The complex and confusing genetics of schizophrenia

An international team of researchers has found that the cause of schizophrenia is even more complex than already believed, with rare gene mutations contributing to the disorder. In two studies published in the journal Nature, they show that schizophrenia arises from the combined effects of many genes.

Blood DNA taken from 6,948 people in Bulgaria and Sweden was catalogued. This included patients diagnosed with schizophrenia, their parents and healthy controls. Scientists were able to pinpoint the sites of gene mutations and identify patterns that reveal clues about the biology underlying schizophrenia. Rather than finding only a few "faulty" genes, the two studies determine that the genetic basis of schizophrenia is tremendously complex. The data confirms that it is a very large number of rare genetic mutations that contribute to risk of developing the disorder.

This research also shows that the new mutations cluster in the same way in those who have inherited the disease. This confirms that schizophrenia is inherently the same however it develops.

Read the full, original article here: The genetics behind schizophrenia are more complex than we thought

Additional Resources:

- "Idea of genetic mosaicism hits psychiatry," National Geographic
- "What is heritability anyhow?," Conversation
- "Schizophrenia and lower cognitive ability genetically linked," Forbes