Genetic screening identifies genes linked to human skeletal disease

A genetic screening approach to studying bone disease has found nine new genes associated with bone health and suggests a new way to discover genes that may be implicated in human skeletal diseases. A collaborative study of the mineral content, strength and flexibility of bones has found clues to the cause of bone disorders such as osteoporosis, osteogenesis imperfecta, and high bone density syndromes. The study, which brings together specialist skills in mouse gene deletion and bone measurement to assess the strength of bones in 100 mutant mouse lines, is the largest reported screen of its type for genes that regulate bone health.

All nine of the new genes discovered had not previously been implicated in skeletal disorders and were discovered by randomly screening different strains of mice engineered such that a single gene had been inactivated in their genome.

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