

Is looking for intelligence in genes a ‘needle in a haystack?’

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

With the advent of new genomic sequencing technologies, researchers around the world are working to identify genetic variants that help explain differences in intelligence. Can such findings be used to improve education for all, as some scientists believe? Or are they likely to have a chilling effect on programs meant to improve educational outcomes among disadvantaged populations? These are among the questions explored in “[The Genetics of Intelligence: Ethics and the Conduct of Trustworthy Research](#),” a special report of the Hastings Center Report.

The report assesses the science and explores concerns about the implications of the research and interest in applying it to education. It concludes with recommendations to ensure that the research is done in a way that is trustworthy and avoids the “vortex of classism and racism.”

Among the major questions is, how likely is it that gene variants with significant influence on intelligence will be identified? While research has shown that genetic variation helps to explain why people in the same population perform differently on intelligence tests, newer DNA-based studies have thus far enjoyed little success in discovering which genetic variants produce those observed differences. Some scientists are confident that new whole-genome testing technologies, applied to large numbers of people, will lead to breakthroughs in identifying which genes help to explain those differences. Others think that the needle-in-a-haystack metaphor underestimates the difficulty.

Read full, original post: [The genetics of intelligence: Ethics and the conduct of trustworthy research](#)