

Media cycle helps perpetuate misleading 'gene of the week' cycle

Science writer David Dobbs has definitively described the voracious appetite of the “selfish gene” meme, pointing out that the notion of individual genes exercising power on the outcome of events has been so good at mass producing itself, that “the selfish gene has become a selfish meme.”

At CGS, we have another name for this phenomenon: the gene of the week.

All “genes of the week” have something in common: they never actually live up to their billing. For starters, it is never true that a single gene just *does* something. Genes work together, and genomes work with their environments. But this inconvenient reality has done amazingly little to stem genetic determinism, or the funding of research that relies upon its framework.

How could this be true? Is it really the case, as Dobbs posits, that “the gene-centric model survives because simplicity is a hugely advantageous trait for an idea to possess?”

The adventures of “smart genes” provide an illuminating case study.

Read the full, original story: The stupidity of the “smart gene”