

## Pseudoscience appropriates 'epigenetics' with promise of life-changing cures

Lots of real scientific terms – such as “neuro” or “nano” – get borrowed for a spot of buzzword scienceyness. [Epigenetics](#) is a real and important part of biology, but due to predictable quackery, it is threatening to become the new quantum.

In rodents, where the experiments can be controlled not merely observed, studies have shown learned behaviours such as fear or stress are passed on to their children, and even grandchildren, by epigenetic mechanisms.

These results are complex, perplexing, but possibly slight, and demand greater examination. Science is unfortunately prone to fashion, and many scientists are intrigued but anxious that the scrutiny being applied to these studies is not robust enough to justify the fanfare.

New age gurus such as Deepak Chopra cite epigenetics as a way of changing your life, under the false supposition that genes are destiny, and epigenetic changes brought on by lifestyle choices such as meditation “[allows us almost unlimited influence on our fate](#)”. Well, no: that sandwich you just ate has changed the expression of your genes too. Even the few inherited epigenetic changes we observe are not very predictable, let alone predictably positive.

Epigenetics is fascinating but still in its infancy. It's not heretical, it won't upend Darwin, or give you supernatural powers, but it is a necessary pursuit in our never-ending quest to unpick the inscrutableness of being. More, unhyped, work is needed, and mystical thinking is never welcome round these here parts.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post:**[Beware the pseudo gene genies](#)