

# Immunology touted as next big thing for popular science

April 29 2014, by Kath Paddison

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(Medical Xpress)—A University of Manchester professor says scientific jargon could be making the science of the human immune system a turn-off for the general public.

Professor Daniel Davis says that scientists are using a number of innovative ways to generate public discussion on immunology and the time is right for people to get to grips with the subject.

His paper, published today in *Nature Reviews Immunology*, coincides with the International Day of Immunology, argues that now is the right time for immunology to become the next big trend in [popular science](#) – to inform new discussions about health and disease.

Professor Davis, Director of Research at the University of Manchester's Collaborative Centre for Inflammation Research, said: "People already know a lot about DNA and evolution and would be keen to learn new concepts - like how the [immune system](#) works."

"It's important to find out about immunology because it is crucial for understanding human health and disease. Plus, the human body is one of the greatest wonders of the universe, and its complexity, delicacy and elegance is clearly revealed in the way our immune system works."

Immunology explores how our immune system seeks out and destroys dangerous bacteria, viruses and fungi. It also examines how its activity connects with other body systems and influences, for example, our

metabolism and hormone levels - and controls how well we feel. Sleep, stress, nutrition and our mental health are all connected to our ability to fight infections.

In his latest book, 'The Compatibility Gene', discussed recently at The Royal Institution in London and at the Edinburgh Science Festival, Professor Davis explored [immunology](#) and its link with compatibility genes.

As part of the research for this book he and his wife had their own DNA analysed for compatibility and explained how research has radically transformed knowledge of the way our bodies work - with profound consequences for medical research and ethics.

Professor Davis said: "The immune system is a wonderful basis for discussing the importance of human diversity. The genes that vary the most between individual people are not those that influence physical characteristics—such as skin, eye or hair colour, for example—but are the genes of the immune system."

**More information:** "Presenting the marvels of immunity." Daniel M. Davis. *Nature Reviews Immunology* (2014) [DOI: 10.1038/nri3681](https://doi.org/10.1038/nri3681) .  
Published online 28 April 2014

Provided by University of Manchester

Citation: Immunology touted as next big thing for popular science (2014, April 29) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-04-immunology-touted-big-popular-science.html>

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