

Dutch height shows humans still subject to natural selection

Insecure about your height? You may want to avoid this tiny country by the North Sea, whose population has gained an impressive 20 centimeters in the past 150 years and is now officially the tallest on the planet. Scientists chalk up most of that increase to rising wealth, a rich diet, and good health care, but a new study suggests something else is going on as well: The Dutch growth spurt may be an example of human evolution in action.

The study, published online in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, shows that [tall Dutch men on average have more children than their shorter counterparts](#), and that more of their children survive. That suggests genes that help make people tall are becoming more frequent among the Dutch, says behavioral biologist and lead author Gert Stulp of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

“This study drives home the message that the human population is still subject to natural selection,” says Stephen Stearns, an evolutionary biologist at Yale University who wasn’t involved in the study. “It strikes at the core of our understanding of human nature, and how malleable it is.” It also confirms what Stearns knows from personal experience about the population in the northern Netherlands, where the study took place: “Boy, they are tall.

Read full original article: [Did natural selection make the Dutch the tallest people on the planet?](#)