

Creativity-mental illness link not as strong as advertised in new study

Genetic variations that can collectively increase a person's risk of being diagnosed with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder can also be used to predict creativity, according to a [new study](#) published in Nature Neuroscience. The study's researchers claim that this is the strongest argument yet for shared roots linking psychosis and creativity. But the correlation found in this particular study isn't very strong, some researchers argue. And without a proper definition for creativity, arguing that such a link exists could do more harm than good.

Analyses showed that people who belong to these artistic societies were more likely to carry variants that increase a person's risk of developing either bipolar disorder or schizophrenia than people in other occupations. And when the researchers replicated the study using data from four studies carried out in Sweden and the Netherlands, they found similar results.

But here's the thing: the increase in risk can be kind of misleading. Together, the variants used the study only explain about 6 percent of schizophrenia and 1 percent of bipolar disorder, according to a graph in the study. And these same variants only explain about one-quarter of 1 percent of artistic ability. That means that the same genetic variants that explain "about 1/20th of schizophrenia also explain about 1/250th of artists' ability," according to David Cutler, a population geneticist at Emory University who didn't take part in the study.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Critics say that a new study linking creativity and mental illness is lacking](#)