

# Scientists have solved a genetic problem

June 16 2009

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Researchers at the Universities of Manchester and Birmingham have solved a genetic problem that causes the accumulation of male hormones - called androgens - in women.

The findings, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, may ultimately lead to a better understanding of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), which affects fertility and causes other health problems in women.

The research identified a defect in the pathway for making [steroid hormones](#) in the adrenal gland. Although the case studied was a rare one, making such breakthroughs can give special understanding of the common cause of excess androgens in women, polycystic ovarian syndrome. PCOS affects approximately 10 per cent of all women at some point in their reproductive life.

Professor Neil Hanley, one of several leading endocrinologists at the National Institute for Health Research Manchester Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), contributed to the studies, which were led by colleagues at the University of Birmingham.

According to Professor Hanley, collaboration has been a key aspect of the research: "What is particularly rewarding about this research is that it is part of a much bigger ongoing interaction between my group in Manchester and the Birmingham team of Professor Wiebke Arlt."

The Manchester BRC recruited Professor Hanley only a year ago from

Southampton. He added: "The reason I moved my group was the strength of endocrinology at The University of Manchester, the Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and across the city as a whole, so it is nice to have contributed promptly to the success of the Manchester BRC."

Source: University of Manchester ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Scientists have solved a genetic problem (2009, June 16) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-06-scientists-genetic-problem.html>

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