

## Complex behaviors driven by remarkably simple genetics

Humans engage in a lot of complex behaviors, but many of them are learned. Genetics gives us a nervous system that's flexible enough to incorporate new behaviors, and we pick them up socially. But many animals display highly complex behavior that appears to be instinctual. Which raises the question of how these sorts of behaviors can be programmed into the nervous system genetically.

Pretty simply, if a new study of mice is to be believed. The work compared the architecture of burrows built by two closely related species. The researchers find the design of the animals' burrows is modular, and the two modules are largely controlled by a handful of genes—perhaps as few as four in total.

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