine neuroscientist and director of the Center for Brain Repair. Together with Cornell University, he examined 20 leading research projects from brain experts on teenage brains. And he says a large amount of their behaviour could be explained by their brain development - or lack thereof. 'I think teenage behavior is probably the most misunderstood of any age group - not only by parents but by teenagers themselves,' said Bhide. Scientists have found out why some teenagers are prone to taking huge risks as well as seeming antisocial. Research from the Center for Brain Health at The University of Texas at Dallas found that connections between certain brain regions are amplified in teens more prone to risk. 'Our brains have an emotional-regulation network that exists to govern emotions and influence decision-making,' explained the study's lead author, Sam Dewitt. 'Antisocial or risk-seeking behaviour may be associated with an imbalance in this network.' 'It's a critical time in life, and a very stressful one, when they are going through so many changes at the same time that their brains are changing. 'The teen years are actually a very busy time for brain development.' When confronted by a threat teenage boys showed enhanced activity in the part of their brain responsible for emotions, unlike children and adults. This made supposed threats difficult to ignore, and often led to an irrational response. Some have suggested that such risk-taking may have once been a necessity from an evolutionary standpoint for hunting. Teenage brains were also found to be less adept at recognising faces, and were also more susceptible to lasting damage from drugs and alcohol.