

Despite what you may have read, there's no 'gay gene'

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Scientists presenting at the 2015 meeting of the American Society of Genetics announced the [discovery](#) of a gene-based algorithm that could predict male homosexuality with 70 percent accuracy. It's the first time a gene-based model has been used to predict sexual orientation, giving credence to the idea that homosexuality has a biological basis.

Exciting as the claim may be, it's crucial not to oversimplify the findings.

The scientists from UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine discovered that methylation, a form of DNA modification, in certain regions of the genome differed between homosexual and heterosexual identical twin brothers. What they did *not* find were the elusive "gay genes." Amid the ever-present "homosexuality is a choice" chants of the anti-gay community, it is, naturally, tempting to claim that this study is concrete proof that sexual orientation is entirely genetic. To say so would be simplistic and, well, wrong. But it does constitute evidence that homosexuality has a biological basis.

The real focus of the study was epigenetics, a field of biology dealing with the ways different genes are turned on and off. What's really important to bear in mind is that the evidence doesn't point to a cause-effect relationship. Just because one individual might have the epigenetic pattern associated with homosexual individuals doesn't mean he is, necessarily, a homosexual. Ditto for heterosexual patterns. It could be a coincidence. His sexuality and his pattern may simply be correlated.

**Read full, original post:** [How to Talk About the "Gay Gene" Without Being Homophobic or Wrong](#)