

## Is the search for “IQ genes” a fool’s errand?

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 the [Center for Genetics and Society](#), 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.

There are some people who *really* want to find the genetic basis of intelligence. The sole effort of [BGI’s Cognitive Genomics Lab](#), for example, is to investigate the genetics of human cognition. The fascinating documentary film [DNA Dreams](#) sheds light on the hopes of those involved with this project. They harbor no doubt that there *is* a genetic basis for intelligence; the only question is when they’ll uncover it and how limitless the possibilities will be once they do. Embryo selection and modification to ensure smarter babies are among the future scenarios they envision.

**Read full original article:** [The Stupidity of the “Smart Gene”](#)