

Ruthless behavior may be genetic

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Israeli researchers said genetics may play a role in the behavior of selfish dictators.

A team at Hebrew University in Jerusalem said they found a link between a gene called AVPR1a and ruthless behavior by using an economic exercise called the "Dictator Game," in which players behave selflessly or like money-grabbing dictators, Nature News reported Thursday.

The research team said it is unclear how the gene influences behavior, but said it may be that for some the adage "it is better to give than to receive" simply isn't true.

AVPR1a is known to produce receptors in the brain that detect vasopressin, a hormone involved in altruism and "prosocial behavior," the report said.

The findings were published in the journal *Genes, Brain and Behavior*.

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