

Scientists identify 'intelligence gene'

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Psychiatric scientists at The Feinstein Institute for Medical Research in Glen Oaks, N.Y., say they've found a gene that seems to influence intelligence.

Working with researchers at the Harvard Partners Center for Genetics and Genomics in Boston, the Feinstein team from the Zucker Hillside Hospital campus examined the genetic blueprints of individuals with schizophrenia, a neuropsychiatric disorder characterized by cognitive impairment, and compared them with healthy volunteers.

They discovered the dysbindin-1 gene, which they previously demonstrated to be associated with schizophrenia, may also be linked to general cognitive ability.

"A robust body of evidence suggests cognitive abilities, particularly intelligence, are significantly influenced by genetic factors," said the study's primary author, Katherine Burdick, noting existing data already suggests dysbindin may influence cognition.

"We looked at several DNA sequence variations within the dysbindin gene and found one of them to be significantly associated with lower general cognitive ability in carriers of the risk variant compared with non-carriers in two independent groups," she added.

The study will appear in the May 15 print issue of Human Molecular Genetics and is available online.

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