

Chlamydia is killing koalas—will genetics find a cure?

The following is an excerpt.

Why do some koalas die from chlamydia and an AIDS-like retrovirus whereas others manage to avoid contracting the sexually transmitted diseases? The answer, it seems, may be in the genes. Scientists in Australia announced last week that they have sequenced the koala *interferon gamma (IFN-g)* gene, a discovery that they call the “holy grail” for understanding the koala immune system. A similar gene in humans helps to combat viruses and regulate the immune system.

The discovery could not come at a more important time for the species. About half of Australia’s koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) are infected with chlamydiosis (aka chlamydia), a disease caused by the chlamydia bacterium that can cause infertility, urinary and respiratory infections, blindness and death.

View the original article here: [Chlamydia Is Killing Koalas—Will Genetics Find a Cure?](#)